

29th October 2020

Twinned

“Can two walk together except they be agreed?”

Bible, Amos 3:3

Our toilet is twinned with a latrine in the village of Basak in Cambodia, number 5334 on a list of twinned toilets. I could show you a photograph and give you the GPS coordinates if you like, but maybe that would be too much information. It's enough to say that every time I use the loo I know I'm twinned with someone who's using *their* facilities a long way away.

Do they know about me and my toilet? I suspect not. The twinning arrangement – put in place by <https://www.toilettwinning.org/>, whose tag-line is *We are flushing away poverty, one toilet at a time* – asks me for a donation to help people who need support for the basics of life. I give, others receive, and the “Toilet Twinning” charity makes it happen.

The best of twinings should benefit both sides, so that, in the words of Amos, two can “walk together” in agreement. My community is twinned with the town of Barga in Tuscany, the link between the two being the late John Bellany, a local artist who painted and exhibited in Barga, as well as having a home there. Is that twinning mutually beneficial? I hope so. And what about other villages and towns twinned with locations in France, Africa, the USA, or wherever, as indicated by the road-signs we see around the country? Mutually beneficial? I hope so too.

In his letter to the Galatians, St Paul deals with disputes in the early Church, when people weren't working together for the good of all. In exasperation he writes. “You foolish Galatians!” Oh, you *stupid* people! And he crystallises this in verse 28 of chapter 3 with these powerful words:

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free,
there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

In our common humanity, reinforced by the outworking of the love seen in our Lord, are we not all twinned with one other? *This* is mutually beneficial, where no one is judged, excluded, alienated, or put down – something to ponder the next time I sit down on my twinned toilet!

A prayer for today

Lord, twin me in the bonds of love with people who need loved the most. Amen.

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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