

Reflections

June 2008

Just about a month ago while I was in the check-out lane at the grocery store, several people were talking to each other about the weather. One of them said he wondered if summer would ever arrive. It was cool, dry, and felt like autumn. I thought it was wonderful having the windows open all day. However, it got “cold” during the night and I got up to retrieve an extra blanket to keep myself warm while sleeping. According to the time of the year, it should have been warmer, and yet I was cold.

Summer has finally arrived. Now I hear people complaining about the weather, the uncomfortable humidity, the lawn mowing, the bugs, the whatever. It changed so fast and weather conditions continue to surprise us. Rain. Tornados. Cool. Hot. Our thoughts and emotions are in disarray. Why am I this way? When it’s hot, I want cool. When its cold, I want warmth. When it’s dry, I want moisture. When it rains, I want to limit it.

Then I think about the beauty of seasons. I think of the grass turning green after a winter’s rest. Trees turning green, and my perennials gardens are sporting flowers already. I am late again this year in planting my “cannas” bulbs, but they will grow rapidly.

Summertime is also vacation time. Vacation is supposed to be the time to get away from the demands of work and other obligations. Vacation places are often so crammed with things to do that many come back from vacation to rest. Gary Apple, the humorist, writes: “I asked my mailman where he went on his vacation. He replied, ‘10017, 60609, and then down to 34291.’”

“In the good old summertime...” Fond memories. Family get-togethers. Friends gathered together. Get-a ways. Leisure and pleasure to bring relief to work and stress. I look forward to going to a class reunion this summer and reuniting with a past that seems to change every reunion. Our stories of each other in high school certainly become “expanding” tales, with a mysterious quality to them. I now do what I said I would never do whenever I heard my elders say when I was a child, “Remember when...”

“In the good old summertime...” “Remember when....” We take the time to find renewal for our bodies through vacations. We take some time away from work for renewal. We take some time away from “home” to be refreshed to make home a refuge from all other demands.

We also need to renew our spiritual batteries. Yes, worship can be in the woods, on the golf course, but it can never (and should not) replace the gathering of the people of God. Mind, body, and spirit need to be sustained and kept in balance. There should always be time for spiritual renewal. Do not neglect the matters of the spirit. Join with others in ministry through worship and mission. Pray without ceasing. Thank God with gratitude. Enjoy God’s wonderful world and be ever mindful of our care of the world. Receive God’s gift of the summertime with anticipation and enjoyment. God bless you.

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