

## Column

Summer is here, and what shall we do with it? This is the question that confronts, young and old alike, this time of the year.

I hope the answer we give to this question will be a thoughtful one. Time, after all, is a limited commodity. Spending it wisely not only contributes to human happiness but, no doubt, pleases God as well.

For some, the summer will mean time off from school. For others, it will mean days off and travel. When I was a boy, summer meant taking off your shoes and going barefooted, sinking your feet in the warm garden earth and wading in cool streams.

As I got older, it was a time for work. Before leaving for his job, my father would give me so many rows in the field to hoe. You quickly learned to get going early. The longer you waited to get started, the hotter the sun and the more miserable the task became.

But we also took vacations. While travelling, instead of stopping at fast food restaurants, we stopped at roadside parks for the noonday meal. Out would come the ice chest and picnic basket. The meal would invariably end with fig newtons, which were a real treat seeing we seldom had store-bought cookies.

What kind of memories are your children storing up that they will be unpacking 20 or 30 years down the line? Creating memories, as I hope you can see from my experience, need not involve a lot of money, but they do involve families coming together and doing something. A television and the internet will never take the place of human interaction.

The summer is just beginning and again the question is: What will you be doing with your summer? Will it be a summer for growth and grace, or will it be wasted time? Will it be a summer of building precious memories, or will it be a summer of lost opportunities?

Perhaps, the way forward is the way backward. What the world really needs is more picnics underneath the trees . . . and, yes, don't forget to throw in the fig newtons!

*Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who settest the solitary in families; we commend to thy continual care the homes in which thy people dwell. Put far from them, we beseech thee, every root of bitterness, the desire of vainglory, and the pride of life. Fill them with faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness. Knit together in constant affection those who in holy*

*wedlock have been made one flesh; turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers; and so enkindle fervent charity among us all, that we be evermore kindly affectioned with brotherly love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

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