

Life is a Gift to be Savored

(Slow down, you move too fast—Words from the 59th Street Bridge Song or Feelin' Groovy)

REFLECTIONS FROM FR. ROSS

Well, Spring has sprung, we are well into Daylight Savings Time, Holy Week is already in the past, and we find ourselves in this special time of Easter. How the time goes so fast! As I advance in age, it seems that time speeds up also. The familiar refrain is, "The older you get, the faster time goes." I wonder how much of that is due to the fact that we seem to get busier and busier.

As we find ourselves in this season of the Paschal Mystery, perhaps we can all make an effort to slow down and try to savor its meaning. The events of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection zero in on a very important truth about entering into the mystery of life. We know we cannot escape suffering and death. Knowing this we need to face them to see how they mesh with the Passion and death of Jesus. While at first glance they might seem to be negative, united with Jesus we will have the grace, strength and courage to allow them to have a positive impact in our lives.

Our society has a tendency to devalue the meaning of suffering in our lives. Unless we are willing to suffer for another, we cannot say that we truly love the other. Suffering, the kind connected to loving someone, makes us who we are. No sane person seeks it, wants it or invites it—but it comes. We try to alleviate it, of course, but sometimes all we can do is to enter into it and try to make it count. Until we experience adversity, we don't really know who we are or what we are made of. If all is going smoothly all of the time we will never grow.

But how do we accept suffering and avoid bitterness? When it comes our way we embrace it and see it as the cost of love and discipleship. We come to realize our mortality and that sooner or later we are going to die. But even in our death there is life because Jesus was willing to take the sins of the world upon himself and embrace his Passion with a passionate love for each of us and all God's people. In freely accepting his death, he knew how to be fully alive. That is our goal; that is what makes all the pieces of our lives come together; that is how we can put suffering in some kind of positive perspective. If we are to be total followers of Jesus, we too accept suffering and death, so that we may be fully alive and enjoy the dance of life. Rule #1—take it slow!

I came across the following poem which invites us to slow down and take some time to reflect on the things that happen around us and how easy it is to miss all that is out there. May we always remember that it is in our being together that we will find what we truly need and want, and become those people that God intends us to be:

SLOW DANCE

*Have you ever watched kids
On a merry-go-round?
Or listened to the rain
Slapping on the ground?
Ever followed a
Butterfly's erratic flight?
Or gazed at the sun into
The fading night?
You better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.*

*Do you run through each day
On the fly?
When you ask "How are you?"
Do you hear the reply?
When the day is done
Do you lie in your bed
With the next hundred chores
Running through your head?
You'd better slow down
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.*

*Ever told your child,
We'll do it tomorrow?
And in your haste,
Not see his sorrow?
Ever lost touch,
Let a good friendship die
Cause you never had time
To call and say "Hi"?
You'd better slow down.
Don't dance so fast.
Time is short.
The music won't last.*

*When you run so fast to
Get somewhere
You miss half the fun of
Getting there.
When you worry and hurry
Through your day,
It is like an unopened gift...
Thrown away.
Life is not a race.
Do take it slower
Hear the music
Before the song is over.*

