

Hospitality means making room for one another!

I have just returned from Flagstaff Arizona and a visit with my dear friends Tom Bean and Susan Lamb Bean. Tom is a photographer and his photo of Glacier Bay is featured on one of the current 100 Year Anniversay Commemorative Postage Stamps honoring the Park Service 100 year anniversary.

Both Tom, the photographer, and Susan the writer, started their lives as Park Rangers, and Susan's books are featured at the National Park book stores.

Visiting Susan and Tom is like browsing in an exotic candy store of spiritual delights.

Buddy frolicked on the mountain side: "Free at last!" and I relaxed on the cool patio.

And we TALKED BOOKS, MOVIES, SPIRITUALITY, and the remarkable outreach they have to a Muslim student from Afghanistan, and a black student from Africa for whom they make room in their busy lives. Flagstaff is a college town, home of NAU.

And both Buddy and I soaked up and enjoyed the remarkable hospitality of Susan and Tom.

Interestingly today's Scriptures are all about HOSPITALITY.

As a reward for their hospitality, Abraham, and Sarah, having been visited by angels, will receive a child within the next year.

And in the Gospel Jesus goes to a "safe house" where he can kick off his sandals, sit back, relax, and enjoy a good meal.

In the process, the cook Martha complains about her sister not being active enough.

And Jesus responds: "Do not be anxious!"

BUT, he does not tell her to "Stop Cooking!"

Both Mary and Martha are offering hospitality: making room for Jesus in their home--each in their own way: Martha by cooking, and Mary by sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening.

Each in their own way, make room for their guest.

On Saturday I bury Tom, who lived to be 104 years old!

When he was born, women could not vote and there was a World War that was to "end all wars."

Tom survived the Flu Epidemic of 1919 which claimed his younger brother and the hardships of the depression.

□ Over his long life time, "like gold in the furnace he was proved."

In reading his bio, I was struck by the compassionate hospitality shown by his father to

his employees during the great Depression:

"Because of the depression my dad was working half time so everybody in his department could have some income. During those times communities worked together and every neighborhood had a vegetable garden that provided food necessary for survival. Men were selling apples for a nickel on street corners. There was no disability, social security, welfare or any social relief programs. i.e, No work no pay."

Thus people responded with hospitality in their time of need.

[How fortunate I am to have neighbors like Shirley and others who are so hospitable...and as a result we are there for one another!]

Sadly we are in the aftermath of the horrible atrocity in France.

This atrocity is the penultimate example of crazed persons unwilling to make room for their neighbors, unwilling to live with their neighbors, incapable of loving their neighbors.

That is no doubt why Jesus summed up his whole message in these words:"

"Love the Lord thy God with your whole mind, your whole heart,

and your neighbor as yourself."

And so we pray:

O God help us to "make room for each other"

for the disabled,

the homeless,

the refugee,

for in offering hospitality,

we truly do God's work.

Amen