

June 17, 2011

“Echoes of the Heart”

Reflections on Life and Community Living

Love is all there is; but it is enough. When Don Meredith, the entertaining quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys—also well known as a commentator on *Monday Night Football*—died last year, an obituary concluded its story on what appears to have been an enviably full and varied life by recalling a comment he made to *Sports Illustrated*:

My deepest fear is that one day I’m going to find out that this is all there is to life, and it won’t be enough.

I’m more than a little curious what the unflappable Don meant by *this* in the phraseology, *this is all there is*. No doubt he meant what any of us might mean: that our lives (the *this*), with our family and friends—doing what we do, celebrating and rejoicing in our own fashion—that *this* is what our lives are about.

This could mean love—the love we share with family and friend alike. It could mean being full of the life-force given to us at birth in ways that honor God and reflect God’s divine purposes (i.e., peace, harmony charity etc.).

Still, Meredith’s reflection on life touches us, doesn’t it? Because we, too, at times wonder: *Is this it? Is this all there is?*

And of course, if our lives are notably deficient in some way, we’re hoping *this* is not all there is. We’re hoping a new day is on the horizon and—please—let it come soon.

In this same vein, from the darker side, I’m haunted by a painting depicting a mother with her young daughter in a human line of despair at Auschwitz, the caption below reading:

O God, don’t let this be all there is.

Having the discipline to see the value of every moment, every life. Always, life’s tragic moments challenge our faith about ultimate meanings and challenge us to honor the gift of life, moment by moment. For indeed, it is in these moments of connection—moment by moment—that our lives are lived.

Our calling in life: *treasure these moments*. They are not forever. But for however long they endure, they sparkle with glimpses of the holy.

The key to our lives is to fill these moments with love. We love by giving life to one another. We give life by giving hope and optimism, encouragement and support. We do it by looking for the good in every human being and by lifting up the poor and the downtrodden.

As we think about life and love and eternity, one of the lingering regrets of our daily living is how we—so easily and casually—while away our days in petty bickering over trivia and smallness.

New life and new hope. In recent months, our two daughters have each given birth to precious little girls—Luciana Marie and Karolina Mikaela. During this same time period, dear friends in my church have lost beloved family members by violent means—two in their twenties, one in his teens.

Navigating the emotional realities of these two disparate worlds—uncontainable joy and unspeakable sadness and grief—takes a person to a deeper place where words fall hopelessly short of feelings but where a more keen awareness of the power of the life-force is all the more revealed. In these moments, we know—more than ever—that our lives are about love.

New life and new hope come in the realization of this truth—that love is not only all there is, but that it is enough.

In trying to find ways of *living again* and sorting ourselves out (when we lose a loved one), the best thing we can do is live our lives in ways that honor the best that was in the spirit of the person who has died. For the sanctity of *their* memory and for God's purposes in the world, honoring the life-force that was in them is what our lives need to be about.

Coming to this point may not be easy, but it is the best way for us to cope and embrace tomorrow. We do this both to lift up their memory, but also to honor God, the giver of life, for whom life is sacred.