

# Back to school, kitchen renovations, the end of summer, and a big decision (7 Quick Takes)

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We are officially back to school! I'm so grateful that both our boys seem to have transitioned back to school smoothly—even though we are all exhausted from the week.

We lit candles at church this weekend, and I remembered to bless our fourth grader with holy water. Lots of prayers are carrying us into this school year, especially because I have been nervous about the start of sixth grade. I vividly remember middle school, not always with affection and joy. But so far, so good.

Four days in, both of our children seem to be excited to go to school every morning.

~2~

I might not recommend renovating your kitchen at the start of the school year. Packing lunches, filling water bottles, and fixing breakfast is just a little harder when the refrigerator is in the basement and anything involving water needs to happen using the bathroom sink. Good luck finding a free sink in the morning while we're rushing to get ready for the day!



We also haven't found our rhythm yet with the school schedule. One child boards a bus about 45 minutes before his brother can be dropped off at school.

The other day I was heating soup for someone's breakfast, filling a water bottle for school, trying to find the forms I had filled out the night before, answering urgent work emails coming in, and looking for my coffee mug when our contractor asked me to make a key decision about the shape of granite for the breakfast bar. I hope I made the right choice.

In good news, I did find the coffee mug. It was on the top of a tall piece of furniture in our bedroom. In bad news, I still hadn't filled it with coffee, and it was almost time to leave.

~3~



What I am missing most is my kitchen sink. The other day I gathered up a pile of dirty dishes and said, "See you all later. I'll just be in the bathroom washing dishes again."

I've been trying not to complain, but maybe failing completely.

My fourth grader looked up and said, "Maybe you could do it for those Purgatory people."

Yes. Yes, maybe I could.

~4~

As much as we all needed to get back to a real schedule, I am always sad to see summer end. Summer is my favorite. I love the heat and being able to walk outside without putting anything extra on. I love the freshness of the foods of summer. I like being able to take the boys for a snowball or an ice cream cone. I love the long evenings and the lack of homework. I enjoy the slower pace of the summer.



Last weekend as summer was ending, one of my friends invited our sons and me to go to her pool with her and her sons. We had such a good time chatting while the children played mostly on their own with very few check-ins with us. It was a lovely ending to a beautiful summer.

~5~

We are so tired of eating out that I finally broke down and ordered an Instant Pot.

I'm excited and a little nervous to use it for the first time. I think we'll start with boiling eggs. But I am determined to use it this weekend to make a meal for my family.

I'll let you know how it goes.

~6~



Today I had the chance to go to a convalidation ceremony for the first time. My friend and her husband had been married this summer but wanted to have their marriage blessed in the Catholic Church. I was so honored to be invited to attend, especially since they invited just a few guests.

I loved how the priest—my friend, Father Tim Brown, S.J., made sure the ceremony

was so beautiful and personal. It was such a special way to celebrate their love and their union and see them bestow the sacrament on each other.

~7~

We broke down and got our sixth grader a cell phone. We had decided not to get him one. Then he started school, and I learned that if he forgot something, he couldn't use the school phone to call me and ask me to bring it to him. If he decided during the day that he wanted to stay after school for academic help or a club, he also couldn't use the school phone.

I'm sure there are parents who would argue that children are more resilient when they forget things and learn from those mistakes. But that's not how life works. If I forget something, I can go get it or ask someone to help me. When my contractor locked himself out of our house one day this week, I texted our afterschool sitter, who drove to the house to let him in.

People make mistakes. We get to turn to others in our lives for help. Me? I want my son to be able to reach out to me if he forgets his lunch.

So, we got him a phone. Less than 24 hours later, he got home from school and texted me photos of the progress on the kitchen renovation with one word, "Update."

This phone might just be a gift to me.

***Read more quick takes at Kelly's blog, This Ain't the Lyceum, and have a wonderful weekend!***