

## JULY NEWSLETTER

### SUMMER ISN'T PERFECT - BUT THEN AGAIN, WHAT IS?

By: Fr. O'Dell

Most folks know that I love summer. When it comes to my favorite season - I guess you could say that it is the **Good Old Summer Time**. Truth is, I wait for summer all year long. I love the warm temps. I love the green leaves on the trees. I love the fact that the sun doesn't set until nine or nine thirty at night. I love being able to be outside in the air. On the coldest day in January - I literally dream of the summer that will be coming in just a few more months.

So, summer is finally here. But, as is true with most things, my expectations of what something is going to bring - and what it actually delivers are two different things. As much as I love summer - there are some drawbacks to this season, too. For example, there are lots and lots of mosquitos. When they bite they cause all kinds of itchy problems. Or what about green grass. It's beautiful, but it sure takes up a lot of time to keep it mowed and trimmed up. Then there is the hot weather. It's great but when you sweat through your clothes every five minutes - you are constantly having to put on fresh apparel. My point is simply this - nothing in life is perfect - including summer.

One of the drawbacks to being human is that we often expect perfection. We like perfection in our environment. We like perfection in our activities. We like perfection in our accomplishments. We like perfection in other people and in our relationships. The problem of course, is that we can never find perfection in any of those beings or things - because outside of God Himself - nothing is anywhere near perfect. So, when we have expectations that things are going to be perfect (my vision of the perfect summer day when dreamed about in the freezing cold of a January night) we are bound to be disappointed and maybe even frustrated and upset. The truth of the matter is that life is not about experiencing perfection but learning how to enjoy the good and accept the bad that comes our way - because we are going to have our fair share of both in our journey through life.

So, how do we enjoy the summers of our lives without having to have the "perfect summer." **First, keep expectations to a minimum.** When we carry around a lot of expectations we have a ready recipe for cooking up resentments in our lives. Very few of our expectations will ever become a reality. Learn to take things as they come - not how we plot and plan for them to be.

**Second, keep a sense of humor.** Even in the best of times, something is going to go wrong. Instead of contemplating about what isn't right, celebrate what is. One of the best ways to do that is to keep a sense of humor. Laugh at the foibles that happen around you and laugh at the things that are good as well. Bottom line, laugh and laugh a lot.

**Third, be grateful.** So often, I find myself failing to thank God for all the good things that He has blessed me with in life. When I am grateful, the negative things that come my way don't seem so big at all. When I am grateful, I can get outside of myself and help someone else. When I'm doing that, I'm not so busy concentrating on how "awful" things are in my own life.

**Fourth, suit up, show up, and shut up.** Life is meant to be lived - not observed. When we are actively living it, we have far less time to complain about what isn't right. When we aren't complaining, the upswing in our attitude is remarkable. Suit up - be ready to go on life's adventures at any time. Show up and participate with a joy that is visible, in all of the opportunities that God makes available to you. Shut up when you feel like making a negative comment about your lot in life and live what is good to the fullest.

July is here. Yes, summer is half over. Yes, there is still grass to be mowed, mosquitos to be swatted, clothing to be changed. But, you know what, God is good and the life He has given us is good too. Enjoy the rest of your summer.