

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 17:5-10

Opportunity is often missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work. —Thomas A. Edison

The year was 1943 and Artur Rodziński was conductor of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. However, on the afternoon of November 14, Bruno Walter was scheduled to lead the orchestra as Guest Conductor at a Carnegie Hall concert featuring the works by Schumann, Miklós Rózsa, Wagner and Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote* with cello soloist Joseph Schuster. Then, suddenly, Walter came down with the flu and was unable to appear. The conductor who was called in to replace him was just 25 years old. The orchestra and the substitute didn't even have *one* rehearsal! And, to make this development even more intriguing, the new conductor was not a seasoned professional. In fact, this was his conducting debut!

And thus began the stunning career of the famous American-born conductor and composer, Leonard Bernstein.

Last year, Bernstein would have celebrated his 100th birthday. He died in 1990 at the age of 72. Who would have guessed in 1943 that the walk-on conductor for the afternoon concert of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra would become world-renown, and that the name of Bruno Walter would recede with the passage of time?

Bernstein seized an opportunity, and it changed his life.

We, too, sometimes face interruptions and opportunities. When we respond to them, our lives might not change dramatically. But, you never know!

However, it is enough to know that our response might change someone else's life, and also, that in responding, we are faithful servants of God.

—Melanie Silva

Prayer: *O God, there are times when we must step in at the last minute and help make things work. May we do so with grace. And there are times when others step in for us, and do better than we ever could. Let us applaud with equal grace and enthusiasm. In Jesus' name. Amen.*