

A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

Autumn

Some people are under the impression that spring is the time of beginnings—of birth, renewal, replenishment, growth. Forget it. The real season of beginning, I believe, is the one we are enjoying right now. Autumn.

This time of year is when school notebooks are mostly blank, when wooden pencils are waiting to be sharpened, when the new pair of shoes still feels awkward and tight. A lot of things around September and October feel like they are waiting to be broken in, used for the first time.

It is now, too, during these weeks of autumn, when you find life has quietly but perceptibly shifted.

You arrive home at the end of the day to a house that is dark. The daylight has gone. Night comes sooner. So does the chill. Shirt sleeves get longer. You dig through the closet looking for gloves. A few weeks ago you were sweating in bed sheets. Now, you fall asleep to the quiet clicking of the radiator, under a layer of wool.

Grass stops growing. The yard is dotted with frost. Change is in the air—reddening our cheeks and numbing our ears. Now is when we shed the old and put on the new. The trees let go of their leaves. Bathing suits go into storage, scarves come out. We turn back the clock and turn up the thermostat and we do not realize it is all because our little planet is about to hurtle around another corner—to start, in a few weeks, one more year.

This, I think, is when the real work of renewal begins—at this bracing moment. This is the time for storing up, and taking stock.

One kind of living—hazy, full of flip-flops and sun-screen—passes away. Another—scratchy, thick and smelling of cedar—takes its place.

This is the season when something begins. It is a time of anticipation—anticipating snow, and skates, and dinners of turkey and sweet potatoes. Soon we will hang Advent calendars and begin, in earnest, the true Season of Waiting. Until then, we continue with what the church calendar calls “ordinary time.”

But, in truth, there is no time that could be considered merely “ordinary.” Every time is extra-ordinary. Every moment is new. Autumn confirms it. To everything there is a season.

The last book of the Bible tells us we are actually at the start of something. “Behold,” a voice says in Revelation, “I make all things new.”

Right now, such reassurance is sorely needed. In a time of war and worry, it seems there is so little we can control. Our destiny is guided by an unseen hand—a hand that reminds us, gently but firmly, just Who is in charge. Are we willing to trust that?

This time of year is the perfect moment to ask ourselves that question.

It is a time when so much seems poised, dangling like a brown leaf on a frozen bough, preparing perhaps to let go—and let God.

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