



*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

The author of these words, Qoheleth, didn't have the rosier view of life. In fact, he's rather depressing. But he does make a point, even if it's not one we're excited to hear, namely, everything has an end.

*a time to be born, and a time to die;  
a time to plant, and a time to pluck-up what is planted;  
a time to kill, and a time to heal;  
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
etc.*

You get the idea. Not something to make one go dancing about the room. Nonetheless, for those of my generation, the Turtles made a song of it: "To everything, (turn, turn, turn); there is a season (turn, turn, turn), and a time for every purpose under heaven...." And that became something of a hit!

Well, we are at one of these kinds of time. Perhaps we could add to Qoheleth's list "a time to begin work, and a time to retire." And this is my time. It's time for me to say farewell.

Retirement was tucked away in a corner of my mind until very recently. About a year ago, my body told me I no longer had the stamina I thought I had. I've known for years that my stamina level was dropping, but I wasn't prepared for my body letting me know I was heading toward empty.

Of course, I refused to accept that and pushed on. Then the body pulled the plug on my energy level. I couldn't argue with that, so I asked the Archbishop for permission to retire. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was pooped!

Retirement presents a whole new way of life for me. Last November, I attended a retreat specifically geared to those of us approaching retirement. It was during this retreat that the idea of purchasing a condominium was presented as a better idea than asking some pastor if I could move into his rectory. I would be living there at the will of the pastor. And if the pastor changed his mind, or a new pastor be assigned and he didn't want me in the house, I would have to move. The image of me having to move at the age of 80 popped into my mind and that led me to buy the condo.

But living in a condo will be the first time since I've been 20 that I will not be living in some ecclesiastical housing attached to a church. My new neighbors may not be Catholic or even Christian. And there's no church next door. This past year living alone in 1144 Harrison Ave. has taught me how to live alone which is a help. But I no longer belong to a Catholic community.

The one thing Qoheleth failed to mention was the one and very important component of life: the continuous presence of God who does not change and who will never leave. At times of uncertainty in my life the words my mother said to me when going through a time of upheaval in an early time in my life: "if God has not abandoned you before, why do you think he will now?" I bless that woman for her advice. Like the Lord asleep during the storm that scared the Apostles to death, he is still with me and will get me through to the new life he's calling me to.

It has been my privilege to serve this community. I was honored to bring Holy Guardian Angels to birth. I wish you well as you step into your own new future. If God has not abandoned you up to now, he will not walk away from you in the future. As Pastor Emeritus of Holy Guardian Angels, I will be keeping up with what's going on at HGA. There is much left to do and I know you can deal with whatever comes along. May God bless and keep you; may he hold you in his hands and give you peace.

Vayan con Dios.

*Fr. Denis*