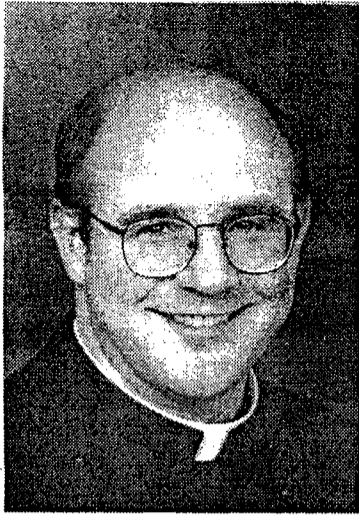


Life as Preparation for the Work of God

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As a number of people know, I communicate often via e-mail with my cousin who lives in the Chicago area. I was particularly struck by a recent message she shared with me. It was a note she had sent to her teenage niece who has been searching for the right direction to take in life. It is a great illustration of how to share Christ in one's daily activity. Also, I thought it was a wonderful example of mentoring and Christian witness. As such, I would like to share an excerpt of it (with her permission). I think it is the type of speech that Catholics need to do more, although I also believe it is an example of behavior that many Catholics already do without even realizing the impact they have on others. Here is an excerpt of "Aunt Linda's" letter to her niece, Laura:

I'd like to share one last story with you. I strongly believe that God has a plan for each of us.

One cold January day when I was in law school [Notre Dame], I had attended Mass at noon in the law school (we had it every Friday for those who wanted to attend.) The subject of the sermon was doing the will of God. Since this was something that I have thought about at length, I was sort of tearing up during the sermon feeling like a failure because at 35 or so, I had still not figured out what I was supposed to be doing with my life - with respect to doing the work of Christ. The gist of the sermon was that we have to put ourselves in God's hands and do his will as opposed to our

own. As I drove home on the toll road, I was thinking about this and sobbing somewhat because I still couldn't figure it out. Then I passed an old broken down truck with a huge Mexican man and his wife standing by the side of the road. The man was very scary looking. It was freezing out and they had broken down on the stretch of road between South Bend and LaPorte not near an exit or help. I passed them and then thought, "No one is going to stop and help them." As I said he was quite scary. I stopped the car and said out loud, "God, I don't know if this is what you want me to do or if I am going to get killed today, but I'm putting myself in your hands. And if it is your will that I die today, then so be it." I backed the car up and the huge man reached over and opened the door. The first thing he said to me was, "I told my wife that God would send someone to help us." That was God's plan that day. How many people are so fortunate that they ask God a question and get it answered in the next minute? The lessons I have learned are to make God a part of your every day life by trying to live a Christ-like life. This consists primarily of treating each person as if they were God. Just think, if God lives in each of us (as our Church teaches) then whatever you do to any person, you do to God. God is easier to see in some people, like you, than he is to see in others such as those skin-

head while supremacists. Nevertheless, if we view all jerks as having some little spark of God and look for that spark, it is easier to turn the other cheek and return love where hatred is manifest.

The point is if you don't know exactly what you want to do for the rest of your life right now, don't feel bad. I still don't either. But if you view your life as a preparation for some work of God, then you will enjoy each step to the fullest knowing that God will direct you where you should be when you have learned what you can from the situation. Learn as much as you can from the people around you. Study human nature and note people's weaknesses and strengths and decide which of those qualities is worth emulating and how you can avoid their downfalls. Stay open to the messages from God. You will be in "school" all your life and life will remain interesting and exciting if you realize that. ☩☩☩

Bishop Warfel's Schedule

Aug. 20-24 Chicago, National Federation of Priests Council Meeting
Sept. 3 Seattle, Region XII Health Care Leaders
Sept 4-7 St. Catherine's, Petersburg
Sept. 7-12 Prince of Wales Island, Synod listening session
Sept. 20-23 Installation of Robert Morlino as Bishop of Helena, Montana
Sept. 24-26 Juneau Diocesan Institute