

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

This week, for your consideration, is a summary of the discussion on dreams, from Sr. Joan Chittister's book, *The Gift of Years – Growing Older Gracefully*. Following the summary are quotations on the burden and blessing of dreams, 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.

Dreams

Our age reveals the number of years we have lived, but there is no counting of years with regard to the spirit. We have within us a life force, an energy, that does not diminish and keeps us forever young. Even as we age and become less active physically, we can be alert and dynamic. Sr. Joan offers, "To stay alive, fully alive, then, we must open ourselves to life's eternal dream. We must dream to be better people tomorrow than we were today." Just because we age, we do not stop learning; reviewing past experiences helps us to recognize mistakes, to think differently about solutions, and to do everything possible to improve our world for future generations.

Burden and Blessing

"The burden of these years is that we come to think that our dreaming days are over. Then we become mired in the past. We refuse to grow. We make past mistakes the definition of our entire life."

"The blessing of these years is the power to dream and the freedom it takes to bring to the awareness of our world – however small, however bounded it may be – the voice of reflection, of reason, of feeling, of penetrating awareness that comes with having been wrong and setting out to right it."

Personal Reflection

My dream is simply this: that people live their "best" life – one free of unnecessary pain and suffering. All of us have a role in shaping our world in a positive manner – from simple interactions and random acts of kindness to the way we choose to live our lives. We can change the world by reading to a child or planting flowers to attract the bees and butterflies who perform a vital role in pollinating our food crops. To care deeply about everything around us is a spiritual act – to consider and deepen the relationship between God, ourselves and nature fosters the dream of a better world. Mother Teresa said "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love." I am privileged to be able to work with those who seek counseling at Holy Guardian Angels Parish, and invite everyone to find their "one small thing" to do with great love.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

What do you dream for the world?

How will you realize your dream?

Pray for an inspiration to become part of the solution for a better world, and carry out one small action to bring God's great love to those who are in need.

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.