

## Space for whoever is coming

Beloved person,

Do you recognise this? That special moment when you've completed all your preparations and are waiting for your invitees to arrive. The coffee is ready and you've bought some treats. You've tidied up. And now you wait for the doorbell to ring... Something happens when you let someone into your house, because your guest also changes your home. You don't just allow someone into your space, but also into your life. This can be enriching, or uncomfortable and perhaps even painful.

Being hospitable requires you to put yourself in someone else's place, to make space for the 'stranger' and to open your heart. Perhaps then, hospitality is also an exercise in, and an expression of, your faith.

We live in a time in which many relationships seem fleeting. It is easy to choose who we want to associate with, who we follow or unfollow and who we prefer to avoid. Under the pretext of 'good vibes only' we perhaps exclude people who don't deliver for us. A relationship then needs to be something pleasant, energetic and preferably with a measurable result. You give me something, I give you something, and as long as the balance feels good, we stay connected. However, being, remaining and forming a community, works differently. Love works differently. Loyalty works differently.

Of course, boundaries are necessary. Not every relationship is healthy, and you should not let everyone into 'your house'. However, if we only choose for those who validate or energise us, we lose something essential. Then I avoid those for whom I have to make an effort. Generous hospitality means that there is space for untidiness. For incompleteness. For people who think differently or make other choices. Do I allow others to see the untidy aspects of my life?<sup>1</sup>

Hospitality is not just about someone who enters. It also touches on those who we don't see anymore. Sometimes people don't want to visit you, no longer want to be together with you or be part of the same community. I sometimes feel that the sadness about this occupies more space than we suspect, and that it influences our way of seeing and of experiencing, more than we think. Because you miss the people who used to be there previously. Because they made other choices. But you are still there, on that same bench, in a now emptier building or in a community that has become smaller.

Sometimes you have to endure cynical jokes, for example because you are wholeheartedly Apostolic. Sometimes there are issues remaining, as if time has stood still. Sometimes it just hurts that people have left the community (and perhaps you may feel, you too), and that it is no longer possible to fulfil the mutual promises you made to each other in that shared place. You respect their choices, but you miss them, because their departure touches something in you. Mourning is also a part of hospitality because whoever wants to live generously and lovingly should not act as though loss does not matter. An open heart is not hardened. It is precisely those who commit themselves that can be hurt, precisely those who love who can miss someone so very much. In your community, in your family or in other circles that you are part of.

Maybe hospitality shouldn't be limited to those who still do or don't come inside through our own door. If we only look at our own house and our own community, perhaps we only focus on those who are missing. Being generously hospitable means that you continue to make space for people who have chosen differently. You can be hospitable wherever you may be. And if we dare to look a little further, an even greater connection may become visible, namely a world in which we are all only host or hostess, but where we are also guests ourselves.

Imagine that you succeed in – standing on your toes, looking over the familiar wall – investigating a new perspective of 'the community'. A perspective that is not only about our own house and our beloved community, but about everything and everyone that has a place on Mother Earth. What form of hospitality is asked of me? What type of guest am I during my lifetime?

With a warm-hearted greeting, gladly your sister,  
Nanda Ziere



**We gratefully remember those who have gone before us**

<sup>1</sup> See also Marije Roeleveld, 'Gunnen wij het anderen om in ons leven te zijn' (Do we allow others to be in our lives), *Volzin*, April 2025.

A video will be available on May 17 with an explanation of the regional discussions, See: [www.apgen.nl/regiogesprekken2026](http://www.apgen.nl/regiogesprekken2026)