

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

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

Transformation

Sr. Joan writes, "There is an important part of the aging process that lies in simply getting accustomed to being older." This new phase of life, in a culture that focuses on youth, tempts into hiding rather than celebrating our age. We stay fit, use anti-aging creams, and eat right, but that only impacts how we look. Transformation is about our outlook on life, not our physical appearance. What we value is of greater importance at this moment in time. Upon reflection we come to the realization that we did not become who we are in isolation, rather there were many who helped along the way. With grace and wisdom, it is our responsibility to help others along their way. It is a time to become the people God intends for us to be, and time to trust that God will guide us on our path.

Burden and Blessing

"A burden of these years is the possibility that I might stay more buried in my losses than aware of my gains."

"A blessing these years is the transformation of the self to be, at long last, the self I have been becoming all my life – an oasis of serenity in a world gone sour on age, the very acme of life."

Personal Reflection

I love being surprised when someone tells me their age. I never guess correctly, and usually underestimate a person's age. At 63, I don't think of myself as old, but in some circles, I am. However, as I approach retirement, I now feel a sense of freedom unknown to me before. I will live more deeply, care more intensely, and experience joy more fully. My schedule is my own to determine, and I will fill it with activities that help me nourish myself so that I may serve others. I have said this before, I truly want to help people live a good life, one that is free of unnecessary suffering. As parish psychologist, I am available to meet with you to talk, and more importantly, to listen. Send me an email, and we can schedule a time to talk (bszulc@hgaparish.org).

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

What do you find difficult about being the age you are?

Recall an event that transformed you, and reflect on the change that occurred because of it.

How might you live more fully, by sharing your story/gifts with 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.