

Homily for New Year's Day...2014

This is the story of a young man who learned a great lesson from the guy next door.

It had been quite a bit of time since the young man had seen his old neighbor...a man who had an incredible impact on his life. After college Jack had married and now lived far away. His life was busy and he had little time to spend with his wife and son. He was always on the move...always working.

One day he got a call. "Mr. Belser died last night," his mother said. "The funeral will be on Wednesday."

Jack was reluctant to go. But his mother convinced him otherwise. She reminded Jack that Mr. Belser stepped in when Jack's father had died. He visited regularly to help out and insure that Jack had a man's influence in his life. He gave countless hours of time in helping Jack and his mother. Convinced, Jack caught the next flight home. The funeral was small and uneventful.

The night before returning, Jack and his Mom stopped by to see Mr. Belser's home one last time. As they were walking through, Jack suddenly stopped. He remembered a small gold box that Mr. Belser kept locked on top of his desk. Mr. Belser had always told Jack that it

contained the “thing I value most.” It was gone and now Jack would never know what was in it.

Two weeks later, Jack received a package. It had been sent from Mr. Belser’s estate. Opening it, Jack discovered the small gold box. Unlocking it, Jack opened it very slowly. Inside he found a beautiful gold pocket watch. Engraved on the watch were these words: Jack, thanks for your time...Harold Belser. Time...that was what Mr. Belser valued the most.

Jack held the watch for a few minutes, called his secretary, cleared his schedule and left saying to his secretary: “I need some time to spend with my son. And by the way...thanks for your time!”

At the dawn of a New Year, the message is simple...don’t waste the gift of time. Mary didn’t. She took the time to reflect on all that had happened and treasured the lessons she learned from the experience of the birth of her son. I doubt that it would hurt any of us to take the time to reflect on this past Christmas in our own lives. It certainly would be a wise use of time to seek after God’s blessing and wisdom in all that we do during this coming year. And certainly, the gift of time should make us reflect on how brief and fragile that gift can be. We need to use it wisely.

Life is never measured by the **number** of breaths we take. Rather, life is measured by **how** we live and act with each breath that we

take. Faith, a faith that we see in Mary, our Mother, teaches us that time is used best when all that we do is simply a mirror of the presence of God in our hearts.