

From the Pastor....

We are born *celebrators*, aren't we?
We go from one holiday, one *occasion*, to the next
Almost at breakneck speed.
And when they seem too far apart on our calendars
We either grow restlessly impatient,
Or we just invent a reason from the blue *to party hardy*.
Who knows why that is the case?
Maybe we need more than we know
To be distracted from harsher realities and/or routine days.
Or perhaps it's a learned and conditioned thing, i.e.,
Getting through the school year in the earliest of days
Was often the space taken up by the times between *holidays*.
And, of course, for some that made it possible to get up for work,
Especially on Mondays if there was a day off later in the week.

Whatever the reason, the truth is that we're pretty good at it, huh?
You name it, we've got themes, costumes, decorations, recipes
And **plans** for every named event.
And each year, they get a bit more elaborate.
To be sure,
There are some really good things that happen on these days.
Families gather; the event celebrated is re-lived with meaning;
Often new directions emerge, new commitments surface
And refreshed enthusiasm is generated.
But when we aren't careful and intentional
The event takes on a kind of mechanical or plastic nature
And is easily forgotten by the next one, or maybe even the next day.
The one flaw in our *celebrating nature* is possible loss of meaning,
The risk of superficiality, the tendency to pay lip service
To some very important things.
We talk of "putting Christmas away" on December 26;
Of having missed Easter completely and not wanting it to be a
"season."

We make a "fuss" on Mother's and Father's Days
But lose that spirit the rest of the year.
And birthdays get lost in the shuffle
Except if they are numbers like 21, 40, 50, 65.
And the occasional 100 gets some fanfare,
Even though it's likely forgotten by noon by the honoree.

There's a special day in July each year.
The fireworks fly, the beer flows,
The hot dogs and apple pie are more "American" than
day
Than on any other day.
But if that day doesn't somehow make special note of
its **real** blessings
It has missed something.
Independence Day reminds us of something unique we
have as a people.
It literally oozes the immeasurable qualities of freedom,
justice and equality
That few nations, now or ever, have enjoyed.
It rejoices in a land of rich resources and beauty seldom
paralleled anywhere.
And these things are **gifts to us** from such incredible
sources as
The accident of birth; the wisdom of forbearers; the
courage of defenders;
The creativity of philosophers, inventors, artists, crafts-
men, statesmen, diplomats
And the grace of God!

Celebrate the independence of America, but not just on
the 4th.

Honor and rejoice in it somehow every day.
But most of all, help to make it what it is designed to be
By living its ideals and granting them to one another.

Peace for the freedom,

Pastor E

