

Fourth Quarter Strategies - Saturday, October 24, 2015

Let me tell you about a dear brother in Christ who is nearing the finish line. I first met Agustin de Guevara more than twenty-five years ago. At the time, he was managing the downtown McDonald's store owned by Herb Peterson (Mr. Egg Mc Muffin). I found him an interesting fellow with a wry smile and what appeared to be a carefree attitude. Twenty-two years later I had the pleasure of really getting to know Agustin. For three full years, our mutual friend Rod Walters, Agustin and I would meet nearly every Monday morning at McDonald's Milpas where the first Egg Mc Muffin sandwich was served twenty years earlier. This is when I first found out how deep his faith ran. Those Monday mornings would jump start all of us as we set out in our different directions to serve the Lord. For the past twenty years, Agustin has served as chaplain for the Peterson franchise which includes six stores in the Santa Barbara area. Now at 91 it appears God is ready to take him home.

Born to Basque parents in Mexico City, Agustin spent most of his childhood in an orphanage where he learned the art of dance and developed a passion for reading. Fluent in Castilian Spanish and classical flamenco dance, he developed a flair for life culminating in his departure for America for a better life when he turned eighteen. Those first four years he held various migrant jobs before arriving in Santa Barbara and landing a position as a full-time dishwasher at the Four Seasons Biltmore. Gradually, Agustin advanced into hotel and restaurant management positions at the Biltmore and was finally enticed to Peterson's McDonald's franchise in his mid-fifties. He has spent the past thirty-plus years working with the Peterson family. The past year has been challenging for him and his wife Carolyn as his health has been failing. Both his son and daughter have recently moved back to Santa Barbara to be near their special Dad and be close by during his last few months here on earth.

To me, Agustin is a wonderful example of how I want to finish my marathon of life. He exudes a peace that can only come from up above. He has his life in perspective and he is truly ready to join his Lord and Savior in Heaven in His time. In the meantime, God has blessed him with close family and friends and minimal pain as he accepts the cancer that has riddled his body. In his own words, he considers his life to have been blessed! He has no regrets and I personally am much better off for knowing this ordinary man with a deep faith who God has used in many lives over these past years for His glory.

As he prepares to depart, he's assured by his favorite verse. In John 14:2 Jesus says, "In my house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you." Agustin has his bags packed and he's ready to meet his Maker. Do you have your bags packed?

Here to serve,

Jim Langley, CLU

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 23:1-6; Isaiah 55:8-11; John 14:1-4; Galatians 5:22-26

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Psalm 23 New King James Version (NKJV) A Psalm of David.

23 The LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not want.
² He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
³ He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
Forever.

Isaiah 55:8-11 New King James Version (NKJV)

⁸ "For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD.
⁹ "For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.
¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

John 14:1-4 New King James Version (NKJV)

14 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Galatians 5:22-26 New King James Version (NKJV)

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.