

# Our God, of now

A new year reminds us of both birth and death. It's not always easy to let go of the old.

The great poet, Robert Frost penned some rather melancholy lines in his old age. He wrote:

"Memories of have starred

Do not atone for later disregard.

Or keep the end from being hard."

Frost had certainly starred - as a famous poet, even a Poet Laureate! But, if these words were autobiographical, he obviously struggled with later 'disregard'. I would imagine aging athletes and movie stars and entertainers might have similar feelings. Each of us, to some degree, with the passage of time feel less vital, feel less needed. The world indeed is going on without us.

The antidote for such feelings, feeling of melancholy and regret, is living in the now with a feeling of gratitude. We can regret the passing of years, or we can be grateful for the fact that we had those years, and grateful for what we might yet do with the remainder of our years. Didn't someone write about 'older age' as "the best of life for which the first was made"?

A parable that has helped me immensely is a parable about the encounter of Moses and the burning bush. Moses saw a bush on fire, and was amazed that the fire did not consume the bush. As he approached the bush, he realized he was encountering God. (I think of this image often in the fall of the year when so many bushes and trees turn red.)

As Moses spoke to God, he asked God what his name was. God replied: "My name is I Am." God is the eternal present moment.

Someone wrote a parable about the moment, and had God continue to speak out of the bush: "My name is 'I am'. When you live in the past with its regrets and failures

and sin, life is hard. My name is not 'I Was'. And when you try to live in the future with all its fears and worries and anxieties, life is hard. My name is not "I Will Be". But when you live in the present moment, life is not as hard. My name is "I Am", and I am with you all days, even to the end of time."

The present moment is really the only time we have to live. Yesterday is gone forever – forever. We give it to God. We express gratitude for the life we had, express sorrow for any failings, and let it go. Our failures can haunt us, as well as our successes, as noted above. We release the past. We surrender it to love. We send love to all the people in our past – those who treated us well and those who treated us not so well. Our attachments and our aversions keep us stuck in the past. The past is gone. We don't want to miss the miracle of now.

We give the future to God as well. As I have confessed before, I tend to be a worrier. Despite six decades of life, and countless proofs of God's love and providence, I still find myself nodding to the gods of fear and anxiety. When I surrender it all to the living God, I feel peace and serenity. Worry, like many bad habits, is simply an addiction! A Higher Power can free us every time.

Living in the now frees me to be fully present to life. A smile, an act of kindness, a donation, an encouraging word, whatever, may change someone else's life. This present moment may be the moment for which I was really created. I don't want to miss it, by living in some idealized past, or idealized future. Now is where God lives. Why would I want to live somewhere else.