



**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word  
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan  
October 19 – October 26**

**1 – “Live in a manner worthy of the call you have received.”** (Eph 4:1)

...I have made profession as a Secular Franciscan: that is my “call.”

**2 – “Why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”** (Lk 12:56)\*\*

Extended meditation:

There was a convention of athletic coaches, athletic directors and some accomplished athletes at Estes Park, CO in the mid-70’s. The presence of God is usually not a topic at such gatherings; most of the talk deals with strong schedules, great athletes and coaches and great sports stories. The main speaker for the event was marked on the program “to be announced.”

When it came time for him to speak, the lights were turned off and a movie projector began. It was a film of 1963 super-athlete Brian Sternberg (University of Washington, died in 2013) as he was executing a pole vault that turned out to be the world record for pole vaulting at that time with a commentary by one of the network sports people. As a result of that, Brian Sternberg was recognized at that moment, literally, as the world’s greatest pole vaulter.

That’s all that was shown, took about a minute. Then a spotlight came on stage centered on an empty chair. Someone carried out an obviously handicapped human being and placed him on the chair in the spotlight and gave him a microphone. The handicapped person began to speak in a raspy voice. He said: Hi, I’m Brian Sternberg. And he told his story.

He called himself a selfish person. He knew he was a great pole vaulter. He did most of his practicing on the trampoline as was common with pole vaulting. Not needing others, since he was a natural athlete, he didn’t have much use for others. He worked out alone away from the rest of the young people in the gym. Gradually, he became quite cocky with what he could do. One day he was doing a double somersault twist on the trampoline and he came down off center, landing dangerously on the trampoline, hitting his head in an awkward way.

He was paralyzed him immediately, confined to a wheelchair forever, and quite bitter about life. With the help of a girlfriend, he only gradually came to understand some things.

In his speech, then, he paused so that it became deathly quiet in the auditorium, and said:



**"My friends, I pray to God that what has happened to me will never happen to one of you. I pray that you'll never know the humiliation, the shame of not being able to perform one human act. I pray to God that you will never know the pain that I live with daily..."**

Then he paused again. And finally continued

**"...unless, my friends, that's what it takes for you to put God in the center of your life."**

Brian Sternberg went on to explain how he had neglected the important things in life. And now he had come to see that God was the only important thing.

**3 – "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:14)\*\***

...Once again, we need to look at ourselves and our desire for power over others.

**4 -- Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ. (Eph 4:32)**

...Am I kind, compassionate and forgiving?

**5 -- "Strive to enter through the narrow gate." (Lk 13:34)\*\***

...How strong is my own spiritual life?

\*\*indicates one of the most important passages of the Gospels