

Aging Gracefully - An Invitation to Contemplation

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

Newness

As we age, the issue is not that change is occurring, it is our attitude toward it that will make the difference. Does our life have meaning, or is it just the next step on the way to the end? The great thing about approaching this stage of life is that it is free of feeling that we “must” or “should” do something. It can be a time of giving ourselves to others, of knowing ourselves more deeply. If you look with intention, you can see the needs of others so apparent in our world today. Sr. Joan provides examples of how to engage with newness for ourselves and others: learn another language, bake for someone, start a book club or simply enjoy life with good conversation. The only thing necessary is to choose newness, and in it, offer a gift to the world.

Burden and Blessing

“A burden of these years is the feeling of finality that comes from knowing that this time, however much of it is left, is the end time. Then the weight of what is left to be finished in us takes its toll.”

“A blessing these years is that we can, if we will, make them something glorious, a kind of shooting star across the sky of the human race.”

Personal Reflection

I realize that as I lived, I was actually filling a basket with various experiences, joys, sorrows and wisdom, although I was not conscious of it. Perhaps I never took time to appreciate what was inside that basket, but slowly I have come to realize it is overflowing, spilling out in many directions of my life. I admit to daydreaming about these years and thinking how wonderful it would feel to kick back and relax. Now I am here, excited about playing on the floor with my grandchildren; reading for pleasure, not work; and taking time to connect with old friends. There is a new type of energy in my life and a renewed desire to draw from that basket of blessings, sorrows, joys, and experiences, and share them with others. As it probably happens with most of us, my life will be as busy and full as I want it to be, and I pray that the Holy Spirit will guide me as I experience the new freedom that comes with retirement.

Invitation to Personal Reflection and Contemplation

What gives you energy?

Name one thing you have always wanted to learn more about, but didn't have time.

Can you choose to engage with others by joining a group in your parish or community?

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.