

February 24, 2025

Daily Reflections



OH, BUT FOR THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

"The life I touch for good or ill will touch another life, and in turn another, until who knows where the trembling stops or in what far place my touch will be felt."

FREDERICK BUECHNER, *THE HUNGERING DARK*

Reflection

Some years back, a friend and I travelled to Hawaii, the islands of Oahu and the Big Island. This was the first time I had been back to Oahu in almost forty years and I was hoping to visit the places where I spent part of my childhood. Arriving with anticipation, we stayed at a place right on Waikiki Beach overlooking Fort DeRussy. This area had great significance for me because it was one of the first places I played after arriving in the islands. My deepest desire as a seven-year-old was to shimmy up a coconut tree and there were

plenty around to practice on. Significant landmarks, Waikiki Beach and Fort DeRussy, were easy to find. I wanted to track down the house where I lived in Pearl City and was not sure if we'd able to find the place. I remembered the name of the street we lived on and that the entrance to the housing tract passed by the Pearl City Tavern. This was before the time of easy access to GPS so the search was not going to be easy.

The first morning, we made our way to Pearl City, which is a spread-out, largely residential area. Think needle in a haystack. We drove around and eventually stopped for breakfast. I asked our waitress if she knew where Robinson Avenue was or where we could find the military dependent housing. She looked puzzled but excused herself. After a few moments, an older woman, the restaurant's chef (and grandmother of our waitress), emerged from the kitchen. She introduced herself, and I shared the location we were looking for and asked about the Pearl City Tavern, since that was my navigation point. She said the tavern had closed several years previously and then explained exactly where we needed to go to find Robinson Avenue. We thanked her effusively and made our way following her directions.

Thanks to the woman's kindness in making the time to talk to strangers and lend an assist, we were able to find and explore the magical place of my childhood. The crabbing pier was still there, the sunken Japanese Midget submarine now had a monument, and the view of Pearl Harbor and the Arizona Monument was even more spectacular. What a gift and joyful reunion. "Yet every now and then, miraculously, a kind person appears and is willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference.... Precisely because it entails esteem and respect for others, once kindness becomes a culture within society it transforms lifestyles...." (Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 224)

Thank God for the generosity and kindness of people.



Arizona Memorial in Honolulu
Photo by Tim Mossholder

For Pondering

- Reflect on a time where a stranger has shown you kindness.
 - What were the fruits of that act?
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For Prayer

*Envision that person or persons,
hold them close to your heart of hearts,
and hold them in prayer.*

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