



"Making Music With What You got... "

December 2015

So here we are, another year coming to a close. We close our eyes for a few moments and reflect on all the happenings of the year gone by. Some thoughts make you laugh, some make you cry, and some just leave your head spinning. Terrorist attacks, civil unrest, protests, personal challenges, family hardships, are all part of what we have come to call "life". And the big question is "how does one keep looking forward when faced with those moments that shake our very foundation, those moments that zap us of our strength?"

I'm not sure that there is an answer to ALL of our questions, but sometimes the only answer is "when life gives you lemons make lemonade". Doing the best you can with the cards you are dealt. It reminds me of the following true story that happened to the famous violinist Itzhak Perlman.....

"The Broken Violin"...

On Nov. 18, 1995, Itzhak Perlman, the renowned violinist, came on stage to give a concert at Lincoln Center in New York City. If you have ever been to a Perlman concert, you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child, and he has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches. To see him walk across the stage one step at the time, painfully and slowly is a sight. He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair.

Then he sits down, slowly, put his crutches on the floor, undoes the clasps on his legs, tucks one foot back and extend the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up his violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play. By now, the audience is used to this ritual. They sit quietly while he makes his way across the stage to his chair. They remain silent while he undoes the clasps on his legs, they wait until he is ready to play. But this time, something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap - it went off like gunfire across the room.

There was no mistaking what he had to do. People who were there that night thought to themselves: "We figured that he would have to get up, put on the clasps again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off the stage - to either find another

violin or else find another string for this one. Or wait for someone to bring him another."

But he didn't. Instead he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity, as they had never heard before. Of course, anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that, you know that. But that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that. You could see him modulating, changing and recomposing the piece in his head. At one point it sounded like he was de-tuning the strings to get new sounds from them that they had never made before. When he finished, there was an awesome silence in the room. And then people rose and cheered. There was an extraordinary outburst of applause from every corner of the auditorium. Everyone was on their feet, screaming and cheering, doing everything they could to show how much they appreciated what he had done. He smiled, wiped the sweat from his brow, raised his bow to quiet the audience, not boastfully, but in a quiet reverent tone said:

"YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES IT IS THE ARTIST'S TASK TO FIND OUT HOW MUCH MUSIC YOU CAN STILL MAKE WITH WHAT YOU HAVE LEFT."

What a powerful line that is. And who knows? Perhaps that is the way of life - not just for an artist but for all of us. Here is a man who has prepared all his life to make music on a violin with four strings, who all of a sudden, in the middle of a concert, finds himself with only three strings and the music he made that night with just three strings was more beautiful, more sacred, more memorable, than any that had ever made before, when he had four strings. So perhaps our task in this shaky, fast-changing, bewildering world in which we live, is to make music, at first with all that we have, and then when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left. In this year where so much has been taken from us all, let us stop for a moment during this holiday season and think how we can make beautiful music with what we have left. Speaking of life, let's close the year with "Some points to ponder"...

Don't undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others, It is because we are different that each of us is special.

Don't let your goals be what other people deem important, only you know what's best for you.

Don't take for granted the things close to your heart (your loved ones), cling to them as you would your life! for without them life is meaningless.

Don't let your life slip through your fingers, by living in the past or for the future... by living your life one day at a time, you live all the days of your life.

Don't give up when you have something to give, nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.

Don't be afraid to admit that you are less perfect (the only person that's perfect is your spouse), It is this fragile thread that binds us to each other.

Don't be afraid to encounter risk, It is by taking chances that we learn to be brave.

Don't shut love out of your life by saying it's impossible to find, the quickest way to receive love, is to give love, the fastest way to lose love, is to hold too tightly, and the best way to keep love is to give it wings.

Don't dismiss your dreams, to be without dreams is to be without hope, to be without hope is to be without purpose.

Don't run through life so fast that you forget not only where you've been, but also where you're going.

Find something to laugh at every day, even if it means that you have to look in the mirror.

LIFE IS NOT A RACE, BUT A JOURNEY TO BE SAVOURED EACH STEP OF THE WAY...

On behalf of ALL your Chaplains, Season's Greetings and a very Happy New Year to you and your loved ones. Should you need a shoulder to lean on or have some good humor to share, don't hesitate to drop us a line.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

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