

Bishop's Message for January 2008

“Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day”, the hymnist Henry Lyte wrote. Nouwen said it this way: “Lord, life passes by so swiftly!” And Nouwen goes on to ask why he is continuously trapped by a sense of urgency and emergency? Good question. I would venture to guess that many of us are trapped by that same sense. The urgent and the emergent often preoccupy us – to the exclusion of the important. A parent wonders: “Where was I when that son of mine was growing up?” A spouse ponders: “When did my partner start thinking that way?” The matters that a few years ago kept us totally preoccupied are now vague memories. Conflicts that a few months ago seemed so crucial now seem hardly worth the energy. The sleep lost a few weeks ago to inner turmoil while mulling over who-knows-what is now a strange emotion of the past. Ideas that amazed a few days ago don't hold the same fascination anymore. Thoughts that captivated a few hours ago have been replaced by others. Why are we so slow to learn from this insight?

Nouwen prays: “O Lord, you are eternal, your kingdom lasts forever, and for you a thousand years are like one day. Let me enter into your presence, and there taste the eternal, timeless love with which you invite me to let go of my time-bound anxieties, fears, preoccupations and worries. ‘Seek first the kingdom’, you said, ‘and all these other things will be given you as well.’” All that is time-bound will show its real meaning when we look from the place God wants us to be – the place of undying love. (*See Mornings With Henri J.M. Nouwen, Servant Publications, Ann Arbor, MI. 1997*)

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