

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm not the world's largest fan of "free" hotel breakfasts. A free breakfast is, of course, better than no breakfast and sounds good in theory. But hopes are dashed with every lift of a chafing dish lid. Rubbery, bland eggs, leaden pastries that couldn't show their faces in Paris, and coffee that simpers rather than shines turn the idea of a hot, delicious morning meal into wishful thinking.



BETSY  
TAYLOR

While on the road recently, staring at my sad suitcase that has shed each and every one of its zipper pulls over the years while debating if I'd left my phone on the nightstand or if it was hiding in the recesses of my shoulder bag, I saw a sight that can invigorate any morning. It was — a baby at breakfast!

Traveler after traveler headed to contemplate oatmeal, yogurt or the ballooning line for the make-your-own waffle machine. But they paused on their way in or to a table to greet the baby. They smiled at the baby. They waved at the baby. A woman a few tables away talked to the baby about her day, or the weather or the cuteness of said baby. All probably wanted a reaction: a light in the baby's eyes, a shy tuck of the chin or, the ultimate reward, the baby's grin and laugh. I don't think there's a better sound.

But it got me thinking, as these human interactions do, about when and why we stop greeting one another in this manner. A baby, this new life (and the biological processes that encourage us to care for children), make us feel some sort of baby camaraderie. We all — or most of us, anyway — feel a little responsible for that baby, for making an infant feel welcome in the world, if only for a

moment. We're the adult ambassadors for society in those minutes, letting that baby know the world can be a welcoming place, that we hope for the best and wish that child well.

It would be odd, right, if we treated everyone this way? You can't go around waving furiously at fellow drivers in traffic, lest your hand gestures get misconstrued, or babble to the person bagging your groceries; it's not going to go over well. But I do think it's worth reflecting on if we can bring a little of that goodwill we offer to a baby to everyone else in our own personal ways; a social nod to our shared humanity.

This issue of *Health Progress* looks at Bridging Divides, and I hope you'll find the authors' inquiries into what unites us illuminating, and perhaps their writings provide a means to reflect on what the work of Catholic health care means for healing in our society.

Issue spoiler alert: As we looked at religious, geographic, economic, racial and ethnic, workplace and other differences, we found plenty of people doing wonderful work to build bridges, from interfaith organizations to policy advocates to the healers and human resources departments in your own environments. Good work is being done all around us to recognize and respect the humanity in one another. So that's a hopeful realization — maybe not as hopeful as waving at babies at breakfast, but not far off.

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