

□ Reading time: 2 min.

A 92-year-old man, neatly dressed and taking great care of his appearance, was moving into an old people's home.

His wife of 70 years had recently died and he saw himself needing to leave his home.

After a wait of several hours at the reception desk, he smiled politely when he was told that his flat was ready.

Resignedly and contentedly he walked slowly towards the lift, using, of course, his nice stick. I accompanied him, describing the flat.

"I like it very much," he said, with the enthusiasm of a child about to receive a new toy.

"Sir, you haven't seen it yet, wait a moment, we are almost there."

"That has nothing to do with it," he replied. "Happiness I choose on a case-by-case basis. Whether I like the flat or not does not depend on the furniture or decoration, but on how I decide to see it, and I have already decided in my mind that I will like the flat! It is a decision I make every morning when I get up."

"I can choose: I can spend the day in my room thinking about all my difficulties with the parts of my body that do not work, or I can get up and thank God for those parts that are still OK. Each day is a gift, and since I can open my eyes, I will slip into the new day with all the happy moments I have enjoyed throughout my life."

*"When I was a young seminarian, I remember going to the infirmary one evening (I honestly don't remember why). While the brother-nurse was tucking in two bedridden priests for the night, I stood in the dark corridor and witnessed the whole scene."*

*As he was tucking in the first priest, pulling the blankets under his chin, the elderly man angrily scolded him: "Get your face out of mine, brother."*

*The poor brother went silently into the other room to the second priest. The priest replied gratefully: "Oh, brother, you are so good to us. Tonight, before I sleep, I will say a special prayer just for you."*

*There, in the dark corridor, I was struck by a sudden realisation. One day I would be one of those two old priests. The full realisation was this: I was already practising for that moment. As one gets older, habits take over. Old eccentrics practise being eccentric all their lives.*

*Old saints practise their whole lives being saints.*

*Old age is like a bank account. We withdraw at the end what we have deposited in it throughout our lives."*