

“Echoes of the Heart”

Reflections on Life and Community Living

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Transitions. If we think about it about it, our lives are an endless unfolding of transitions. Always, our lives are in some state of flux and change. Simply put, it's the way of things.

Certainly, President-elect Barack Obama's *Presidential Inauguration* on January 20th, is a reminder of the change and transition that surrounds us. Obama's ascendance to *leader of the free world status* bursts with change on multiple levels. For countless millions, for better or for worse, *change* means hope—hope for a new a day, a new voice, a new authenticity.

Hope for change, of course, brings with it expectations. No matter how high Obama's presidency soars, he'll have a legion of detractors—people whose expectations he will be unable to satisfy. Still, *change* is in the air and the hope that *change* brings beats on with undimmed resolve and promise.

At their best, transitions are opportunities—opportunities to grow and expand one's horizons. Now and then, we can all benefit from new surroundings, new friendships, and a new trajectory in our lives.

In my own case, three times I've moved across the country (Palo Alto, CA to Buffalo, NY; Buffalo to San Diego; San Diego to Miami Lakes)—each time to a new church situation (or the possibility of a new situation). Always, there's risk involved along with frequent nights of worry about what tomorrow will bring.

As 2009 continues to unfold, there are some useful things to remember about transitions:

1—Transitions overflow with possibilities. For many of us, some transition might be the best thing that could happen to us. It might nudge us out of our stupor and awaken us to experiences of self-discovery and self-realization we never thought possible. Often times, a career move, a new relationship or some new learning can do wonders for our spirit.

2—We never know what God/ life has in store for us. God has a vision (a range of possibilities) for each of us. We never know how, or in what ways, that vision might unfold. With that in mind, we should never presume to know much about tomorrow based on what we know about yesterday and today. The truth is: we don't know. And when we think we know, much of the time we're wrong.

When we dare to use our gifts and give ourselves to the flow, all kinds of things are possible. Until our dying moment, God is never done with any of us.

3—Transitions remind us that life is a process. Which is to suggest that change is natural. It's the way of life. All the time, our lives are unfolding; we're in the process of becoming. The key is to *give* ourselves to the process and see where the spirit takes us. It may be to a new discovery or new awareness that brings enduring positive change to our lives.

4—We don't have to have it all figured out today. Just because we're in the midst of significant change doesn't mean we have to fully understand it—at least, not today. Often times in life, the best thing we can do is be patient. Much of the time, our spirit, our heart, and our mind need time. We need time for new realities to settle in our spirit.

This is particularly true in relationships—in our marriage, for example, and with our children and parents. When we're evolving as human beings, when we're going through whatever transition or change, we need time; time to evolve and time to grow.

The New Year calls. With the excitement and possibility of the New Year upon us, the key is to keep after it. Keep putting ourselves out there with the *big picture* in mind. The *big picture* is how everything fits together—our families, our communities, our nation, our world.

One of the wonderful blessings of the New Year is the rich symbolism of new beginnings. Now and then we all need a fresh start—in whatever. And, always, we need to be humbly reminded that new beginnings are possible.

This is certainly at the core of the hope we'll be celebrating at Barack Obama's Inauguration in a few days. My wife, Yvette, and I will be there. With our youngest daughter living in the area, we can't resist.

Transitions! They're the way of things.