

Grace Notes in Miniature

Friday, June 26th, 2020

Dear friends,

I have to confess to a certain amount of sadness today as I start to write this missive.

It's a sadness with which I am familiar, having been here – as have you – before. There is a certain amount of relief and anticipatory joy that, in whatever role we play – student, parent, bus driver, coach, educator, support staff member, fellow parishioner, neighbour – we have made it to the end of another school year and can look forward to the different pace of summer. Some times have been more poignant than others as I



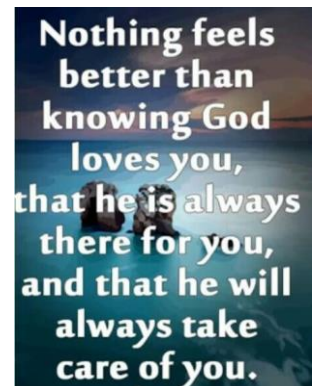
packed up to move on to another job, position or posting and I would sit or stand for a few minutes contemplating the empty walls or shelves, recognising the experiences and relationships of this place in space and time, some of which were being left behind. Along with those feelings would be the mixture of anticipation and nervousness about what the

new leg of my journey would bring and would demand of me.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4-L6rEm0rnY>

This year, the feeling is different yet again because it has been such a different year. So many of our goals for ourselves and our children – whatever our relationship to them – have had to be shelved or redefined, and there is a sense of things not fitting quite as they should. There is still a lot of uncertainty about how the coming year will unfold and we find it hard to let this one slip away when we don't see the way clearly to the next. There have been fruits of many unexpected kinds: creativity, inventiveness, learning new skills and new ways to do things, and I hope that we hold on to the lessons learned – especially so many of the good ones about relationship – and that we don't let them slip as life returns to its new “normal”.

People have shared with me that their faith has taken on a new context, especially as we had to come to terms with being limited to participating in celebrations remotely. As I tuned in to Mass all



around the globe, and listened to the words of great homilists like Bishop Robert Barron, I found a new appreciation for the universality of our Catholic faith.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IN4AcFzxtdE> I do take some issue with the premise that “God is watching us from a distance” as I believe God isn’t at a distance, but right here in our midst...

I have been blessed by being invited to/included in many



beautiful, meaningful and faith-filled events which schools developed to celebrate their graduates and their communities in general. In all these occasions the strongest message has been how much the students are loved by the people sending them forth, and how much they love in return. The message of the importance of accompaniment which

Renewing the Promise impresses on us in Catholic Education is one I saw in every celebration. I hope and pray that a large part of what our students are taking with them is this message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kbwKRYdP6zl>

May this summer bring us all a break, some time to reflect, and opportunities to reconnect, however slowly and gently, with our families, our friends and our faith communities.

With every blessing,

Gillian

