

June 23, 2019

Dear Friends,

This past week summer happened. Every year summer comes. But this year my hope is for a quieter summer with a little bit less drama and some more time for genuine leisure and relaxation. You know, it seems to me that we have lost the capacity for genuine leisure. It is almost as if we have to be busy about something every possible moment or we are somehow guilty of wasting time.

But it wasn't always so in my life. I remember when I was a lad summer Sunday afternoons were really times of leisure for our family and for many families. If you are old enough to remember there were what were called the Blue Laws which prevented stores from being open and selling their wares on Sundays. What that meant was that no shops were open. No employees were expected to leave their families and go to work to wait on customers.

Because of those laws, Sunday afternoons, after Mass and Sunday breakfast in the morning were times filled with reading, playing games, sitting outside under an old elm tree with my dad in his hammock and my mom in a kind of collapsible beach chair reading the Sunday paper, listening to the Phillies game on the radio. And offering a comment or observation occasionally. My dad would not last very long on that hammock before the sounds of gentle snoring would be heard. Inside a roast would be filling the house with the smell of a wonderful Sunday dinner.

I have such fond memories of those days. The pleasures were simple but genuine. The experience of being together with family but not even always interacting with each other although sometimes we did. These were glorious days and they promised ample time. Rest, enjoyment, reading, listening, resting, doing crossword puzzles. It was our way of remembering to keep holy the Lord's Day. Not even the sound of lawn mowers broke the quiet. They were good days and we would be better off still as a society if we were to experience anything resembling such quiet time today. Every moment does not have to be filled. There is room. There is time. There is enough time. Would that I relearn that lesson. Would that we all did—and soon.

In the Peace of Christ,