

RELYING ON OTHERS: OUT OF NECESSITY?

I believe the year was 1965. The whole family was down the shore. We were renting a two bedroom upstairs apartment. It was towards the end of August. People were placing end of the season ads to sell things, especially boats. My brother and I were in the market for a boat. We called the person in the ad and set up a time to meet them. My sister's fiancé was driving my dad's car. I was in the middle of the front seat and my older brother was riding shotgun. As we drove south we were in the outer lane of two lanes. We stopped at a red light. On our left a young boy about 11 and his sister about 9 had walked out to the middle of the street and were waiting because the light changed and the traffic started up. What we didn't know was that their younger sister was running out from behind them to join them in crossing the street. As we started up she ran to the middle of the street—and kept going. My brother-in-law-to-be slammed on the breaks and swerved to avoid hitting her but was too late. She stopped and threw up her arms but we hit her. She was about five years old. She went down in a heap immediately and wasn't moving or crying. But she was bleeding from her arm.

We jumped out of the car and went to her. She was not conscious. There was an A&W Root Beer stand right at the intersection. There was doctor there having a soft drink. He ran right down and immediately knew what to do, assessed her as in shock. Got her arm in a tourniquet and elevated her feet. People called the police and rescue squad. We were really shook up. I was maybe 18 years old, my brother 21, my brother-in-law 23. My brother thought we have to get word to our mom and dad. But there were no phones in our rented apartment. Mobile phones didn't exist. My brother told me to go into the Root Beer place and ask to use their phone. I didn't even have money on me. I went inside, told them I was part of the accident outside and had to reach my parents. They brought me behind the counter. I asked for a phone book, looked up the name of the landlord and called. I was successful in reaching them and explained what had happened. My dad had to borrow their car because we were driving his car.

So many people helped us out in that split second where before they had been just enjoying themselves at the shore. So many people reached out to us in that moment of need. So many people turned out to be truly reliable even though they were strangers to us and we to them. The little girl was rushed to the hospital. She was not injured bodily or with a concussion. She did need a lot of stitches to close the wound in her arm. Right after the accident her brother had to go tell their parents

that their daughter had been hit by a car. You can imagine the adrenalin that shot through them as they rushed to the scene but by then the daughter was in much better shape, the rescue squad had arrived and there was some order returning to a scene that had been bedlam only a few moments before.

The innate goodness of people. People will more often than not rise to the occasion when we are in need. You may have been there for others in your own life at different times and I know I have been there for others when they needed and others have been there for me when I needed. I go into all of this for a simple reason. It has to do with Jesus sending his apostles out on mission and telling them that they are not to take a lot of stuff with them. They are to rely on the kindness and care and hospitality of others. More so than they should rely on their own preplanning. But this does not come easily to us, to rely on those we do not know. But Jesus bids us to believe in the kindness and care even of strangers. Even today.

Upon what do you rely? Pretty much yourself and your own planning and provisions? I do that most of the time. But I also know that people are good and they care. We must learn to rely on others and even ask them for their assistance. Many people come here to Saint Anthony's and ask for help each week. We help each one as best we can. We try to be reliable and assisting. Jesus' way of living in this world not only calls on us to love our neighbor but to trust that our neighbor will love us in return. That is not easy to do. It is a grace. And we pray for that grace this summer day.