

**Companions on the Journey**

**August 28, 2022**

**Dear Friends,**

A question that has been occurring to me? Has the trifecta of politics/sports/entertainment replaced religious faith in the lives of more and more Americans? Has the power of the Blue Screen (which ironically is invisible but real on our Smartphones and Computers and Tablets) replaced the power of God—actually—for most people today? Two questions which are very real to me. In my observations and conversations and reflection I see many who invest themselves in areas or aspects of the world in which they live. Meaning comes mostly through their political affiliations—how we should treat people, what we should stand up for, how we conduct ourselves, etc. For the believer, meaning comes from the Lord. God has already decided what things mean, what the purpose of life is, why we are on this earth to begin with. It is for us to discover or uncover this meaning and embrace it and live it in our daily lives. So, there is a very real question. The meaning I find in life, and which animates me to live a certain way, with very particular values, where does that meaning come from? What is its source? Where do I go to discover it or uncover it? Is it God or is it of human origin?

Sports just continues to grow into multi-billion-dollar industries This is so whether we are referencing the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, The National Football League, American Soccer League, National Hockey Association, including the WNBA as well. The Superstars in each sport or league are looked upon as much more than athletes. They are celebrities and gurus who establish the demeanor you are to present to the world. Their opinions are sought on all manner of issues whether they know anything about them or not, often they are the deciders about what is important and meaningful. What is cool and what is uncool! So, step back a moment. Ask yourself: Should I place my faith and trust in this person because he can catch a football, in that person because she can dunk a basketball, in that man because he has a three quarter of a billion-dollar thirteen-year contract? Really? But many, many people do. Because via the social media we believe we know them, and we can put our faith in them. And God, where is God? Isn't God invisible? Isn't God somewhere very far from here? How can we even tell if God has something we are supposed to do?

And then we see the multi-million-dollar weddings of major celebrities displayed all over social media. This is what life is all about. This is how the rich people live. Wouldn't you little people like just a taste of this? This is what is important. Multiple relationships, squandered fortunes, dazzle and hype. Famous for being famous. BUT. Wasn't this one of the temptations that Jesus was confronted with? All the glamor and glory of the world? "Go away, Satan." There is nothing there. Nothing real. It is all illusory, fleeting. Here today; gone tomorrow. What is life really about? Why are we here? And for how long? What we do and for whom matters. God desires us to make a return on all that He has given to us. He desires us to return to him the gift of the heart he first gave to us, but a heart refashioned by the way we live and act towards each other.

Over the living of our lives hovers the specter of death. And then what? What happens to us? Do we die and just disappear? Go into the ground and that's it? Or is there a life that does not end, which continues into eternity? And if there is, where did it come from? AND, how do I get to go there and not just into the ground? Or is it that I believe that there is some benevolent deity that has created me and wants me to live in his presence forever but has no claims on me whatsoever, no expectations, no requirements regarding the quality of my life and relationships and my work? Does that even sound plausible? If you were such a God, would you settle for a deal like that? Do you settle in your present life for any deal like that?

My friends, these issues are real. They need us to discuss and argue them. They call on us to take seriously our lives on earth. Each of us must step up. No one can do this for me—or you.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry