

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

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

Spirituality

Growing older invites us to a different way of living. For a variety of reasons, we are unable to repair or redeem family disagreements, broken friendships or angry words, but does that mean our lives were a waste? Sr. Joan writes, "Only if we mistake the meaning of the last period of life. This time of life is not meant to solidify us in our inadequacies. It is meant to free us to mature even more." This time of life calls us to look inward, to face ourselves and look realistically at what we have been and then to decide what we will do about it in the present moment. Will we be more charitable, caring, and merciful? Will we be honest with ourselves and others?

Burden and Blessing

"A burden of these years is the danger of giving in to our most selfish selves."

"The blessing of these years is the opportunity to face what it is in us that has been enslaving us, and to let our spirit fly free of whatever has been tying it to the Earth all these years."

Personal Reflection

I have a tendency to hold a grudge; this is not something that makes me proud, and it is difficult to publicly admit, but I have worked determinably over the years to understand and change this behavior. Holding a grudge keeps one tethered to a wrongdoing or hurt or injustice, and it focuses solely on the offended. Better to resolve it to understand the real issue at the center of a problem, and become more self-aware of the ways in which we view ourselves, others, and the world. By refusing to rest in anger or grief, we learn to take into consideration other points of view, circumstances, feelings, and attitudes, and become more compassionate toward ourselves and others. A deep and honest look at our personal shortcomings enables spiritual growth and engenders change that benefits ourselves and those we encounter on this journey of life.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

Engage in self-reflection. What burdens are you aware of carrying and how can you free yourself of them in order to live more fully?

How do you resist the temptation to remain unchanged?

Find one small way to deepen your spirituality and share it with those around you.

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.