

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - NOVEMBER 27, 2016

PROBABLY NOT MANY HERE HAVE HEARD OF GEORGE T. DORAN, HE WAS A CONSULTANT AND FORMER DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE PLANNING FOR THE WASHINGTON POWER COMPANY IN SPOKANE, WAHSINGTON - YOU MAY NOT HAVE HEARD OF HIM - BUT UNDOUBTEDLY MANY HERE HAVE HEARD OF SMART GOALS - RIGHT?

THEY ARE POPULAR IN BUSINESS PLANNING AND I KNOW AT UD THEY ARE OFTEN USED WITH STUDENTS...

WELL, WAY BACK IN NOVEMBER OF 1981 - 35 YEARS AGO - GEORGE PUBLISHED A PAPER TITLE "THERE'S A S.M.A.R.T. WAY TO WRITE MANAGEMENT'S GOALS AND OBJECTIVES" THUS INTRODUCING THE WORLD TO THE IMPORTANCE OF SMART GOALS...

OF COURSE, SMART IS AN ACRONYM FOR:

**SPECIFIC
MEASURABLE
ASSIGNABLE
REALISTIC
TIME RELATED**

IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR US TO HAVE GOALS IN OUR LIFE ISN'T IT?

HOW WOULD WE ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING IF WE DIDN'T HAVE GOALS...

OUR GOALS MIGHT BE LONG TERM, E.G. GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE....

OUR GOALS ARE ALSO SHORT TERM, STUDY FOR MY TEST TONIGHT AND PASS MY EXAM TOMORROW....

WE ALL HAVE SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM GOALS...

WE ALSO HAVE GOALS THAT SOCIETY EXPECTS US TO REACH AND GOALS WE CHOOSE FOR OURSELVES...

SOCIETY EXPECTS US TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL....

BUT I CHOOSE FOR A GOAL TO PLAY IN THE BAND, OR PLAY SOCCER, OR BE IN THE SCHOOL PLAY....

THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT HAVING GOALS IN THE FUTURE IS THAT THEY HAVE AN IMPACT ON OUR PRESENT.....

THEY IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR ACTIONS IN THE PRESENT....

WE HAVE TO ACT DIFFERENTLY NOW BECAUSE OF OUR GOALS IN THE FUTURE - DON'T WE???

WE HAVE TO PRACTICE OUR CLARINET, OR PRACTICE SOCCER OR REHEARSE FOR THE PLAY.....

IT'S A LITTLE BIT LIKE HAVING BI-FOCAL LENSES....

WE HAVE TO BE ABLE TO HAVE AN EYE ON THE FUTURE AT TIMES BUT ALSO PAY ATTENTION TO THE PRESENT, THAT WHICH IS RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES RIGHT NOW/TODAY

TODAY IS FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - AND ADVEN - CALL

UPON US ALSO TO LOOK TO THE FUTURE BUT AT THE SAME TIME BRING OUR FOCUS BACK TO AND LIVE DIFFERENTLY IN THE PRESENT....

ANOTHER WAY OF TALKING ABOUT GOALS IN OUR LIVES IS TO TALK ABOUT VISION - WHAT KIND OF FUTURE DO WE SEE/IMAGINE FOR OURSELVES - INDIVIDUALLY AND AS A COMMUNITY WHAT IS OUR VISION?

UD'S NEW PRESIDENT - ERIC SPINA - HAS ASK THE UD COMMUNITY TO

ENGAGE THIS YEAR IN A VISIONING PROCESS - WHAT KIND OF UD DO WE WANT TO SEE IN 20 YEARS....

OUR LITURGY TODAY INVITES US TO DEVELOP A LONG TERM VISION FOR OUR FUTURE AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A COMMUNITY - A VISION OF THE COMING OF CHRIST, THE SON OF MAN - THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD....

ISAIAH PUTS IT IN BEAUTIFUL, POETIC TERMS.....

NATIONS "SHALL BEAT THEIR SWORDS INTO PLOWSHARE AND THEIR SPEARS INTO PRUNING HOOKS....

