

A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

Proof That God Loves Us

How do we know that God loves us and wants us to be happy? I can answer that in one word: summer.

Summer is the season when God is really strutting His stuff. It is the time when the days are long, nights are short, and nature is positively giddy. The weather can be tropical, or thunderous, or scorching. The sun can make you blister, or make you batty.

And into this come, incredibly, Ferris wheels.

Into this come sparklers.

Into this come hot dogs and lawn sprinklers and the musical stylings of the Mr. Softee ice cream truck.

Into this come the unmistakable *fwap-fwap* sounds of rubber flip-flops. Into this comes the hum and grind of a thousand air conditioner units on a 100-degree day on Yellowstone Boulevard.

Into this, God gives us lemonade. And soft ice cream. And French fries smothered in vinegar.

He gives us the bliss of a breeze, or the warm breath of a table fan, or the casual comfort of a front stoop.

He gives us the beach.

He gives us a few weeks off from school, and a heavenly escape from books and assignments.

He gives us the smell of saltwater, and the taste of taffy. He gives us a few more hours of daylight and, with the arrival of evening, the blessed neon flicker of fireflies. He lets us go barefoot and hop across the asphalt or the boardwalk in search of Big Gulps.

He gives us “brain freeze.”

He gives us little gold fish in plastic bags, won at the fair.

He gives us Citi Field.

Yes, thank God for summer.

Thank God for folding lawn chairs that leave web imprints on your butt.

Thank God for inflatable swimming pools.

Thank God for barbecues and charcoal and the unmistakable, inescapable scent of chlorine in a public pool.

Thank God for pinwheels and fireworks—the oohs and ahs of a night in July, when everything seems perfect, and America seems blessed, and it is hard to suppress a lump in the throat.

Thank God our forefathers declared independence in July, instead of January.

There is so much that we take for granted, so much of daily life that can be frantic or fearsome, especially in a city prone to blackouts and a population prone to burnout.

But every year, for just a few weeks, we have reason to rejoice—to celebrate the simple fact that we are alive, that we are free, that we are loved by a God who worries over us and wonders about us and wishes us only to be content and happy. It is there every morning during these lazy days of summer. Enjoy it while you can. Savor it. Devour this season like a Nathan’s hot dog—in great gulps. And smother it, if you can, with relish.

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