



“Grandpa’s Hands”

June 2022

One of the best lessons in life I learned from one of our members on the street. They said "Rabbi, at times the responsibilities of this job gets me down, the constant changing of policies, getting the short end of the stick, and peoples attitude toward first responders. But rest assured we will not stop doing what we swore to do, cause that's who WE are". It made me smile and proud of my flock, it reminded me of the story of "Grandpa's Hands"

Grandpa, some ninety plus years, sat feebly on the patio bench. He didn't move, just sat with his head down staring at his hands. When I sat down beside him he didn't acknowledge my presence and the longer I sat I wondered if he was OK. Finally, not really wanting to disturb him, but wanting to check on him at the same time, I asked him if he was OK.

He raised his head and looked at me and smiled. Yes, I'm fine, thank you for asking, he said in a clear strong voice. I didn't mean to disturb you, grandpa, but you were just sitting here staring at your hands and I wanted to make sure you were OK I explained to him. Have you ever looked at your hands he asked? I mean really looked at your hands? I slowly opened my hands and stared down at them. I turned them over, palms up and then palms down. No, I guess I had never really looked at my hands as I tried to figure out the point he was making.

Grandpa smiled and related this story: Stop and think for a moment about the hands you have, how they have served you well throughout your years. These hands, though wrinkled, shriveled and weak have been the tools I have used all my life to reach out and grab and embrace life. They braced and caught my fall when as a toddler I crashed upon the floor.

They put food in my mouth and clothes on my back. As a child my mother taught me to fold them in prayer. They tied my shoes and pulled on my boots. They held my rifle and wiped my tears when I went to the military. They have been dirty, scraped and raw, swollen and bent. They were uneasy and clumsy when I tried to hold my newborn son. Decorated with my wedding band they showed the world that I was married and loved someone special. They wrote the letters home and trembled and shook when I buried my parents and spouse and walked my daughter down the aisle. Yet, they were strong and sure when I dug my buddy out of a fox hole and lifted a plow off of my best friends foot. They have held children, consoled neighbors, and shook in fists of anger when I didn't understand. They have covered my face, combed my hair, and washed and cleansed the rest of my body. They have been sticky and wet, bent and broken, dried and raw.

And to this day when not much of anything else of me works real well these hands hold me up, lay me down, and again continue to fold in prayer. These hands! are the mark of where I've been and the ruggedness of my life. But more importantly it will be these hands that G-d will reach out and take when he leads me home. And with my hands He will lift me to His side and there I will use these hands to touch the face of My Maker. End of story.

I will never look at my hands the same again. But I remember the day G-d reached out and took my grandpa's hands and led him home. When my hands are hurt or sore or when I stroke the face of my children, wife or loved ones, I think of grandpa. I know he has been stroked and caressed and held by the hands of G-d.

To my Brothers and Sisters who out every day, to do G-d's Holy work of protecting His children and keeping our streets safe, YOU are the hands of our society. You are like Grandpa's hands in the story. Your work is scrutinized, you get yelled at, shot at, sometimes abused physically and verbally by the same people you are trying to protect, but you keep on giving of yourself, and giving of yourself, and for that we say, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU. Our society couldn't live without you! Without you we would be like a child trying to go through life without hands.

Some points to ponder and keep you smiling.

- *) Accept that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue.
- *) Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- *) If you lend someone \$20, and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- *) Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you don't have a leg to stand on.
- *) In life nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- *) You may be only one person in the world, but you may also be the world to one person.
- *) Don't cry because it's over; smile because it happened.
- *) We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors but they all have to learn to live in the same box.
- *) Happiness comes through doors you didn't even know you left open.
- *) No matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that.
- *) You should always leave loved ones with loving words. It may be the last time you see them.
- *) You can keep going . . . long after you can't.
- *) Either you control your attitude or it controls you.
- *) Sometimes the people you expect to kick you when you're down, will be the ones to help you get back up.

*) Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want them to doesn't mean they don't love you with all they have.

*) It isn't always enough to be forgiven by others. Sometimes you have to learn to forgive yourself.

*) No matter how bad your heart is broken, the world doesn't stop for your grief.

*) The people you care about most in life are sometimes taken from you too soon. Remind them everyday how much they mean to you.

*) Life is a journey not a destination, enjoy the ride even when the scenery changes.

On behalf of ALL your Chaplains, may G-d bless you, keep you safe, and always keep you in his loving care.

A SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR VERY OWN FR. DAN BRANDT, CELEBRATING THIS MONTH 23 YEARS OF BEING ORDAINED.

FEEL FREE TO DROP HIM A CONGRATULATORY

MESSAGE AT: Dan.Brandt@chicagopolice.org.....Thanks!

Should you need a "shoulder to lean on" or an ear to listen or perhaps have some good humor to share, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

Blessings for a healthy, enjoyable summer. Amen

Compliments of your Police Chaplain

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