

Frequent Communion

These hollyhocks were magnificent—a stretch of brilliant purple and pink blossoms ten feet high. Their eyes met mine as they swayed in the wind—I bowing to theirs.

A house with an unusually blue door caught my eye one day on a walk. I stopped and then took it with me on my walk, all the while wondering why. Did the blue in me meet the blue door?

These are common communions. We find them in the ordinary walks of life. They draw us out of ourselves into some Other. It could be a face on the bus, a zinnia waiting outside the library, a play of light on a wall downtown or simply a piece of bread or a glass of wine. We let ourselves go, not into the way of despair, but hope. We go through a door we didn't know was there just a few seconds before. A meeting happens. We are fed. We feel full; at home; One.

The more frequent these communions, the more human we become. Daily antidotes to dis-eases of the heart, these little communions make sense of life, literally. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have we yet imagined what awaits us on our daily rounds.

In the Gospel of John (9:1), Jesus meets someone born blind—a stand in for all of us. We are all blind from birth; hard of hearing; out of touch with reality; heads so stuffed with junk that we ache for breakthroughs into ourselves—our real selves. A friend of mine gets terrible headaches and when she is freed from them, she says: I feel like a human being again. Ah, yes! But some headaches are with us from birth and won't go away.

Trying to be human ourselves and helping others to be is a constant headache for us. We get stuck in patterns of thinking and feeling, seeing and hearing that don't fit. The pressure hurts. A man came to our rummage sale with a wallet full and his face empty of joy. As he bought his few little items, he shared how bored he was. He didn't know what to do with his life. You could feel his pain.

We seem to live in extremes in this culture. We are either trying to climb out of the pit of boredom or run ragged with too much to do. Multitasking is in. Single minded devotion and attention is not. The writer, Helen Luke, a daily “communicant”, wrote: “Wisdom consists in doing the next thing you have to do, doing it with your whole heart and finding delight in doing it. And the delight is the sense of the sacred.”

The sacred is everywhere not just in certain designated holy places or persons. It happens between us anywhere. If we can but break through our lazy familiarities and our fears of the strange and the never-before, we go to Communion. We see. We hear. We taste and touch. And, yes, we smell the sacred delights of fresh bread, sweet basil, freshly shampooed hair....following our nose.

Going to Communion in the officially recognized sacred places is not *full* Communion unless it awakens us to receive frequent communion everywhere else. Moreover, if we learn to receive communion frequently outside of church, communion in church grows deeper. Let us receive the Body of.....