

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

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

Productivity

Sr. Joan writes, "To insist on living until we die may be one of life's greatest virtues." Living a full life means not giving up or being satisfied with what we have done. We can always do more, to continue thinking and doing and thriving. Retirement doesn't signal the end of work, only the type of work we do. The work we choose in retirement is important – it is an opportunity to leave the world in better shape than we found it. Now is the time for the work of the soul and we can choose to act in ways that "brings out the best in the world around us." In doing so, we become "co-creators of the world."

Burden and Blessing

"The burden of these years is that we begin to think of ourselves as superfluous simply because we are no longer tied down to a corporate schedule anymore."

"The blessing of these years is that they enable us to change our part of the world in ways that are expressive of us as they are good for others."

Personal Reflection

The career I had enabled me to earn a decent living, purchase a home with my husband, and raise a family. Having achieved those goals, I now find myself in a position to do something different, to focus on the well-being of others in a deeper manner than ever before. I have always volunteered with school, parish, community, and other organizations, but now that the nine-to-five constraints are off, I have greater freedom to co-create a world that offers hope for those who suffer the pain of loss, the difficulties of marriage, and the challenges of relationships. No matter what we choose, or the path we walk, there are those we find along the way that make our journey easier and more meaningful. I am grateful for those who have walked with me, and I continue to seek ways to return that grace by being present to others. May you always have someone to walk with you.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

In what ways have you stopped living? Are there ways to continue living and bringing your talents to the world?

Identify one small need and strive to make it better through your generous action.

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.