

How Do We Close Doors And GO ON LIVING?

Robert Maloney, in an article for America Magazine, wrote that, "...We all suffer pain, even at times tragedies. They mark us for life, for good or for bad. Those who learn to deal with their darker moments grow, eventually finding light even in the darkness. Little by little they put tragedy into a broader perspective. They move forward, changed by painful experiences and renewed by them. Unwilling to let the past dominate their lives, they forge a new future."

Life has a way to challenge each one of us – even when we think we have it all figured out and seem to have everything under control. There is a measure of insecurity that seems to make its way into our lives and control us. I often wonder about that – especially as we reflect on the 18th Anniversary of September 11th. None of us could have imagined anything more horrific than that day ~ it is now a permanent "bookmark" in our memory bank. But I have been amazed at how resilient we have become in handling things – even personal challenges – these also leave indelible marks in our lives and they are important.

I watch families struggling to keep their bond alive when health issues become so overwhelming. I see adult relationships being challenged by career and economic pressures and the need to stay above water financially. I become frightened when I watch families fall apart because of domestic violence – alcohol and sexual abuse. I am often concerned about our teenagers and young adults – who have grown up in a world that is so materialistic and self-centered – that literally begs them to embrace this kind of philosophy. I also find a tremendous amount of denial these days. We live for the moment...seems to be the battle cry of most. Our schedule becomes our "god" – and I include myself in that as well. But denial can be much more serious than a schedule.

Denial is placing the realities of our life somewhere else in hopes that they will not surface. But realities have a way of creeping up to greet us when we least expect it. Robert Maloney mentions that there are five significant moments when closing the door is essential: a/ Anger b/ Failure c/ Grief d/ Relationships e/ Irresolvable Problems.

Maloney's premise is that we cannot escape these realities and we must deal with them. But how? I worry about how well we, as a community, are taking care of ourselves. I believe that many of us feel that the experience of church is supposed to be a "cure all" for things that are going on in our life. I see it all the time – a heavy expectation that God is supposed to take care of "whatever". NOT SO! We are to take care of ourselves and God will become a partner with us. Our faith, and how well we nurture it, is what can take us through anything – even closing doors on very heavy items that have occurred on our journey. We (I) must learn to name what is unhealthy in our lives – have a willingness to deal with it – and the courage to let it finally go. I know that this is easier said than done. But I refer back to an Article in America Magazine – where an Irish poet, Patrick Kavanagh, is quoted: "...We are not alone in our loneliness, others have been here and known grief's we thought were our special own – problems that we could not solve – loves that we could not have – pleasures that we missed by inches.." How true that is – we cannot do it all – we cannot figure out the perfect road to success – we cannot always be the great role models others want us to be. There are times when we must acknowledge that we do not have all the answers – nor does the "world out there". What we strive to do as a faith community is to look to God for the

answers. It begins with a true soul searching on our part. And, in the soul, we will find
God and the answer to our true needs and happiness.

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