

January 14, 2018

Psalm 139:1-6,13-18

Mark 1:14-20

Aran Islands, Aran fisherman's sweater

100,000 stiches, lovingly knit, for family

When knitting, thinking about keeping loved
one warm

The knitter could relate to Psalm 139:

“For it was you who formed my inward
parts; you knit me together in my mother's
womb. ... intricately woven in the depths of
the earth.”

God knows us, God has plans for us – plans we
don't always follow

Life doesn't always go as planned, either

Sweater's pattern helps identify the body, in
case the fishing trip does not go as the
fisherman planned

Just as sweater lovingly, intricately knit, so
God intricately knit us, with a plan for us,
individually and corporately

Each gifted, each unique

Yet just **one part of a whole**

The God who knows us, calls us

It is a call to love and serve God

This call to love God is fulfilled when we
follow Jesus

Each one of us is unique, so how we follow,
how, where we choose to place our feet, as
we move forward, will be different

Yet, the motivation should be the same – a
desire to share with the world around us the
love and support we experience in our
relationship with God

Jesus was clear about how we share the love:

- feed the hungry
- welcome the stranger
- visit the sick and those in prison
- clothe the naked

This is a good beginning

It is why we are collecting socks and sweaters
and coats and food

But, following God's call also means being
willing to get to know those who are cold
and in need of warmth

Here I have to preach against my own bulletin cover. It was taken out of context.

I believe whether we love God or not, we are known by God, and it is the “knowing” that is important

God knows us – and loves us anyway, because God knows our heart (which is what Paul was talking about)

If we truly want to share with the world God’s love, it can only happen when we are prepared to go beyond the superficial act of giving – anonymously – and be willing to be open to the other, get to know the other, especially those in need of warm clothes, a place to stay, and heat

This is our calling, this is what WOW – Widen Our Welcome – is all about

If you are like me, you probably feel totally inadequate

I am certain the initial enthusiasm those disciples felt, when first called, soon dissipated into strong feelings of inadequacy

Still, they gave of themselves to the task, and the rest is history.

Giving socks and sweaters and coats and food is a good first step in sharing God’s love with the world

The bigger challenge is dropping our nets, letting go of all the important things that have our lives bound up so tight our anxiety levels are off the scale, and allowing time, to just stop what we are doing and get to know the other – to listen to their story, learn who they are

Not necessarily the homeless of New Bedford but the harried clerk at the grocery store checkout or that irritating neighbor, who might have just lost a loved one (or a job), or anyone of a thousand people, who cross our path

God knows you. Do you know your neighbor?