

The Bell

Up the road from my house is a field. As I pass this field, I see the same two horses. They look normal, yet one always follows the other. One day, I decided to stop my car to watch them. And then it struck me: one of the two horses was blind. I assumed the owner had decided not to put the horse down, but instead to make a home for it.

I found myself taken with these two horses, and their quiet parade. I often stopped to watch them, and listening carefully, I could hear a soft ringing. The sound came from a little bell worn by the smaller of the two horses, the horse which could see. The owner had attached a bell to the mare's halter, so the blind stallion would know where she was, and could safely follow her.

The mare would check on the stallion, her blind friend would listen for the bell, and trusting, he would walk slowly to where she stood. In the evening, when they moved to the shelter of the barn, the mare would look back to be sure her friend had not fallen too far behind.

As I watched, I wondered: who am I? Am I like the owner of these horses? Do I help those I lead to support each other? Am I committed to coming alongside others, to help them when they are in need? Or do I "throw people away" because they are different, or they have problems, or for no better reason than they aren't perfect?

Watching these horses, I realize there are times when I am the guide horse, helping others make it through; and, there are times when I am the blind horse, in need of a bell to guide me home. And that we each can be the bell that guides others and gives them hope, even as we listen for the bell which rings for us. While understanding that each person we meet is burdened, or as Plato said, "Everyone we meet is fighting a great battle."