

A View from the Pew

by Deacon Greg Kandra

Packing

So I'm trying to get ready for our vacation, and I'm all set to start packing. There's just one problem. Where do I begin?

This is not an unusual situation for me. I'm a chronic procrastinator, and this is one of the reasons: Sometimes, I just can't figure out the best way to get started on a tedious and daunting project. Even if it's something as benign as packing for a two-week trip. (On the subject of packing: Summer, I'll have to say, is easier than winter, when there are sweaters and heavy socks to contend with.)

My wife, as methodical as a metronome, is much more organized about these things. She may have to stay up all night figuring it out, but she gets it done. Cheerfully, too. (One reason, among many, why she's in charge of our tax returns; but, I digress...)

Anyway, ruminating on the subject of packing, I can't help but wonder if we plot out our lives the way we pack our suitcases. Life, after all, is the biggest trip of all: the adventure that takes us to unknown ports of call, where we sometimes face unexpected detours or dead-ends, and where the itinerary isn't always clear. It is the journey that matters.

What do we pack to take on that trip?

Do we take along joy? Do we fold up our trust (paying careful attention to the creases) and tuck it in a convenient corner? Do we remember to bring at least a travel-size dose of courage? Do we pack in our carry-on a healthy amount of faith?

All these things are helpful—necessary, even—for our journey through life, and our journey through living. And none may be more necessary than faith.

I'm not speaking just of go-to-Mass-and-pray-the-Rosary faith (though, yes, don't forget that!). I'm speaking, also, of faith that is intangible yet real.

Faith in God's love. Faith in His mercy. Faith in His plan for our lives, no matter what that might be, and no matter how much we might wish it were something else. It is faith in something (Some One) beyond our own puny understanding—and a faith that can sustain us through the turbulence, delays, setbacks and crash landings that so often accompany this adventure called Life.

And then, of course, there is that greatest of travel accessories—so great, it's not really an accessory, but a requirement; it's something as fundamental as a passport or a soft pillow.

It is, of course, Love.

Do we remember to carry that with us? In quantities both large and small?

Love can be, at times, like a pair of travel binoculars; it enables us to see things differently, intimately, up close and personal. And it can also be, at times, like a healthy dose of Dramamine, getting us over the rough patches and calming our nerves. You can never bring too much of it. If we do that, our pantries will be full to overflowing. We will have the Bread of Life, for life

These are just a few things, I think, that are good to pack with us as we go through our days. I'm sure there are many others. Be sure to check your packing list.

You won't find these things at Hudson News at LaGuardia, or at the sundries shop at the Holiday Inn. But they can make life's journey infinitely more comfortable.

Best of all, they won't set off the alarms when you pass through security.

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