

## ***Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation***

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

### ***Fulfillment***

Sr. Joan writes that “youth is a cauldron of hot issues – career and excitement, dating and mating, succeeding and failing.” During our middle age, those events culminate, and we settle in to the rhythm and busyness of life. As we age, we are less intent, having succeeded and attained much. In many ways, we are ready to meet the new challenges associated with aging. After being ambitious, chasing success, and not having time for much else, we now awaken to wonder and begin to pay attention to the beauty of nature and the comfort of right relationships with God and with others.

### ***Burden and Blessing***

*“A burden of these years is the awareness of all that we missed for so long while we sold our souls to the idols of the time.”*

*“A blessing of these years is the equanimity that comes from knowing that none of the side roads of life were really wasted. Truth is, we learned something invaluable on each of them. We learned that to come to fullness of life it takes absolutely nothing at all beyond the development of the best in ourselves.”*

### ***Personal Reflection***

In the busyness of life, we tend to forget ourselves, thinking only of next steps, events, or challenges. As we slow down the pace of life, we finally have time to address the question of who we are or who we want to be. Aging provides the luxury of time, which allows us to come into the fulfillment of which Sr. Joan writes. We enjoy nature, read for pleasure, pray with our entire soul, listen to music, and revel in the good company of old and new friends. We use our experience and our talents for the benefit of others and grow into the best version of ourselves. Mother Teresa stated, “Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.”

### ***Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation.***

Who do you want to be, and what steps will you take to get there?

Name one small practice that you can try in order to enter more deeply into contemplation, and become more spiritually fulfilled.

Is there a talent you can share with others? What is your small thing done with great love?

Warm regards,

***Barbara Szulc, Psy.D.***

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