

## Becoming an Elderling

Don't fuss about getting old. Just remember the alternative! As an elderling you notice that a new foggy memory is an improvement over the crisp, almost photographic memory you took for granted as a teen. Everyone is forgiving when you forget to do what someone told you to.

Often when someone is angry with you, a day later you can't remember what they said or what you said. In the past you may have carried the pain of insults around as if it were important and if someone hurt you deeply enough, you never forgot or forgave. Because memory is poor now, words and images pass through instead of sticking—and every day seems new. You are never bored or hold grudges now. When busy gathering compliments and trying to avoid upsetting people or getting upset, you may not have noticed the flowers,

children, animals, clouds or lightning the way you do now.

Perhaps your vision isn't what it used to be but slight distortions make it easier to see the faces of departed loved ones. You don't see dust in anyone's home. People may look more beautiful now because faces and features soften. Flaws once you tried so hard to overlook in yourself and others—you cannot see at all.

Ears fail to hear small talk or whispered insults or gossip. Missing the nuance when someone smiles but speaks in a hostile way makes sarcasm sound like compliments. Not hearing acutely, you discover it doesn't matter as much as you once thought when someone mumbles curses. As time dims the perfection of sight and hearing, you see deeper and hear all the way into the hearts of others.

Attachment is illusory because it means trying to hold and keep that which was never ours in the first place. Even our bodies do not belong to us. That is why the body gets left behind when it gets broken or completely worn out. As an elderling, we have the opportunity to turn our eyes from the bright sights and loud sounds of this physical existence to the silence found within us when the echoes of outside die away!

*Editor: Jane Zoltek, ssj-tosf*



*Namaste!*

## *Tidbits...*

\*On a church bulletin board: If you don't like the way the cookie crumbles, try the Bread of Life.

\*There is plenty of heavenly music for those who are tuned in.

\*God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts.

\*Too many folks use their religion as they do a bus—they ride it only when it's going their way.

\*There are too many people practicing religion today, and not enough people who are good at it.

\*The Lord is my Pace-setter, I shall not rush. He makes me stop and rest for intervals. He provides me with images of stillness which restore my serenity. Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruits of my hours. For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord and dwell in his house forever.

\*The shortest distance between two people is the right word.

\*What makes you tick sometimes needs rewinding.

\*When Jesus brings you the bread of life, take down the recipe!

\*Sign on editor's desk: NEVER BE REDUNDANT—NEVER, NEVER, NEVER.

## Every Season Of Life A Gift

At the conclusion of the 1999 International Year of Older Persons, Pope John Paul II wrote a heartwarming letter to his elderly brothers and sisters in which he encouraged them to see “every season of their lives as a gift” and to “live with serenity the years that the Lord has granted them.”

“Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty if we are strong, and most of them are fruitless toil, for they pass quickly and we drift away.” *Ps 90-10* Seventy years was an advanced age when the Psalmist wrote these words, few people lived beyond it. Nowadays, thanks to medical progress and improved social and economic conditions, life expectancy has increased significantly in many parts of the world. Still, it remains true that the years pass quickly and the gift of life, for all the effort and pain it involves, is too beautiful and precious for us ever to grow tired of.

I find great peace in thinking of the time when the Lord will call me from life to life! And so I often find myself saying, with no trace of melancholy, this prayer: “At the hour of my death, call me and bid me come to you.” This is the prayer of Christian hope which in no way detracts from the joy of the present while entrusting the future to God’s gracious and love care.

The deepest yearning of the human heart is Grant that I may lovingly accept your will and place myself each day in your merciful hands.

And when the moment of my definitive “passage” comes, grant that I may face it with serenity, without regret for what I shall leave behind. For in meeting you, after having sought you for so long, I shall find once more every authentic good which I have known here on earth, in the company of all who have gone before me marked with the sign of faith and hope.

*A story is told about a cleaning woman in 19th century England who chose as her epitaph: “Don’t weep for me now, friends. Don’t weep for me never more. I’m going to do nothing for ever and ever.” Source Unknown*

“A Blessed Easter to each of you! My wishes for you this Easter: Good health, Good fortune and a fulfilling life. HAPPY EASTER!”



### *Wit and Wisdom*

\*God gives us the ingredients for our daily bread, but HE expects us to do the baking.

\*Just heard a new definition of eternity. It’s the length of time it takes to pay off your credit cards.

\*A Bible that is falling apart probably belongs to someone who isn’t.

\*Keep your temper. Nobody else wants it.

\*A coincidence is a small miracle in which God wishes to remain anonymous.

\*Did you hear the one about the guy who put on a clean pair of socks every day? By the end of the week he couldn’t get his shoes on.

\* Not what I get, but what I give. This is the gauge by which I live. Not merely joys that come my way, but the help I give to others today. Not the rewards of money and fame, but the burdens I carry in Jesus’ name. May this be my pay at the end of the day. Not what I keep, but what I give away.

PEACE

*Is seeing a sunset—and knowing WHO to thank.*