

Friday was our last day of school at St. Regis, so this Memorial Day weekend really feels like the start of summer. I like it when school ends by Memorial Day, and I'm an old fogey who thinks school shouldn't begin again till after Labor Day, and even though I encourage children to stay home till then they don't listen to me. This weekend starts to feel like summer. Pools open. Schools wind down. And people party; they celebrate graduations, weddings, holidays, out-of-town visitors; they go out of town so they can be out-of-town visitors at somebody else's party. Kids join other kids on sport teams and parents join other parents on bleachers. You may need a vacation just thinking about it all.

Summer offers so much that it's hard to figure out what to do and what not to do. Some people form these judgments rather easily--if it's not fun, don't do it; if it's fun, do it. But people also learn, sometimes the hard way, that not showing up for something *you* thought wasn't important can get you into a lot of trouble. You decide not to go to a particular family gathering or event, but later you find out people like expected you to be there. The calendar of summer activities has days similar to the Sundays and holydays of a church calendar--days when we expect people to show up. So learning the expectations of summer is pretty important. We're not all just individuals; we're part of a group. If some individuals don't participate the group suffers, and you notice it on the big days and events of a family's summer.

When Jesus prayed to his Father on the night before he died, he remarked about the importance of unity. You might think the reason for unity is so that the people involved could live in peace. That's true, but there's more to it than that. Jesus says when the disciples are one, the world will believe that the Father sent the Son. So the unity of the group has a purpose far beyond the group. It doesn't just make the disciples feel better, it inspires the world to believe in the Father and the Son.

At St. Regis we do a lot in groups, we have councils and committees and we ask everyone to reach their decisions by consensus. That's not just so that the individuals can feel better, not even so that the group can work better, but so that the group inspires others to believe in values like listening, caring, working together, and believing in a reality that's bigger than our preferences.

So, this summer, it's important for us to take time off, to relax and to enjoy all that summer has to offer. But when we do that, we never disconnect. Our time off should relax us so that our time on is profitable. Our time off should build our relationships and make us faithful to what we stand for. When we do that, we'll help the world believe in what we believe, that through Christ, everything finds meaning, including the lives of individuals and the ways they connect.