

October 4, 2020

Jeff's reflection for World Communion Sunday

Henri Nouwen was a Roman Catholic priest. At one point in his life he taught at Yale University. In 1981 he left Yale, and he went to South America for six months, living in Bolivia and Peru.

In Peru, he lived in the home of a family that was poor. They didn't have room for Henri in their house, so he slept on a bed on the roof. After being there for a few months, he told the family members that he would be leaving the next week. However, since he hadn't left yet, they acted as if he was staying.

A week later, on a Saturday morning, Henri, suitcase in hand, stood before the family and told them that he was leaving in one hour. The mother, Sophia, gave one of the children, whose name was Johnny, a bit of money and sent him to the store. As they waited for Johnny to return, Henri looked at this watch. His bus was leaving in 30 minutes. He began to feel nervous.

Suddenly, Johnny was back with a large bottle of Coca-Cola and two cookies. Johnny said, "Let's have a party. He poured the Coke into the family's one glass and then passed the glass to each person to have a sip. He broke the cookies into pieces so everyone could have a piece.

Pablito, Johnny's 13 year old brother, said, "Let's have some music." He pulled out an old record player, put on a record and said, "Let's dance."

Everyone danced and laughed and said goodbye to Henri. Shortly after noon, they picked up Henri's suitcase and everyone walked him to the bus, which was leaving at 12:15.

Nouwen said he realized that they had just celebrated Communion.

The family had celebrated that Henri had been with them, and this was a way of saying 'we love you. Thank you.'

Christian churches celebrate communion. In The United Church of Canada we share some bread and some grape juice, remembering that Jesus shared meals with many people, and that at the last supper he shared with his friends he said, "This bread is my body, broken for you. This cup holds my life, poured out for you. Do this, and remember me."

In communion we remember that Jesus shared God's love with everyone. That he told everyone that they were a loved child of God.'

The first Sunday in October is called World Communion Sunday. Many Christian faith communities, on this Sunday, will share communion. In this time of COVID, many will probably share in their homes with a few family members. As we share communion today, we remember that all of us are loved by God, and that everyone in the world is part of one big community and family of human beings.

So, let's share some food and drink, and give thanks for the love of God in our lives.