

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

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

Joy

Retirement calls forth a decision: we can live in bitterness over all the things we didn't achieve or that we gave up in order to achieve; or we can choose to live with joy, where life will fully pour in, if we let it. Moving into a period of life in which schedules are wide open with possibilities, we can certainly appreciate and be grateful for all that it took to get to this point, we can celebrate what we have learned and what we have become. We can also begin to experience the freedom to learn to continue to grow and to become our very best selves. We also have the opportunity to help others discover new ways of living joyfully, too.

Burden and Blessing

"A burden of these years is to fail to get beyond the bitterness of having been displaced, and to not see that being moved quietly off all the platforms of life is also to be free of the statecraft that goes with them."

"The blessing these years is to wake up one morning and find ourselves drunk with the very thought of being alive. Then, wherever we go we will spread the joy we have finally been able to find in ourselves."

Personal Reflection

When I was young, my mother and I took daily walks, sometimes my brother and sister would come along, but often, it was just me and my mother. We lived in the city with lots of concrete and fewer trees than most areas, but I remember the way my mother pointed out flowers with a sense of delight and joy as she noticed their beauty.



The gift of being attentive to the beauty around me, given on those walks, is something for which I continue to be grateful. While walking with my grandson recently, I witnessed the gift passing to him, as

he laid down on the ground in front of us to get a better look at the ants busily working between the cracks in the sidewalk. Joy sprung from deep within, and the feeling remains with me as I recall the memory. It is a great joy to notice and enjoy God's beautiful creation and to help others to discover its beauty as well.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

When do you experience joy? With whom do you share it?

What do you notice in the little things around you?

What joy have you discovered that resides within your heart?

How will you spread that joy to others?

Warm regards,

Barbara Szulc, Psy.D.

Parish Counseling Services are available upon request. For an appointment, send an email to BSzulc@HGAParish.org. No fees will be assessed, however, free-will offerings to Holy Guardian Angels Parish are kindly accepted.