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God and Summer

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God and Summer

In the northern hemisphere, summer officially begins on the longest day of the year, in late June. The days grow shorter all through the following months, although the weather typically becomes warmer - at least during July and August. But summer means much more to us than a correlation between shorter days and higher temperatures.

When we think of summer, what comes to mind? We might consider vacations, outdoor events, gatherings with family and friends, or travel; rest, changes in daily habits, or reading a book. The season and the weather are factors, but those provide only the occasion and the environment. We give meaning and purpose to the summer through the decisions we make about our occupations.

God is ready to encounter us in ways uniquely adapted to our summer doings. We have the capacity and the responsibility of saying "yes" or "no" to any and all inspirations, suggestions, opportunities, and graces that are offered to us. The weather and the seasons are outside our control. But as we take into account the daily temperature when we select clothing and locations for events, we can also consciously attend to the movements of the Spirit in us as we plan outings, family reunions, and volunteer service.

God created the weather and the seasons, which are for us immovable and unchangeable forces. But, as vulnerable and weak humans, we are privileged with the capacity for personal contact with God, who is immediately accessible and responsive to us. Summer is for many of us a time when schedules vary more than during the rest of the year, providing opportunities for noting the beauty of our surroundings and the closeness of our Creator.

During the summer, we can call a friend and suggest a walk together; we will make arrangements about a meeting place and a destination so that we can enjoy one another's company. When we call upon God, we are together even in the desire to make contact. We can experience being in close companionship without the need to move from one place to another, for we are already together. Our thoughts and feelings, as in any conversation or walk with a friend, can be light and cheerful, intense and tearful, or anything and everything in between.

This summer, if we wish, we can take some times - momentary or more lengthy periods - for "vacations with God" that will cost nothing,

require no planning or packing, and yet be occasions of refreshment, restoration, and re-creation. God and summer go well together.