

Thank God for each amazing day

If you want a meditation for enjoying a summer day, it would be hard to improve upon this bit of verse by e.e. cummings:

"I thank you God for this most amazing day; for the leaping, greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky, and for everything which is natural, which is infinite, which is yes."

Every day is an amazing day. Sadly, we too often miss the day, looking for another day, a more special day. But the day will come when we will yearn for just one more "ordinary" day.

I think back to my third year of high school in the minor seminary at St. Charles College in Catonsville (now Charlestown). I was diagnosed with acute nephritis, a serious kidney infection. I nearly died. I spent 30 days in the hospital. I was in a room with three other men. In the bed across from me to my right, was an elderly gentleman who was dying. When the nurses and visitors would come in to see him, he would repeat again and again: "I just want to see green grass again. I just want to see green grass again."

I have never forgotten that. I have never taken grass for granted! There is a greenly spirit in grass and trees. There is a life force in all of creation. Summer is a time to look again at what we so easily take for granted. Another poet put it so well when he told us to: "look at the old until it becomes new again."

The "blue, true dream of sky" appeals to me as well. I have always enjoyed the sky. I have always loved clouds. I still see figures in the clouds as I once did as a child. Each day's sky is an original portrait from God. We often travel great distances to see something new. Yet, all we have to do on any day is to look at the sky and realize a vast part of our world is new every day.

If you recall Thornton Wilder's play, *Our Town*, the main character Emily gets a chance to relive a day from her life. Her observation is that everyone is just going through the day without really living the day. She said something like: "Doesn't anyone ever look at each other? Doesn't anyone ever see?" It's so easy not to see the

people around us, or the world around us!

Cummings thanked God “for everything which is natural.” If you want to wake up to life, go for walks in your neighborhoods or state parks. Just notice the natural. On my nightly walks I have made friends with many of the creatures. There is usually a rabbit hopping by. There is often a frog waiting on the sidewalk to say hello. I meet people walking their dogs. And, of course, in summer, there are lightning bugs – lots of them. On certain nights this summer there have been a veritable constellation of “fireflies.” To me, this is pure magic. From a technology point of view, each generation lately has technology that most previous generations couldn’t even dream of. I find it comforting to realize that there is something we share today with our ancestors in the distant past – grass and trees and lightning bugs and sky and all of nature.

I enjoy the miracle of all that is around me because I have discovered I just don’t travel well. I have led a few tours to Ireland and the Holy Land and Europe. But I don’t sleep well on these trips, and my body never seems to adjust to the changes. I always enjoy the people, but I can enjoy people right here! When I came back from Lourdes with a cold I knew I wasn’t supposed to travel anymore!

So I enjoy the daily miracle of birds singing and cats purring and people laughing. In the now and in the natural is the infinite presence of God. The Spirit of God breathes life into us and into all things. Our proper attitude is to thank God for each amazing day.