

The Road Less Traveled – October 13, 2017

They provide popular fodder for email forwards. They are simple truisms penned by dying celebrities, and they can speak volumes. One such list, written by author and household humorist Erma Bombeck, has circulated for years, since her death in 1996. They are presented as a dying woman's list of misprioritizations, which she had come to regret.

If I had my life to live over again I would have waxed less and listened more.

Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy and complaining about the shadow over my feet, I'd have cherished every minute of it and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was to be my only chance in life to assist God in a miracle.

I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed.

I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded.

I would have eaten popcorn in the "good" living room and worried less about the dirt when you lit the fireplace.

I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth.

I would have burnt the pink candle that was sculptured like a rose before it melted while being stored.

I would have sat cross-legged on the lawn with my children and never worried about grass stains.

I would have cried and laughed less while watching television ... and more while watching real life.

I would have shared more of the responsibility carried by my husband, which I took for granted.

I would have eaten less cottage cheese and more ice cream.

I would have gone to bed when I was sick, instead of pretending the Earth would go into a holding pattern if I weren't there for a day.

I would never have bought ANYTHING just because it was practical/wouldn't show soil/ guaranteed to last a lifetime.

When my child kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, "Later. Now, go get washed up for dinner."

There would have been more I love yous ... more I'm sorrys ... more I'm listenings ... but mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute of it ... look at it and really see it ... try it on ... live it ... exhaust it ... and never give that minute back until there was nothing left of it.

It's wonderful advice from a dying woman. Except for one thing. She wasn't dying. Erma Bombeck actually penned those words in 1979, 13 years before she was diagnosed with breast cancer and 17 years before she died of complications from a kidney transplant. She wasn't dying, but realized at the age of 52 that there is something altogether basic about life that all of us tend to miss. That all too often our priorities aren't God's priorities, and that – from time to time – God reaches into our lives to remind us.

We talk a lot in the church about reconciling and integrating the lives we lead versus the lives that God calls us to lead. Maybe part of the problem is that we insist on talking about those lives as if they were two different things.

See you Sunday.