

Monday 3rd Week Ordinary Time January 22, 2018 St. Agnes Church

What is life? I hope you brought a pillow and a snack. This is going to take me a while.
 We have crossed over into a new liturgical year, a new counting of days
 based on the time it takes the earth to rotate around the sun.
 At this new beginning, these early days of “ordinary” time as the Church calls it,
 it is fitting that we ponder basic truths and foundational principles of our faith.

The question “What is life?” falls into this category.
 I can’t say I have the ultimate answer or even the best of answers
 but I do want to attempt this morning to explore what we often take for granted.
 I will approach the subject of life not so much from a philosophical perspective
 as from a theological, a faith perspective.
 I just want to jump into the fray, so to speak...make observations rather than argue about definitive truth.

As I see it...life movement. It is change. It is growth and development. It is experience.
 It is more than biological existence. It is more than breathing air and taking food.
 It is more than mere survival. It is more than just chemistry.

In general I can say that life is wonderful. It is amazing. It is a mystery. It is precious.
 Life is good. Life is ordered. It is not an accident. It is intentional.
 I believe God creates life. God sustains life.
 I also conclude that life is threatened by forces that are evil,
 forces of chaos, destruction, darkness.

Life depends upon breathing, an exchange with the environment.
 What is needed is taken into a living organism; by-products are expelled.
 The observation is that when breath (and blood) leave the body, life seems to lessen.
 So much breath and so much blood is required to sustain life.

A distinction can be made between human life and non-human life.
 Human life in its natural, unaltered state, entails thought, will and emotion.

Life is; it is being. It is more than what one has physically. It is more than mobility.
 It is more than health. It is more than intellect. It is more than consciousness.

We attempt to localize life in some part of the body.
 We say that the center of life is the heart or the mind. But this is a reduction.
 If there is a center to life it is the soul that is the center...and the soul is more than the heart or mind.
 The soul can be said to be a possession of the whole body.
 However, if you lost your finger in an accident, you don’t lose part of your soul as a result.
 The call of faith is a call to true life, the life intended by God.
 Salvation has to do with being rescued from anything that might hamper
 the development and living of life like death and sickness, like unbelief and sin.

Here is the paradox of our faith: Jesus tells us that we achieve full life only when we cease clinging to
 it...when we find it in loss and sacrifice. This goes beyond the birds of the air and the lilies of the field.
 To offer up our life for some greater good is something the birds and the flowers do not do.
 The life Jesus is talking about is experienced by those who are freed from trying to preserve their life.
 Think of money. It can be saved or it can be spent. Life finds fulfillment when it is spent.

Life is individual. It is also communal.
Each life is unique, non-repeatable, and has intrinsic value.

Life is given. I did not choose to be born. I did not choose my family or my circumstances.
However, I can choose how my life is lived.

And there you have it...a 4 minute treatise on life according to Msgr. Don Enzweiler.
I hope it adds something good to your life.

Today's prayer: "O Lord, thank You for the gift of life. Help me to live it well. Amen!"