

Along the track

Doors

Years ago a group of us conducted a census of a large suburban parish. That entailed knocking on every door which brought with it a degree of apprehension, to say the least. What kind of a reaction would I get? Sometimes doors slammed. Sometimes we were greeted by anger, confusion, criticism or just silence. Other times when the door was opened we found a welcome, amazement even and sometimes a cuppa and cake!

In so many ways doors can be a great symbol of life. Philosopher professor Drew Leder wrote:

A door is truly an amazing thing.
Closed it is an agent of separation.
But swing it open and it becomes an invitation,
Uniting what before was separate.

He may have been writing about this passage from Scripture:

Look, I'm standing at the door and knocking. If anyone listens to my voice and opens the door, I'll come in and we'll eat together. Rev 3:20

There are quite a few mentions about doors in Scripture.

Knock and the door will be opened to you Mat 7:7.

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews...
Jn 20:19

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret that secret place; and your Father which sees what you have done in secret shall reward you openly. Mt 6.6

Jesus told a story about a man who knocked on his neighbor's door at midnight and said, "Friend, lend me three loaves because a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him." and he was told by the neighbour to go away. Luke 11:5-13.

Look, I have opened a door in front of you that no one can shut. Rev 3:8

And that is just a sample. So what's the point? There are two huge carved wooden doors at the entrance to one of the great religious houses in Rome, headquarters of one of the largest religious orders in the world. The doors are impressive but they only have a knob on the inside. Only the person inside can

open that door! In a sense, every moment is a doorway, full of promise, full of opportunity. But only I can open that door. I can open doors to welcome people, to welcome life, to welcome the new, to go out into the world. A door can be a sign of our need for time alone, our need for security, safety or it can be a means of shutting out the world. When I go out and close a door, I leave things behind - memories, objects, stuff left undone, things that have made me happy, things I have done well, things I could have done better. I saw this sign on a door recently: Everyone brings joy to this place. Some when they come, others when they leave!

What doorways did I open this year? What doors opened for me? Were they inviting and welcoming, helping me to learn, to grow, to make connections, to discover new things, new ways? Is there one that comes to mind in particular? Did I find doors that were closed to me?

Perhaps it might be timely to ask: 'what kind of a door am I? Jesus told us: I am the door. Jn 10 9. And in many ways, so are we!

What kind of door was I? Was I open and welcoming? Was I a revolving door – in a bit of confusion, a sense of going around in circles perhaps? Perhaps that was due to a hectic schedule or just an inability to decide. A closed door perhaps, keeping others out, blocking out opportunities?

What's on the door? Welcome? Enter at your own risk? Do not disturb? Wipe your feet? Handle with care? Beware of the dog? No trespassing? No longer at this address? In use/busy? Or...

We take things with us as we step into the new – what do you want to take with you? What would you like to leave behind?

During Covid we lived behind closed doors for so long and there has been a lasting legacy from that experience. We value our privacy, we are all individuals, we need space and time to be alone. But we are by nature social beings, individuals yet interdependent. We're built to be with others simply to survive and remain sane. Still more, we need each other for love and meaning because without these there's no purpose to us.

Regards
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