

Don't Leave Too Soon!

Too often in life we leave too soon. Some people leave high school too soon, and sometimes college. We give up on marriage, jobs, long-term goals, and many other things. When we leave too soon we often miss a great deal of potential and possibility.

A number of years ago a man left prison and found a job he liked very much. He worked very hard and was highly respected by the people around him. He looked forward to going to work every day and felt challenged in a very creative way. Then one day he was offered another job that paid twenty-five cents an hour more, and he accepted it. Even though he took it for the money he knew he wouldn't like it. It turned out to be a disaster and he was fired. Left with no job at all, everything went downhill.

A re-entry program in Albany is located in The Altamont Motel and Conference Center. It provides job training, group counseling and housing for people leaving prison. The program was started by Father Peter Young, a highly regarded priest in the Albany community.

One night during a severe snowstorm, a young man named Bill, recently released from prison, attended a group program at Altamont. He complained bitterly about not being able to find a job or decent housing and having few items of clothing. He even complained that he didn't have a pair of snow boots. "Look at the snow outside," he said. "It's ten inches deep and all I have is sneakers." Father Pete sat listening, then quietly untied his snow boots and gave them to Bill. Soon after he walked out into the snow in his stockinged feet and drove home. On the wall behind Bill was a large banner which read, 'DON'T LEAVE BEFORE THE MIRACLE!'