

THE "SPECIAL" TAG

Isn't there something special about scoring a special limited edition of something? It seems to make the Oreo cookie taste better, or the baseball card worth more. When the deal is for a limited time, we might move it to the top of the list. That "special" tag seems to make something more treasured. I know when I say to myself, "This might be the last time you are going to get out to golf for the season," it seems to become more important, maybe even more intense of an experience. At times like this, I want to take it all in. Last Thursday I went out early in the morning. The trees were offering their beautiful colors, the wind was brisk, reminding me it is Fall. We treasure things when we know time or experience is limited. During my last trip to the Holy Land, I thought to myself that I might never get to return there again, so I spent the time there with a greater sense of reverence. That "special" tag; that once in a lifetime experience invites us to appreciate everything more deeply. If we knew it was the last time we would ever taste something or go somewhere, our preparation, and the way we embrace the experience might be different. When a diagnosis is delivered that life will be shortened, often the response one takes is to either fight it or to treasure the time allotted in a new way.

Today God is letting us know we are special. He is letting us know we are unique. We are invited to realize every day is special and should be lived with intensity. Jesus tells all who are listening to love God totally, to be all in, to live with an intensity as if you can never have the day back. When we love the Lord with all of our hearts, with our entire being, every day has a "special" tag. Every day we wake up to a new 24 hours to allow ourselves to fall in love with God and to be loved by God. He is inviting us to love with all our heart, all our mind, and all our being. What else is there? We do not need tags to tell us we are special. We do not need a wake-up call to tell us life is precious. God offers us this reality every day we have breath. Jesus tells all who will hear to love totally God and to love your neighbor as you love yourself. God longs to pour His love into us. Our love is a response to His total love. God loves us with His whole being. He sent Jesus to save us so that we could realize the specialness of this love. Gravity pulls me to seek unique and once in a lifetime "special" tags. Exclusive is fantastic and today God is saying to all of us, we are exclusive, we are special, we are loved totally. He is all in. He is committed to us and has things for us to do for the sake of His Kingdom. He wants to protect that in us. He wants us to trust His total commitment and invites us to respond with a total commitment in return. Who are we to deserve this? It can't be, but it is!

Blessed be the name of this Lord forever and ever!



Father John Ouper