

Pastor's Letter – August, 2014

Conventional wisdom holds that “things slowdown in the summer.” It might take a while...but the pace of life generally slackens. That is, if we let it. That’s the key: pulling the foot off the accelerator and let ourselves coast. By the time summer is in full swing, it doesn’t do well to force much of anything.

Case in point: my zucchini steadfastly refuse to be rushed. Standing next to my zucchini plants tapping my foot accomplishes nothing...except getting my shoe dirty. Similarly, the clock on my kitchen wall is utterly indifferent to my complaints about its moving too slow (or too fast!) The time and the seasons are about as amenable to my prodding as a donkey on Benadryl. Things have their pace. I do well to accept them.

Summer bears an invitation to at least think about slowing down. Maybe it’s purely a function of warm weather. One of my most vivid memories of Hawaii, other than the palms, the macadamias, and 2500 miles of shark-infested water...is how relaxed people seemed – all the while sitting on top of a powder keg of lava! Something accounts for their thorough-going serenity. Maybe deep down, at the cellular level, all Hawaiians have a sense that, whatever other untoward events may befall them, winter is NOT around the corner...and never will be. Perhaps that awareness alone makes for a spiritual calm that we northerners seldom enjoy.

Contemplative living – steeping oneself in the presence of God in all things – is all about slowing...listening...and savoring. The contemplative way is not an easy one. For example, I’ve wondered how a dyed-in-the-wool contemplative handles a job interview. When job searching seems so frenetically filled with being a “proactive self-starter able to get the job done 24/7”...are contemplatives invariably lost in the dust of the thundering herd?

The good news is that summer is a fertile recruiting season for contemplatives. In a season so rife with “L words” like “lolling”, “languid” and “leisure”, we can almost hear our inner embryonic contemplative self-calling out: “feed me, nurture me, let me flourish...but for goodness’ sake do it slowly!” Summer offers what might be considered “training wheels”, a chance to ease into contemplation, so that by the time mid-December blows in we’ve gained the spiritual strength to set aside the snow shovel long enough to relish the Christ-child in our midst.

But that’s a long way off. For now, I want to linger listlessly beside a liling stream and soak it all in. This season, I wish you many long, luscious moments of living into Love.

In faith...and in gratitude...

Tim