O God, you call all to life and wholeness. You are the one who brings light out of darkness; hope out of despair. You are the gentle massager of the hardened heart, Compassionate tiller of the barren terrain within, You are the potent catalyst of the wilting spirit, I desire to answer your call. God, Who called me to this age. I am ready to release the wisdom within me- Wisdom seeded from the beginning, Wisdom you planted. I’m willing to let go of what was I’m longing for the life, the light of your spirit within To guide my journey home. God, You created me, -You love me - You breathe me - You call me, I yearn. O God, I pray for the grace to let your wisdom and unconditional love sustain and nurture this journey. God, I yearn to release- to let go- By your grace, I desire To let the elder within come forth. I am ready. Birth the dream. Birth me into the fullness of life. Sr. Ann Billard, OLM
OBJECTIVES

- Illustrate the relationship between spirituality and positive aging
- Re-vision aging
- Provide meaning and purpose in the later years
- Provide a process that encourages a way to become a spiritual transcendental elder
  - Provide opportunity for Questions
  - Evaluations

CHANGE

There is nothing permanent, except change.
Heracleitus, Greek Philosopher

Eating nutritionally
Exercising
Mental stimulation

Certain behaviors contribute to physical well-being
The Spirituality of aging is . . .
the Spirituality of letting go

What is the relationship between aging and spirituality?

SPIRITUALITY IS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, OTHERS AND SELF.

What does the research say about spirituality and aging?

THERE ARE A MULTIPLE SPIRITUAL NEEDS AS ONE AGES.
Spiritual Transcendence

The growing ability of the soul to take the ordinary events of one’s life and gradually respond differently, Moving beyond the tangled web of life’s experiences, Re-weave them to find meaning And thus re-connect to the wider community differently.

Aging Re-Visioned

Transcendence is the essence of call to religious Advanced age offers elderly consecrated persons the chance to be transformed by the paschal experience. (Pope John Paul II)

Transitional Passages:
The Call: Let Go Re-weave: Reclaim Wonder and delight in life Mission: Share the legacy
Components of Aging Call

- Call is pure gift
- Call is unique, personal to who you are
- Call to wholeness, completion
- Call is for others
- The One who calls is ever present

What are you holding onto?

“Sell what you own and give to the poor” Mark 10:21

Aging - a call with its own mission

When there is call, there is a mission. Mission is to be lived from a sense of fullness, not emptiness.

Pope John Paul II:
“You have a mission to fulfill and contributions to make.” (1984)
Youth is the flower of humanity; the elder is the root pressed against the darkness of the human heart holding the sublime potential of the human spirit.

ALLEN CHINEN: IN THE EVER AFTER

Questions to ponder

- What is your own attitude toward aging?
- How does it influence your relationship with the older adult in your life?

Aging is about crisis
Crisis about

- Meaning of one's life
- Meaning in suffering
- Meaning in death
Choices:
1. Give up
2. Go full speed ahead
3. Assess...
   Make plans

The Struggle

Toxic ager or Spiritual elder?
How one ages is a choice.
Sullivan: “Aging will happen, sage-ing must be sought.
Sage-ing - a process that enables older people to become spiritually radiant, physically vital, and socially responsible” to navigate the second half of life with purpose.
(From Age-ing to Sage-ing, 1995)
Aging – visioning for mission

From age-ing to sage-ing

First half of life – writing the text of our lives – Outer work

Second half – becomes the commentary – Inner work

Jesus said to Peter: Very truly I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and go where you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.” He said this to indicate the kind of death Peter would glorify God. – John 21:17-19
Inner Work of second half of life

- Task 1: Face the Reality of Aging and Dying
- Task 2: Life Review
- Task 3: Consciously let go of ego
- Task 4: Self-transcendence
- Task 5: Find a new rooting in Self
- Task 6: Determine Meaning of one’s life
- Task 7: Rebirth - Dying with life

Phase 1: Letting Go
Tasks 1, 2, 3:
  - Task 1: Face reality of aging: Admit it and accept it
  - Task 2: Life review- Self confrontation-reformation
  - Task 3: Consciously let go of the ego aspirations

Phase 2: Reclaiming the Wonder
Tasks 4, 5, 6
  - Task 4: Self-transcendence—move beyond self-centeredness of youth
  - Task 5: Find new rooting in Self-emancipated innocence
  - Task 6: Reclaim wonder and delight in life-Determine meaning of life
Phase 3: Sharing in Mission

Task 7: Re-birth- Dying with life: Share the Legacy

"You are my witnesses, says the Lord, my servants whom I have chosen." (IS: 43:10)

Why commit to doing the inner work?

☐ "a sage offers his experience, balanced judgment and wisdom for the welfare of society".

☐ The inner work "helps us consciously transform the downward arc of aging into the upward arc of expanded consciousness that crowns one’s life with meaning and purpose" (Schachter-Shalomi & Miller, 1995)

☐ Pain that is not transformed will continue to be transmitted.

Saying "yes" to the call of aging

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I know the plans I have for you, declares God.
Hence is not to despair. 
Moan is to prosper you, not to harm you. 
plan gives you a future and hope. 
Jer 29:11

All of us are called to be the real deftector protecting the elder’s roots.

Truth is the flower of humanity.
The elder is the root boasting the potential for all humanized.
John Dixon


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Time: 3:30 – 4:30 pm EDT

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Presenter: Lynn M. McKenzie, OSB

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