

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

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

Sadness

Familiarity comforts us, whereas trying new things, making new friendships or discovering new patterns are a challenge to us, and we often don't want to make the effort to engage in this newness. The familiarity, and comfort that comes with the status quo, is not long-lasting, for it too, fades away. The real sadness in remaining in comfort is that we do not expand beyond what we have always been. There is always more to do to make the world as good as the generations before had made theirs.

Burden and Blessing

"The burden of these years is the desire to give in to the natural sadness that comes with the shifting journey through life, to cling to it in ways that make living in the present a dour and depressing prospect."

"The blessing of these years is the realization that there is still so much for us to do that we have no time, no right, to be sad."

Personal Reflection

When things begin to change, it is easy to become nostalgic about the good old days. Along with this sentiment comes a certain amount of sadness. While we miss those who have gone before us, or the way things used to be, we can overcome some of that longing by recalling all the joy those individuals have brought into our lives over the years. Throughout our lives, we enter into relationship with others – some last a lifetime, others fade with the seasons. However, in every encounter, we have the opportunity to reveal our true selves, and plant seeds of kindness within each heart. We may live to see the results of our planting or we may never know whether the seed will grow. It is good enough to know that we have tried to spread joy, peace and love to the world through our words and actions.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

What causes sadness in your life and how can you find ways to move through it gracefully?

Have you planted seeds of kindness, and did they grow and flourish?

Think about trying something new, and commit to one small practice this month.

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.