

I REFUSE TO SURRENDER!

Seeing photos of myself -- on the one hand, I wish that I was younger. I don't see myself as the camera sees me. In my mind's eye, I'm still a young man -- forever young and never aged. I see a young man in my mirror, not a 60-something year-old. It's why, for example, I expect to beat my very talented thirty-year-old son in tennis, why I overextend myself, why I never expect to be tired. It's why I catch sly, half glimpses of myself that never betray me or my age, why I think I am still as attractive as I ever was.

On the other, I am grateful that I am no longer young. With age comes a seasoning that makes one more or less inured to life's difficulties and inoculated to its many lies. There is a resting knowledge that cannot be replicated in youth, youth that pines for a future that never comes as expected. If I were to offer any advice to the young, it would be to seize the day and enjoy the process of making a way for tomorrow, with faith, hope, and charity.

And then there is the historical reality that I would not want to be young in a world such as ours, when the world is more insane than ever, and bound to get worse. This is why I pray for my children and my grandson, and why I keep trying, in spite of seemingly insurmountable odds, to make the world more habitable for them, to endow them with liberty and hope, and to enshrine the present by leaving a legacy to them that may be meaningful and serve as a guide for them. I hope one day that they will read my works and realize that was part of my life's mission.

Michael Rectenwald