



*The
Rector's
Voice*



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From: Father Jerry Pisani

Fly like an Eagle

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

The Company You Keep:

There are many people who wish to fly like Eagles, but may often not realize that this is not done alone. A familiar statement is often made by life coaches that goes something like this, “if you want to fly like an eagle then don’t hang around with turkeys”. The word community comes to mind. Less and less people today are active members of a vital community and, unfortunately, many of those productive communities are dying for lack of members. It is not only our churches that are lacking in membership but groups like Kiwanis, Rotary, Elks, and various like societies of note. Perhaps this is one of the main reasons for our worldwide recession?

Another possible lack in our communities today could be that individuals are not aware of some basic principles or content to living that bring about these kinds of community. Many today are “loners” and do not realize that most of life is not a solo act. They may be addicted to some advances in technology that have great benefit to society but that can also bring isolation. Some may recall when workers sat at their desk when everyone’s desk was in the same big room. Now we place desks in a cubicle that tends to isolate workers who are thought to need “privacy” to be productive. Lately this trend is beginning to disappear as companies encourage people to gather in teams to enhance ideas and productivity.

The Thoughts You Think:

We are not only responsible for what we think but what we think gives direction to our lives. Change you mind – change your life is a common phrase used by many. Your mind gives direction to everything you do and therefore can bring positive or negative experiences.

I have gathered together a number of acronyms that I hope will stimulate and foster a renewal of your mind and encourage community for renewal and strength. Separation and divorce are becoming too common. Division is surely not a good measure for growth. Addition and especially multiplication are real ways to increasing productivity and celebration. Some acronyms I have collected from life coaches that are a part of my regiment for personal development. Most of them I have developed to try to help clarify and summarize concepts that enable me to think and grow. I hope you may find them useful as well:

TEAM – [Together Everyone Accomplishes More.] Team is a good acronym to establish the worth of the previous paragraph. Not necessarily the teams who are out for financial profit, but teams that wish to encourage one another toward growth and development. Teams that are not just out to serve

themselves but whose purpose is to energize the atmosphere of service to others. Holy Writings of various Faiths teach that it is in giving that we receive and not just getting all that we can for ourselves. I often speak of our civic atmosphere today as getting all you can, can all you get, and then sit on the can. Team suggests that we primarily support each other and not just focus on me, myself, and I.

CARE – [Constantly Appreciate and Respect Everyone.] How pleasant it would be if more people were apt to appreciate and respect everyone. They say that charity begins at home and also that no one can give away what they don't have. A lack of conscientious appreciation and respect for one's self will stifle any ability to extend that to others. CDD – Character Deficit Disorder may be a common ill in today's world. We may only be thinking of "number one" in outward and self-aggrandizing ways without a true sense of an inward awareness of genuine appreciation and respect for the source of our true character. A caring family is still one of the prime ingredients of a healthy character.

GREED – [Grabbing Repetitiously Everything Envisioned Desperately], is another characteristic that comes to mind regarding the instability of our present world atmosphere. Most people today realize that greed has been a primary force in creating our economic crisis. Many, however, only see greed in others and not in themselves. Some imagine that only the wealthy are the greedy ones without awareness of how selfish we all can be regardless of our economic standing. Many people today see things and think they need them. It wasn't too long ago when a need was perceived and then one would go shopping for what was needed. Necessities were more clearly defined then rather than a collection of goods and services that are purchased today to insure our status and worth.

HOPE – [Habitual Open Productive Exploration.] People without hope often perish. This is sad but true. Most of us are blessed with the full advantage of our five senses but we so often neglect to use them. We look but don't see – hear but don't listen – enjoy being "stroked" but seldom reach out to touch others, etc. I believe that hope is a habit to be developed. Like many other natural gifts and talents it is only through practice that we make them perfect. I have also noticed that people who are hopeful are usually a part of a vibrant community. Perhaps the lack of hope is another primary cause for the diminished membership of healthy community organizations. What a joy it can be to be open to new ideas and experiences. It is most fulfilling to be productive and lots of fun in exploring our world and all that is in it. People without hope often live in sadness, ignorance, and fear.

FAITH – [Finding Authenticity In Today's Happenings.] People of hope need an active faith. Finding authenticity each day in what happens to us and around us is vital to our well-being and stability. I realize that faith is a noun, but I truly believe that only the action of finding will enable us to acquire a lasting and personal faith. Faith is too often found in a document of lists and codes; a compilation of words and phrases with a definitude of certainty. This kind of faith is usually second or third hand and not partners with us in the depth of our soul or being. There is a saying, "Illness is not cured by saying the word "medicine," but by taking medicine. Enlightenment is not achieved by repeating the word "God" but by directly experiencing God." – Sankara (Indian philosopher and theologian from whose doctrines the main currents of modern Indian thought are derived). How much more enlightening and wonderful one's faith can be when it comes from personal experience.

BELIEF – [Balancing Enthusiasm Level In Educational Formation]. Belief is another word that goes along with Faith. It is easy for people to believe almost anything and to be very enthusiastic with little educational formation. Some people may just be gullible? It is not unusual to find that people still believe things that were thought to be true years ago that are no longer supported by today's knowledge. For instance; I was amazed to find out that The Flat Earth Society exists today. It was a lengthy and detailed website to follow their mission of "*Deprogramming the masses since 1547*".

