

SAID ED September 9, 2012

The Lord's Day

This weekend, we get back to our “more normal” routine of life as summer is ending and school begins. Summer is always a great time to pull back, change the pace of our lives; and break from the routine that normally leads us through the course of the week. It’s a great time to find some moments for relaxation, for the savoring the warmth of the day and just being with family and friends. I hope that your “down time” has been good this summer.

Summer vacation is to the year what Sunday ought to be to the week; a time to withdraw from normal activity and to realize that all of life is a gift of God. We are indeed stewards of creation, and the Lord expects us to be mindful of God’s presence in our lives. Everything we have and are is a gift from God.

Unfortunately, our culture is losing the value of the “withdrawing and relaxing” from regular activity. Our scriptural tradition speaks about the Sabbath day, the Lord’s Day, the day of rest. The translation of the word “Sabbath” is properly rendered: “withdrawing.” We “withdraw” from the normal work-a-day world to celebrate our relationship to God and one another and with God’s creation. Giving ourselves “space” and a break from our normal routines allows us to reflect upon God’s desire for a relationship with us. So often we find ourselves so busy caring on the duties of daily life that we can lose focus. We forget why we’re doing these things in the first place. God gave us the Sabbath so that we would always have one day of our week to remember who we are and where we have come from and why we are upon this earth.

Unfortunately, the culture in which we live does not honor the Sabbath. In fact, Sunday is no different from other days of the week in so many ways. The malls are open, stores are ready to do business with us, many businesses operate seven days a week (I’m not talking about service businesses that exist for the purpose of helping people). I’m concerned about the wholesale forgetfulness that we seem to be lapsing into. We people need at least one day every week to withdraw from our “normal activities” and to relax in the loving arms of God and one another.

It’s a shame that our Sabbath is being gobbled up by galloping commercialism and frantic activity. Summer vacation may be the last vestige that we have of what it means to relax, withdraw, and allow God to refresh us. I hope you have used your vacation this summer as a kind of Sabbath, a special period of allowing yourself to let go of the urgencies that so often flood our minds and hearts; of the busyness that crowds our activities and keeps us at times from even remembering why we are so active and so busy in the first place.

As we begin with the Fall season I invite you to think about how you spend your Sabbath every week. What are we losing by not taking a day of rest every week? God wants us to have the space and the time to relax; to rest in the divine love and mercy, to cuddle up in God’s lap as a child might do with its parent, knowing that the weight of the world is not really on our backs, even though at times it feels like it is. It’s a time to be secure in the knowledge that this is God’s world, that, if we do our small part, God will do the rest.

Have a great week.
