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Minister of Word and Sacrament

May 1, 2009

May Day

Dear Readers,

I remember May 1 from when I was a child. Maybe it is because I grew up in a different part of the country, but we had a tradition then and there that seems to foreign to people here and now. When May 1 came around we called that May Day. On May Day we prepared and presented "May Baskets."

These baskets were hardly baskets. As I recall they were paper nut cups or Dixie cups that we filled with candies and/or nuts. The candy itself was nothing special. Some M & M's or some jelly beans, and perhaps a chocolate or two. There was not much to it—but it was fun and another way to celebrate spring and the movement from one season to the next.

I remember how fun it was to not only prepare these "May Baskets" but to present them to our friends. It was really a good time to give them away. Certainly too, it was also fun to get them. I do not know how much my parents invested in the cost of this activity, but I'm sure it was not extravagant. What was extravagant was the joy that went into preparing for and sharing the tokens on the appointed day.



While I am sure that today I will receive no "May Basket" (mind you, I'm also not giving any either), what I am even more sure of is that we are losing sight of our ability to have fun and celebrate our lives without spending big quantitative of money and/or being elaborate. What has happened to the simplicity of having fun and enjoying life?

We have become a society that measures the quality of our entertainment by elaborateness or by how much cash we outlay. How is it that shopping became an activity in and of itself? I thought it was a necessary means. How is it that dinner out has become a regular activity? I



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thought it was a special treat. How is it that we now need new clothes with each new season? I thought we were supposed to wear those pants until we wore a hole in knee or the back end.

Let me suggest that some of our spending money and some of our elaborateness is overdone. Gifts can once again be small tokens—like baskets that were never baskets but little nut cups prepared with love. There is as much fun in sharing a simple hamburger as there is in having a full course meal. I also think that going for a walk or a drive down a back wooded road can be as entertaining as involved costly activities.

What if we had friends over again and shared a simple meal of soup or salad or baked potatoes? What if the focus was more on being together rather than the contents of the meal or the spotlessness of the house? What if we found it fun to play cards or board games? Does anyone remember how to play rummy or Clue?

I remember when May Baskets were incredibly fun. I remember when Aunt Elsie made sugar cookies. I remember when Dad would take us out for a drive. I remember when we talked face to face with our friends—I mean actually gathered them into the same room rather than emailed them or texted them. I remember it all as worth doing again.

Say “Yes” if someone invites you for hot dog casserole! The gift is not so much the casserole as it is the community that you have with that other person. Such was also the reality of those “May Baskets” of old. It was not so much about the candy as it was about the fun of preparation and sharing. Of such is holy...it is the communion of being in community with each other. So, I urge you to say “yes” not if, but when someone invites you for hot dog casserole!

Blessings,
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