

The seasons change, and so must we



The other day, I was texting with my brother about something or another – probably a beer he thought I should try, or our family’s Thanksgiving plans, or how I trounced him in fantasy football – and he made an offhand comment about us being two “middle-aged guys.” I zoomed past it at first before backing up slowly to take another look – like I was gawking at a fender-bender.

My first reaction was to laugh dismissively. “Middle-aged?” I thought to myself. “I’m not middle-aged. I’ve got a 2-year-old, for goodness’ sake. And a 4-year-old. And a 6-year-old! Plus, I love Taylor Swift ... and Marvel movies!”

“Besides,” I said, “I’m only ... oh, shoot.”

The realization hit me like an ice-cold shower: It stung a little, but it also washed me clean of my denial. The fact is, I’ll turn 45 next spring, my brother will be 47, and I’ll be darned if that isn’t the Merriam-Webster’s definition of middle-aged.

The pieces of the puzzle have been there for a while – the army of gray hairs slowly forcing its blond foes to retreat, the random morning aches getting noticeably more frequent, how chasing around toddlers takes a little more out of me than it used to – I just never took the time to put them all together. But here we are now: smack-dab in middle-age. It’s funny how quickly the seasons change.

The Church, too, is changing seasons. With the coming of Advent, we flip the calendar to a new liturgical year. Let us not take the present for granted, as we’ve done so often in

the past. Let us slow down instead and appreciate the feasts and traditions that will come throughout the year.

I've pondered all of this – aging, denying that I was aging and accepting it to be true – quite a bit over the past month or so. While it might have been sparked by being called middle-aged, it was perpetuated, I think, by autumn coming hard and fast this year.

As I watch the leaves fall softly from their branches, I realize how fitting of an analogy it is. I, too, have entered a new season – one that I'm trying to embrace. Whether I like it or not.

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Speaking of change, we're making a big one here at Our Sunday Visitor. Two, actually.

As he has mentioned in his column over the past several weeks, Timothy O'Malley is stepping aside after writing "Opening the Word" for the past six years. Each week, as he has explored the readings for Mass, Tim has inspired – and often challenged – readers to apply the lessons of Scripture to their own lives. While we will miss his weekly column, we are thrilled that he will continue to write periodically for Our Sunday Visitor, starting with a series on liturgical reform ([the first installment can be viewed here](#)).

While he has left big shoes to fill, the editors at Our Sunday Visitor are excited to introduce two exceptional writers who will continue to prepare you well for Mass every week, and as the Church begins its new liturgical year on this First Sunday of Advent, now is a perfect time to present them to you.

Up first is Catherine Cavadini, a professor at the University of Notre Dame who directs the school's master's program in theology. She has written numerous articles on Faith and Scripture and will offer a thoughtful and fresh perspective on

the weekly readings. Next week, Father Joshua Whitfield will make his debut in "Opening the Word." Father Whitfield is a former Episcopal priest who is married with children. He and his wife converted to Catholicism in 2009, and he was ordained a priest through the pastoral provision in 2012. Father Whitfield is a highly regarded writer who currently serves as the pastoral administrator of St. Rita Catholic Community in Dallas. Starting with Catherine Cavadini's column in this issue, she and Father Whitfield will alternate columns every other week.

We hope their words will enlighten and edify you as you continue to walk your faith journeys with Our Sunday Visitor.

Thoughts? Email us at feedback@osv.com.

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