

SAINT MARY OF THE LAKE SEMINARY  
MUNDELEIN, ILLINOIS 60060

HOMILY

Reverend Thomas J. Murphy

"Opening Mass" of School Year 1974-75

Friday, September 27, 1974

4:00pm Theology House Chapel

THERE IS AN APPOINTED TIME FOR EVERYTHING.....

This is the theme of today's liturgy -- an awareness and consciousness of an appointed time.

As human beings, we are the recipients of many gifts. At this moment in history we have the gift of freedom. Here in this community, we have the gift of food and warmth. We possess also the gift of friendship, the gift of life, the gift of health. As human beings who are capable of love, of laughter, of tears, of pain, we are most conscious of all these gifts and we try to use them well.

But like so many other dimensions of human life, we are tempted to forget one of the most precious gifts that each of us possesses -- the gift of time.

Depending on who we are, and what our present experiences are, time can have different meanings. For the child, time often is a luxury to be wasted. For the adolescent, time is an experience to be endured until adulthood. For the terminal patient in the hospital, time is a tyrant whose parameters become clearer each minute, each hour, each day. Time is a gift given to each person to be used once, and never repeated. Time is measured in exact detail of seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years. The extent of this gift of time varies from one person to another. For some, this gift is restricted to a few hours or days. To others, for a brief span of years. To others, still, for eighty or ninety years. For so many, time is a gift that is squandered - for others, it is ~~cherished~~ - for still others, it is taken for granted.

Cherished

But within this experience of time, there is an appointed time for everything and everyone. As we begin a new period of time in the Year of Our Lord 1974, this is an appointed time for all of us here present. For some here this afternoon, this is the appointed time to begin the formal process of education for ordained ministry; for others, it is the last period of time before that goal is achieved. But for all of us, it is a gift once again to be examined and utilized to the fullest.

All of us here this afternoon share an experience in time to respond to the question asked in today's gospel of "Who do men say that I am?" This coming year our study of theology, our prayer, our formation, is meant to help us answer that question at this moment in time -- to be able to announce to the world that we recognize Christ in the midst of the poverty, the hatred, the war, the ignorance that exists in the world today.

We are conscious today at the beginning of a new year, of the seminary experience that we are being given a gift of time. A time measured by three quarters, thirty weeks, one hundred fifty days of class. During this year, as we use each part of this gift of time, we realize full well that it will never be given to us again. The brevity of time makes us aware of how precious this gift is. The parameters of time make us conscious of our own limitations.

Our response to the reality of the time factor in each of our lives, could prompt us to different actions. But my cry, my challenge to you and to myself at this moment in time is to use this gift well during the coming year. To utilize every second, moment, hour, day, week, month to achieve the process of growth and development which is essential to the man who has responded to the challenge of God's call.

This is an appointed time - this coming year - never to be repeated, never to be relived, never to be given again. Like all gifts, it could be squandered, it could be ignored, it could be used for a brief period, it could be wasted. But on the other hand, it could be the time that would make all the difference. But the problem is -- we will never know until we use this gift.

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Til then, we just have to wait and see.