

Spending Our Time

Last week I found myself waiting for a routine test at Northwestern Hospital, surrounded by a variety of people in the same boat: waiting for our number to be called. Yes, we were all a number.

For a brief moment, the reality of time invaded my consciousness, for I realized that all of us sitting in that waiting room were vulnerable, facing the uncertainties of life. The results of my test were just fine, but until I actually discovered that, I thought about time and how quickly it moves and how much of it I waste. I couldn't help but think some people sitting around me would get news that would change their lives forever.

The gospel awakens us to the harsh reality that time can slip away in busyness, worry, or just plain indifference, not really caring about the direction one's life is taking. That "thief in the night" can rob us of the chance to change the course our lives are taking by letting God grab a hold of our hearts and change how we experience the passing of time.

So many of us live in a world of counting the minutes, hours, days, weeks and months...we live by the calendar and appointment book, and the digital reminder of the exact time as we keep glancing at our smart-phones and tablets. Advent awakens us to experiencing a transformation in how we experience time, from counting, or "chronos" to "kairos" which means a moment of transformation that alters our lives in a significant way.

My experience in the waiting room went from counting time, looking at my watch, becoming apprehensive to seeing a deeper reality in that waiting room. As I saw all of us in all



When God is forgotten, we can never experience meaning and depth of heart; we live on the surface, going through the motions, even with our religious ritual and practice.

our vulnerability, sitting in those ridiculous hospital gowns tightly rapped around our bodies to preserve some semblance of dignity, I came to a new awareness that we are all in this together and we have to "seize the moment" for time is a gift to be treasured and never to be taken for granted.

The people referred to in the Gospel at the time of Noah lost a sense of God's presence in the eating and drinking and marrying, realities which are good in and of themselves, only when they are rooted in meaning and purpose. In all of the ordinary realities of life God has to be central for it is in these very ordinary slices of life that God can transform our lives.

When God is forgotten, we can never experience meaning and depth of

heart; we live on the surface, going through the motions, even with our religious ritual and practice.

Advent reminds us of the importance of treasuring time and awakening to the reality that Christ has not only come to us 2,000 years ago by being born in a stable but that he comes *now*, in the ordinary events of life and will return sometime in the future to completely end chronological time.

How are *you* experiencing time? Is your life moving too quickly and is time just slipping away in endless activity? Do you have a sense that your life is moving in a certain direction that gives you hope?

Sitting in that waiting room at Northwestern these questions were surfacing but God entered my thoughts and my perception changed.

In an unlikely place I was surprised and left the hospital with hope, not even knowing the results of my test.

God is waiting for us, whenever and wherever we find ourselves, to encounter His Presence in such a way that we know with certainty that our lives are a part of God's plan.

— Fr. Frank, Homily, 1st Sunday in Advent (12-1-2013)