

The past few weeks I have been pondering the phrase “quality of life.” How does one define that? Specific answers would vary from person to person, but I think there are some universal, thematic answers that will fit for all people; answers that are part of the vast human truth.

There is of course, the obvious “Christian” answer that is the foundation of it all: “Life is good because God loves us and gave it to us, and Jesus gave his life to redeem ours.” I am convinced that is true for all people, whether they know it or not, whether they like it or not, whether they believe it or not. But all of us, both those of us that have chosen to live a life of faith and those that have not, still must figure out how to “make it work” in daily life.

Frankly, our calling or purpose is at the center of the “quality of life” question. Our quality of life is maintained when we are fulfilling our calling; doing what God needs us to do to bring “your kingdom come” into reality. And frankly, maybe I should say that a little differently: Our quality of life is maintained when we are fulfilling our callings...

Yes, I am convinced we have more than one. When we are children our calling is to be obedient sons or daughters, attentive students of life; learning the lessons taught by our elders and our society. From the time we are children, we are to sort out our talents and gifts, discerning what it might be that gives us a “spark” of life and enthusiasm. We are to pursue that, developing it and using it for the good. In the middle of all that, we are to learn and to use critical thinking skills, practice goal and priority setting, seeking to spend our time doing what is good and necessary and beautiful. From the beginning, as we grow in age and maturity, we are to learn from our successes and our failures, for doing so, no experience or time is ever wasted. This is all life-long work. Whatever we do to make a living, we make a life by doing this kind of developmental work in mind, body and spirit.

And even yet, the picture is not complete. One key component is so thoroughly assumed that we don't often think about it. None of this self-discovery happens in a vacuum. As poet John Donne penned, "No man is an island entire of itself," we are all connected, one to another. We only find our optimal quality of life when we are doing what we are called to do in the midst of loving those we are called to be with. At our baptism, we each became part of a community of the faithful. In that moment, we are also called to dedicate our lives to learning what it means to have faith, living out that faith, and sharing our quest with others. We are called to be attentive to keeping our familial relationships healthy, loving our neighbor/neighborhood in word and deed by looking out for their wellbeing, recognizing that the stranger is our neighbor as well. Being in the midst of those we love and who love us in return is the ideal place to be. And remember, it isn't limited by geography, it's about where your heart is. You can be miles apart and still be together or be in the same house and be isolated.

So I wish for you a good quality of life your whole life long, that you are constantly discovering and working on. May it bring you peace and a sense of life's meaningfulness always.

Pastor Karla