

Make Full Use Of Your Today - by Sr. Margaret Dorgan, DCM

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MAKE FULL USE OF YOUR *TODAY*

What does the future hold for me? Where will this *today* take me? These are questions pressing on every human consciousness although many of us try to brush them aside. Maybe we say, "It's too weighty a matter to occupy the mind. Squeeze as much enjoyment as you can out of the present."

Saints agree that the present is a sure value we possess, but they tell us to shape it not just for where it is but also for where it can take us. If human life moves forward without a goal in view, it can use up its energy on worthless pursuits. Sometimes we hear the lament, "I wish I could live some parts of my life over again."

The treasure of time can't be put into a bank account and left there to be drawn on later. The moments we have in our possession have to be used as they arrive. We can spend them wisely or throw them away heedlessly. In the second reading for the First Sunday of Advent, St. Paul declares in his letter to the Romans, "Brothers and Sisters, you know the time. It is the hour now for you to awake from sleep. For our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed....Let us conduct ourselves properly" (Rom 13:11,13).

Advent is a season that wants to teach us unforgettable lessons about time. An eternal Person enters into the boundaries of the temporal. The everlasting and unchanging divine Logos is sent by the Father to be subject to the ongoing movement of human existence. Why would He do this? Here is a question we can ponder without ceasing and find ourselves digging deeper and deeper into the ineffable that challenges our comprehension. But of this much we can be sure: Love for us imperfect and fault-prone creatures initiated the Incarnation. "God so loved the world as to give God's only Son" (Jn 3:16).

Jewish prophets in wonder foresaw the One Who was to come. Some of the mystery was unveiled for them, but we who arrive many years afterwards are the recipients of far more. A later century receives God in a human body. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). "Raise a glad cry, you heavens. The Lord has done this. Shout, you depths of the earth. Break forth, you mountains into song. You forest, with all your trees" (Is 44:23). Isaiah's song is on our lips with even greater joy, for what he prophesied was fulfilled in the thirty-three years of Jesus' life.

Now all earthly time carries the radiance of a Redeemer whose feet touched our ground. He experienced every today flowing from yesterday and moving into tomorrow. And He wants us to recognize how that stream of successive instants carries us onward, each one offering a special grace. We take hold of the moments

as He did when He undertook the temporal passage of His life among us. Salvation has been granted to a human race in need of rescue from sinfulness. As inhabitants of a world that received the Father's only-begotten Son, we breathe with a freedom the Jewish prophets could only envisage. Whatever happens, though much of it seems enveloped in darkness and suffering, is marked by a Redeemer's saving touch. In especially hallowed moments, He feeds us with Himself in the Eucharist.

We say to God with the psalmist "You have given me Your saving shield. Your right hand has upheld me and you have stooped to make me great" (Ps 19:35). With Jesus as our Brother, born of the Virgin Mary, our Mother, we are of precious worth, called to be holy. This is not a task we try to accomplish on our own.

Paul speaks to us as he did to the first-century Colossians, "You are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved." Having been chosen, how do we view the time assigned to us? Paul explains, "Clothe yourselves with heartfelt mercy, with kindness, humility, meekness, and patience" (Col 3:12). So much of the world is torn apart by dissension and violent anger –not just the wider world but the smaller ones we inhabit.

Jesus, Who came first to Bethlehem, gives us a model to repair what is torn apart in human relationships . Following His example, St. Paul urges us, "**Bear with one another, forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. Over all these virtues put on love, which binds the rest together**" (Col 3: 13-14).

At each new dawning, let us dedicate the oncoming hours to such love.

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