

Along the track

On Eagles' Wings

I was recently talking to a car salesman when a call came through. "I'll have to take this", he said. "She rings just about every day expecting her new vehicle to be here." Despite ordering it months ago, the vehicle, a very up market campervan, had not even been built yet. She was getting more and more anxious as she wanted it as a surprise for her husband's upcoming ninetieth birthday. She was only eighty-eight and they planned to travel around Australia for some months, if not longer.

How do you feel about the future, your future? Are you full of hope or do you despair? I have been to a few reunion gatherings of late and many of them feel that the best of life is over. I don't.

What helps is watching the young grow. Dropping grandchildren at school can be a rejuvenating experience. It is wonderful to see such joy, energy and excitement. It is their enthusiasm and openness to learn that inspires. They remind us that we were like that once, so why not now? Why should they have all the fun? Isaiah could be a very demanding prophet and pretty tough at times. On the other hand he had this message:

Those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31

What a great image – soaring on the wings of eagles and the freedom and joy that conjures up. Hope is not some fanciful dream of what might be. We live in hope when we recognise the closeness of God. Mystics are often seen as remote, divorced from everyday life. Not Thomas Merton. He wrote: *There is only one reality. Our hours and our days are divided not between time spent with God or in the world but between those occasions when we are more aware of God's presence in our experiences or less aware of it - when we are more, or less, distracted from that presence by the heartaches of our work.*

God is present in the highs and the lows, the sacred and the ordinary. God is as much present when we are at prayer or defrosting the fridge or when we are cooking or at work, when we are out in nature or at home doing the housework. God's presence is everywhere, a treasure hidden in every field. When we come to recognise, to notice this extraordinary

gift and believe in it, we are indeed in a hope filled time. We come to realise that our lives are not little or anonymous or not important, but that God's presence, God's invitation to life is in the ordinariness of things, every moment of every day. That's when we come to realise we are being carried on eagle's wings.

It is the attitude we bring at any stage of life that is important. We may not always be able to run and not grow weary or walk without getting tired but we can all soar on wings like eagles. So often for some it is easier to live in the past than the present, going over old hurts and disappointments or what was not achieved rather than what is or what can be.

Of course there are times of sadness, frustration and disappointment but letting that define who we are and what we can offer indicates a lack of hope. For others, a fear of what might be can also betray a lack of confidence in God who is with us always.

Living in hope reminds us to treasure the rich and unforgettable moments in life long after they have passed, those moments of laughter and joy or the experience of awe and beauty. They remind us of the wonder of life. They make us glad to be alive. There are some things in life, whatever its burdens, however it is spent, which if we cultivate them will never die. They will be the source of our joy forever and will sustain us through everything. Go and find them, treasure them and share them.

We each have something to give at every stage of life, despite trouble or strife, difficulties or simply just slowing down. Hope reminds us to treasure the love of those around us who make the journey gentle as we go. In caring for those around us we can grow into the knowledge and the desire to ensure that we are all safe and wanted, necessary and loved.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope."

—Romans 15:13

Regards
Jim Quillinan

Email: jquillinan@dcsi.net.au