

Reflections with Sharon

Thank God for life

Read John 10:1-10

When for one reason or other, the threat of death lunges at us, we instinctively find ourselves fighting with all our might to hold on to life. In a flash, we realize just how short and precious life is, because inherent in all of us is the will to live. It does not matter how bad things are, people love life. People will complain of hard times, rising costs, poor conditions, ongoing struggles, increasing uncertainties and even pain and sickness, but nobody wants to die. Everybody, or at least most people, wants to live.

The will to live is something that I find both mysterious and fascinating. We all know of people who have suffered the most horrendous things, but have refused to just give up and die. We've heard stories of people who have survived fires, extreme cold, beatings, shark attacks, bear attacks, torture, injustice, ailments, loss, imprisonment, abuse and every conceivable kind of difficulty, but still they cherish life and recognize it as a sacred gift from God. What an indictment to those of us who have a relatively wonderful life, but like spending our time griping and complaining whenever things do not go our way!

I like it when I ask someone how he or she is doing and the person replies, "Thank God for life." That tells me that this person has a right perspective on things. So when my attitude toward life begins to get lackadaisical, I know it's time that I shape up. Having great plans and good intentions are wonderful, but that's not enough; I have to take the bull by the horns and live life zestfully, for whatever my lot, this is my life. Life is lived every single day; it's not standing in the shadows waiting patiently for a sign indicating that I'm ready. That's why if I don't hurry up and get my act together, before I fully realize what's happening, time will run out and the life I had always been intending to live will remain an intention.

Sometimes it takes a close encounter with death to shake us up and make us see how sweet and valuable life is. All of a sudden, we gain fresh appreciation for the simple pleasures of being able to see and hear and taste and smell and touch and move. We see the beauty of the world around us with new eyes. Our relationships become more meaningful as we take time to really listen, to love, to care, to reach out, to forgive, to restore, to support, to encourage and to be a blessing. A spirit of thankfulness replaces our grouchy disposition; a ready smile chases away our ugly frown and whenever someone asks how we're doing, our ready answer is "Thank God for life."