There are many “IF” (see next acronym) beliefs today that are held enthusiastically with little balance or educational formation.

IF – [Illicit Fact]. Too often people continue to believe things that are illicit – no longer plausible in this day and age and, therefore, are no longer fact.

FEAR – [False Evidence Appearing Real]. Too often our fears come from false evidence. This also is a problem to many in our “enlightened” age. Since we seem to feel that people have a right to believe what they want, we encounter many who have unreasonable fears. Many people because of false evidence appearing real to them experience phobias of all sorts. It only goes to show how important Faith really is to our well-being and progress in life.

LOVE – [Limitless Offerings Veraciously Expended]. Many times at weddings we often hear the words from Christian Scripture in 1st Corinthians: - And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. Love is when we begin to move away from ourselves and notice others. When we begin to realize that it is in serving that we are served and that in giving we truly receive. A lot of people speak of falling in love when they may have only fallen in lust. There is surely nothing wrong with being physically attracted to another and having sexual desires, but this is a long way from actually growing in love together in marriage. When this happens there is a limitless and veracious desire to meet the needs and desires of one’s partner. True love is very special and nothing like the popular notion of falling in love.

GRACE – [God’s Recreational Activity Causing Excellence]. God’s love is limitlessly offered in truth with distinction and quality. When we allow God to recreate us and allow God’s love to cause us to move toward excellence, only then are we on our way to true success. It can happen in simple and subtle ways as well as in more dramatic and spectacular events. It is when we lack such grace in our lives that we become old and grow stale. One of the evangelists that I traveled with for a while often said, “if you don’t come apart – you will come apart”. R and R – recreation – is an essential part of being alive and well.

SUCCESS – [Serving Ultimately and Consistently Causes Excellence, Stability and Security]. Success is never the end. Many think that they will be considered successful if they have a lot of money, live in a large home, drive expensive cars, among many other status acquisitions. Success is always the journey and not the destination. Success is how one moves along in life; the dignity of how we move forward toward many goals and attainment. Hopefully this acronym makes clear this process that truly defines what we really mean by success. Placing service to others as primary to self-service. Having a sense of excellence in whatever we say and do with consistency. Remaining stable and secure in the process is the hallmark of being on the right path.

PRAYER – [Perusing Reasonable Alternatives Yet Expecting Resolve] serves to continue the process of moving beyond our limited resources on a daily basis. Prayer is still an important part of the lives of people who want to move forward and tap a resource beyond them. Prayer might be thought to be to one’s spiritual life as breathing is to the body. The lack of fresh oxygen in the physical realm causes one to die very quickly. Prayer is just as essential to a vibrant and lively spirit. Being open and receptive to reasonable alternatives enable us to move forward and energize new perspectives. The more we peruse the fresh air of new concepts within the depths of our being and connect to the primary source of all being the more we expect resolve. Being open to God’s universal presence without giving instruction, describing our wishes and desires, and expecting that the solution will come without our cooperation and partnership. God should never be reduced to the “tooth fairy” or a divine Santa Claus in the sky.

LEADERSHIP – may actually be another term for maturity. We may be children of God but we are all

expected to grow up and become responsible adults. There are certain criteria that are essential to helping us become fully aware of who we are and how we integrate with others. In this process I believe we all can and should move to leadership in some way to enhance our community and world. This acronym teaches us what the essential criteria for leadership are as listed here:

Learning Enthusiastically
Appreciating Diversity
Encouraging Relationships
Sharing Hospitality
Inspiring People

If one does not apply and practice all these behaviors their maturity in leadership may be incomplete.

PEACE – [People Energizing Alternatives Causing Equality]. Peace is not something you can wish for nor is it a commodity we can purchase. People who are peacemakers generate peace. When each of us energize and purpose to promote ways to effect equality for everyone will we cause peace in our time.

SECURE – [Staying Extremely Comfortable Under Reoccurring Experiences]. As we understand and apply these acronyms in our daily way of life we almost automatically become rather secure. Security is one of those inward and spiritual gifts that come from the soul. There are many things around us that we can never fully control. Security is an inward and invisible grace that comes from the way we live our outward and visible lives.

The Way You Perform:

The company you keep and the way you think is how you will perform. A good life is one of progress and adventure. Change is inevitable so everyone is faced with a continuing need to change. It is not uncommon for many to resist change, but no resistance on our part is capable of preventing the change that will occur.

We perform best when we live positively and resistance is not a positive action. It is much more exciting and productive to help influence change by joining with others to energize a better way. This positive action also brings the satisfaction and gratification of sharing with others in making all our lives better. It rewards us with joy and gladness in caring and sharing. It includes us in the wonder of our growth and development as well as others we may never come to know.

While there is much more to be said at every point made here, I will close. I hope what you may have read will encourage you to choose wisely the company you keep, never stop learning and thinking, and reap the joys of joining with others in communities that bring positive and healthy change to our world.