

This week, for your consideration, is a summary of the discussion on future from Sr. Joan Chittister's book, *The Gift of Years – Growing Older Gracefully*. Following the summary are quotations on the burden and blessing of future, a personal reflection, and a call to contemplate meaning in view of your own life, no matter where you happen to be on the journey.

Future

Sr. Joan writes that there are two ways to regard the future. One is to think that because we are old, there are certain things that we can no longer do. The other is to think about the things we have always wanted to do and then choose to do them! As we age, we have a greater awareness of time, and there is a sense of urgency to life. It is now the time for being courageous and being where we are most needed. "This is the time to do every single thing we can possibly do with all the life we can bring to it," says Sr. Joan. The gift of life is sacred, and now is the time to live fully. Share your well-earned wisdom with others.

Burden and Blessing

"A burden of these years is to assume that the future is already over."

"The blessing of these years is to give another whole meaning to what it is to be alive, to be ourselves, to be full of life. Our own life."

Personal Reflection

There is a beautiful poem written by Mary Oliver, called *The Summer Day*, the last line of which is a question: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" This poem evokes a great deal of wondering for me. Although it is a simple question, it becomes more important the older I become. When we are young, we think we know what we want and think we can predict how we will spend our life. Sometimes we even have 5-year and 10-year plans – then, life happens and we may find ourselves needing to change plans, modify our vision, and begin again – only this time, we are wiser and better equipped for the journey. Change takes courage, but a life well spent requires some risk-taking, doesn't it? Now is the time for all of us to ask that question and to pray for the Spirit to guide us to living our "one wild and precious life" with meaning and grace.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

What is one thing that you have always wanted to do? What is keeping you from doing it?

How do you want to live your "one wild and precious life"?

What wisdom can you share with others as we live into the future together?

Warm regards,

Barbara Szulc, Psy.D.

Parish Counseling Services are available upon request. For an appointment, send an email to BSzulc@HGAParish.org. There are no fees; however, Holy Guardian Angels Parish kindly accepts free-will offerings.