

AGE DOES NOT ALWAYS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

This past Thursday night I went up to the hospital to visit one of my parishioners who had recently had gall bladder surgery. When I got off the elevator on the fifth floor, I immediately saw a woman I knew from my daughter's basketball days. I said hello to her as I came off the elevator and proceeded down the hall to see my parishioner.

After my visit, when I made my way back down the hallway to the elevator, I encountered this same woman still standing there. This time I stopped and asked if one of her parents happened to be in the hospital. I was caught by surprise when she told me it was actually her youngest daughter who had a gall bladder attack earlier that day, and she was scheduled for surgery the very next morning. I found it so interesting to encounter two people that night dealing with the same medical issue. The parishioner I visited is a senior, while this girl who played basketball against my daughter is just 19 years of age. When it came to having their gall bladders removed, age did not make a difference with these two individuals.

We are often of the opposite view— that age does make a difference. This is true in many instances. It always amazes me to see in sports like hockey and baseball that when athletes hit their thirties, their skills begin to diminish. We sometimes hear broadcasters say a hockey team is getting slower, even though the average age on the team might be just 29 years.

Age can start making a difference when it comes to an athlete's skills, but for most of us it can also factor into our looks. Apparently, this is not the case when it comes to my wife Nadine. I had a doctor's appointment on Monday, and our physician commented after seeing Nadine the week before how she has not changed in looks over all of these years. I made the mistake of asking the doctor if she had the same opinion when it came to me. In her professional view I have changed in looks with age. While I may have changed in looks with age, I have not minded qualifying for some senior discounts that I was not eligible for when I was younger.

In certain areas of life, age certainly has made a difference. One area in my life I might argue that age has not made a difference would be with respect to my need for naps. Obviously, I napped a lot as a baby and infant, but this need has not changed as I have aged. Some days I can have a nap after lunch and enjoy another one after supper, too.

Coming across two people with gall bladder issues on Thursday night was a reminder to me that, when it comes to things like our physical health, age

may not play a factor. This reminder got me reflecting how age does not make a difference either when it comes to spiritual health and well-being. We see several examples in scripture where God uses people regardless of their age in order to do His will. In the miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, it was a young boy who gave his lunch of 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish to the disciples that Jesus blessed and fed the crowd with. In Genesis we learn that Noah was 600 years old when he finished building the ark for God. Scripture makes it very clear in these and other examples that age does not disqualify us nor make a difference when it comes to serving Him.

John came to understand that age does not make a difference when it comes to matters of faith and addressed this in one of his letters:

I am writing to you who are God's children because your sins have been forgiven through Jesus. I am writing to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I am writing to you who are young in the faith because you have won your battle with the evil one. I have written to you who are God's children because you know the Father. I have written to you who are mature in the faith because you know Christ, who existed from the beginning. I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God's words live in your hearts, and you have won your battle over the evil one. (1 John 2:12-14)

John was writing to believers of all ages here to show them that one's age does not make a difference when it comes to having one's sins forgiven, winning the battle with temptation, knowing the Father better through Christ, and finding strength from one's faith and trust. I was reminded last Thursday night that age does not make a difference when it comes to being blessed with prayer. I did not go see the young woman who needed her gall bladder removed because she was sleeping at the time. That did not stop me from saying a prayer as I walked toward my car. I prayed two prayers for healing that night despite the age gap between the two people— another reminder of how age does not make a difference when it comes to matters of our spiritual health and well-being.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean