

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

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

Time

Time deepens us and allows us to “soften” in the ways we think and interact with others. Sr. Joan writes, “If we watch older people closely, the free ones, the ones who let life come to them rather than trying to wrench it to themselves, we can see it happen right in front of us.” As we grow older, we finally come to realize that time is precious and brings everything into fulfillment, if we use it well. We have time to remember and to understand our choices; we have learned so much, each experience making us stronger and willing to answer the question, ‘What have I become?’”

Burden and Blessing

“The burden of these years is to allow time to hang heavy on my hands, to simply sit and wait for life to be over – as the Irish say, ‘knocking another day out of it till the great day comes.’”

“The blessing of these years is to realize what an important and lively time this final period is. I can, if I will, bring it all together, into the final and very best of me.”

Personal Reflection

I once asked a person what he would want someone to say about him in his obituary, as a way of getting him to think, not about what they had already accomplished, but what he had yet to do. I like this exercise because it allows us to focus on what is most important in life and connect/reconnect to our purpose; it provides the opportunity to consider how we want to live, and how we want to use the time we have left. The person I asked told me I was being morbid, that he couldn't even consider the question, but I still hold that the exercise has value. I think that Sr. Joan's reflection on “time” is along the same lines – becoming our very best selves is one of the final gifts that time offers. Grateful for all that I have, I will continue to use my time to deepen in spirit to become what God truly wants me to be.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

How has time changed you?

How is the Spirit calling you to action these days?

Consider the words of poet Mary Oliver, “Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”

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.