ONE NATION SHALL NOT RAISE THE SWORD AGAINST ANOTHER; NOR SHALL THEY TRAIN FOR WAR AGAIN"

IT IS A VISION OF PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR ALL....

IT IS A LONG TERM VISION WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRESENT - FOR TODAY.....

ESP. AS WE HEAR IN MATTHEW SEVERAL TIMES IN THIS CHAPTER 24 -

"STAY AWAKE" IN OTHER WORDS, STAY FOCUSED, BE MINDFUL...

OF COURSE, CHRIST WILL COME AT THE END OF OUR LIVES AND AT THE END OF TIME....

AND CHRIST COMES IN THE SACRAMENTS.....

BUT HE ALSO COMES IN DAILY UNSEEN WAYS....

WE MUST STAY AWAKE! KEEP A FOCUS! BE MINDFUL!

KEEP OUR FEET ON THE GROUND! STAY ROOTED IN THE PRESENT!

WE MUST BE ATTENTIVE TO CHRIST'S COMING IN THE PRESENT IF WE

WANT TO BE READY FOR HIS COMING AT THE END OF TIME...

I READ RECENTLY THAT ST. HILARY OF POITIERS RECOMMENDS

CONSTANT PRAYER IN HIS COMMENTS ON THIS WEEK'S GOSPEL SO THAT

WE MAY BE IN THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND TO RECOGNIZE CHRIST....

THAT IS STILL TRUE TODAY...

IT IS SO EASY TO MISS CHRIST'S VISITATIONS IN OUR LIVES

TOO OFTEN WE RECOGNIZE CHRIST'S PRESENCE LONG AFTER THE

FACT, IF AT ALL..

WE MIGHT REALIZE THAT SOMETHING CHANGED, AT SOME POINT OUR

LIVES TOOK A DIFFERENT DIRECTION AND THAT WE HAVE ARRIVED A A

FUTURE WE COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED - THAT IS CALLED GRACE - A

VISITATION OF CHRIST...

E.G. AN ADDICT HITTING ROCK-BOTTOM MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE CHRIST

AT WORK IN THE EXPERIENCE, BUT LATER, IT WILL BE OBVIOUS THAT

EVERYTHING CHANGED IN THAT MOMENT

OR E.G. AN EXPERIENCE OF A CALL TO MOVE IN A NEW DIRECTION IN

OUR LIVES - IT MAY START OUT IN A VERY SUBTLE MANNER - ONLY TO BE

RECOGNIZED MUCH LATER AS CHRIST'S GENTLE NUDGE ALONG A NEW

PATH OF SERVICE.

ALTHOUGH THIS VISITATION OF GRACE IN RETROSPECT CAN BE SEEN AS

A MAJOR CHANGE IN OUR LIVES - AT THE TIME, THE CHANGE IS IS

SUBTLE AND GENTLE THAT WE MIGHT MISS CHRIST ACTING IN OUR

LIVES.

*AS THE LIGHTS OF OUR ADVENT WREATH MULTIPLY WE NEED TO
RECOMMIT OUR SEARCH FOR CHRIST'S SUBTLE LIGHT IN OUR LIVES.
IT MIGHT INVOLVE A FEW ADDITION MINUTES OF PRAYER IN THE
MORNING AND AT NIGHT, READING A SPECIAL BOOK, CHECKING OUT A
SPECIAL WEBSITE EACH DAY THAT ADDRESSES THE ADVENT THEMES OF
EACH DAY...*

*ALONG THOSE LINES, I WILL SEND A COUPLE OF THOSE WEBSITES THAT
REFLECT ON THE DAILY READINGS TO DEACON GREG AND HE CAN SEND
THEM ON TO THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED....*

THIS SEASON IS ALSO A SEASON FOR JOY...

*TRAINING OUR HEARTS THROUGHOUT ADVENT TO CATCH SIGHT OF
CHRIST'S DAILY ARRIVAL WILL PROVIDE NEW REASON FOR CHRISTMAS
JOY...*

LET US STAY WAKE, THEN!

CHRIST IS ON HIS WAY.....