

Carpe Diem — Seize the Day

By Rev. Antony Law (OMF)

“Carpe Diem” in Latin means — seize the day. Taken literally, this has become the slogan of hedonists: Pleasure above all - Tomorrow does not matter - Enjoy today. Is that what it means? The phrase was originally used in Roman poet Horace’s *Odes*. The original phrase goes: “*carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero*” — “Seize the day, put very little trust in tomorrow”. Most simplistic explanations typically refer to Horace’s connection to Epicureanism (philosophy focusing on pleasure), hence the hedonistic understanding.

When Horace wrote — seize the day, put very little trust in tomorrow — he did not suggest ignoring tomorrow, but rather not being a hopeless optimist about what tomorrow might bring. To do what needs to be done today, so tomorrow is more likely to be the tomorrow we hope for. Doing nothing and just letting tomorrow play out as it would, was not something Horace would suggest.

In a way, *carpe diem* is not a suggestion to focus on mindfulness, on being here and now, & not in a passive sense of just being present. The focus is on **being here and doing the work**. So rather than “have all the fun you can”, the key message here should be understood as “**focus on now and do what you can to build the tomorrow you want**”. In Mark 10, a huge crowd was following Jesus as he left Jericho. A man named Bartimaeus was blind and begging by the roadside. When Bartimaeus heard that Jesus was nearby, he began to shout, “*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*” (Mark 10:47 NIV) When Bartimaeus had gotten up that morning, he had no idea that Jesus Christ was going to be passing by him that day. He thought it was just another ordinary day: same place, same cry for help, same situation. But suddenly Jesus was there. Bartimaeus had no time to prepare or think through his response. It was just an opportunity that dropped in his lap. And he chose to **seize the moment**. He decided not to delay or procrastinate. He was going to do it—**NOW**.

Pastor Rick Warren referring to this passage says, “Whatever you’re going to do, do it now. Don’t say, ‘Next year I’m going to make a fresh start’ or ‘Next month I’m going to make

some changes' or 'Tomorrow I'm going to make that a priority.' It's now or never. **Seize the moment!**" This is how I serve the nations for the Gospel today - Seize the Day. April 2024 marks the second anniversary that I officially became a full OMF member & served as the Regional Director of the Diaspora Mission. As I shared in my newsletter by the end of 2023, I have travelled to 75 cities in one year, to pray, to meet, to share the Gospel & vision, in order to see people coming to Christ. But there's another part of my ministry, which is to build up the churches to be missional churches, & Canadian Christians to be Gospel-embodied disciples. Thanks to God's leading, churches & Christians began to come together to meet regularly in different "hubs" caring for different ethnic groups. Church leaders, missionaries, & lay Christians are joining hands to share & pray for Filipinos, Thais, Indonesians, Hongkongers, Uighurs, Vietnamese & to work together to serve them here & beyond. Please pray for two potential new "hubs" for Mongolian & Cambodian interested parties.

Many years ago in one of my seminary years, I used a devotion book written by Dr. Charles Ringma - Seize the Day: 365 Days Walking with Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In the devotion, Dr. Ringma tries to capture Bonhoeffer's spirit in his life & his ministry. In Bonhoeffer's time many were compromised with Hitler's regime, even the German churches & pastors, in order to keep the church running & kept a life to live. For the Truth & the Gospel, Bonhoeffer treated every day as his last day to live only for the Lord he served instead of other "kings". This cost his life but he had no regret to "seize the day", to live & to do his best for the King of kings. That's the spirit Dr. Ringma implies in the devotion encouraging the readers to "seize the day" and live every day as the last day for the best for the King. In the 365 days of a year, how would you live every day? Are you living out the true meaning of "Carpe Diem" or do you live it as the hedonists believe - "Pleasure does not matter - Tomorrow does not matter - Enjoy today? Are you procrastinating?