

99 Ways to Celebrate

"I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness." (Philippians 4:4)

We celebrate the greatness of God's Creation, God's saving deeds, and the Spirit's acts of love among us. In turn, the love of God moves us to be creative in many ways especially through service to others. If we enjoy what we are doing, we magnify God's glory and we have reason to celebrate. Through good intentions our activities enhance us, our neighbor, and our Earth. Through full awareness of celebration as gift to be enjoyed we can enhance our communal mission to heal our wounded Earth. The following is my list of 99 activities/celebrations; I invite you to construct your own list and we can rest assured it will be different:

Acrobatics -- We have all done some form of acrobatics; mine include two from the past: balancing a hoe vertically on my little finger and standing on my hands. The human body may be quite agile and there is a beauty in seeing one perform acrobatics with a sense of pride and excellence. We celebrate God's gift of body form.

Anniversaries -- Milestones come in all our lives and, as we age, they seem to come more frequently. Others celebrate ours; we ought to give extra attention to theirs, for they have journeyed hard and deserve congratulations. Besides birthdays, such events include: marriages, ordinations, graduations, professions of vows, lengths of service, and retirements.

Art Appreciation -- At times we like to observe great art. The publicly displayed art object is a creation worth celebrating, and one which could inspire us to respect the work of human hands. Through appreciating human works we are better prepared to discover the works of the Divine Artist of the universe.

Assessing Environmental Resources -- Processes and facilities need critical oversight so that they may function better. I celebrate performing about two hundred of these assessments over time -- and our work inspired some to do good things. Assessing is a foreshadowing of the process of healing Earth on a grander scale, and the need to have good ecological models in place.

Audio-Recording -- Through several grants from the Kentucky Historical Society ASPI (when I was director) was able to record many elderly people and their unique experiences before they passed on. Obtaining sound records of special persons, events, and music is of great importance in archival history; the recorders are today's storytellers. We appreciate that our sacred tradition is a careful handing down over millennia of God's word; we need to partake in that tradition and to keep the records of what we hear so others can capture the words after the speaker has passed on.

Baptism -- My regular pastoral work only began in earnest in this century; among the pastoral duties that have impressed me most is performing baptisms. The faith of the people touches us; the power of God at work overwhelms us; the invitation to enter more closely into the Divine Family takes our breath away. What else can we do but celebrate?

Basketball -- This is the only competitive sport that has appealed to me over time; for a brief window during theology studies I was able to play occasionally with aging Jesuit peers and even hold my own. Spectator basketball has become difficult with years when I have found my heart palpitating during close games. Thus sports can be celebrations, if they are not taken too seriously.

Biking -- I no longer do this exercise but remember well the freedom that came from traveling the country roads in youth. I took a rather long bike trip once in British Columbia and Washington State. The ecologically minded know that bikes are modes of transport in which we exert power and yet are at the mercy of the elements; the activity is risky and depends on skill and attention. Biking is a part of our journey of life that has an end-of-trip celebratory aspect.

Birdwatching -- I listen to and watch a mockingbird and receive immense joy in the unique repertoire. Birds are so mobile and free and their song so happy even though no one gives them a special feast. Their graceful flights and many colors add to the atmosphere of joy, which God gives to many creatures, for us to discover to our own delight.

Birthdays -- Why not celebrate when we were born? It made our parents happy at a time when our own memory was somewhat undeveloped. Birthdays extend that initial happiness of successful delivery throughout life; they become even more significant when we survive our peers and show how surviving life is a gift.

Blessings -- We celebrate the many times we give blessings to others, and the many times we receive them. Amazingly, we all can give a multitude of blessings, for God's works are magnified through our expressions of gratitude. We can even bless God Who bestows on us the power to give blessings to all. Forget no one; bless all!

Browsing -- What a delight to go to a bookstore or library and just look around, and relax in the expectancy of what we shall accidentally find. It is a celebratory search for more knowledge and a search of our heart, which will not rest until, as St. Augustine says, it rests in God. Browsing is expectancy.

Camping -- Those of us who have camped multiple times find many of these episodes to be celebratory events. Taking part in camping is the making of a temporary home in a different place. This enjoyable but mobile condition recalls the search for a Promised Land, a celebration of the Great Exodus. Our camping is part of our life's journey before going home to God.

Card-Playing and Other Games -- I have enjoyed some social events when playing poker, *Scrabble*, *Monopoly*, euchre and other games. While never overly enamored of such activities, I have enjoyed the delight in the eyes of the more competitive players -- including over the years my mother, siblings and friends.

Climbing Trees -- I liked to climb a favorite apple tree in the yard, not very high but just above the ground. In youth and beyond, going upward is a type of recreation that involves immediate success above the everyday world. God gives us the energy to climb out of our present condition and attain something greater; we need to see and take the effort to climb some more.

Collecting Things -- I used to collect stamps and other items before I found a trace of materialistic present. Gathering treasures can be for the sake of preservation and necessity, or for less noble reasons. To collect in a beneficial manner is to look ahead to future need, to bring together so we and others can use the collectibles well. God moves us to collect scattered people into community.

Concrete Block Laying -- Some of us have gotten to like a particular pursuit more than others; one of my favorites was laying concrete blocks. One can see the immediate result of labor, something that will endure and be useful for others. This is worth celebrating, for it give us hope to do bigger things.

Contemplation/Meditation -- I like the precious time each day given to meditation. The act of sacred listening and conversation is one of the highest forms of celebration. By lifting our souls to God we enter more closely into the Divine Family and prepare our being for deeper conversation with our neighbor and all creation.

Conversation with Friends -- Actually, this most popular form of celebration is related to listening, except here the give-and-take is of utter importance. God makes covenants with us throughout history in formal conversation, giving of Self, and asking something in return. We need to continue that conversation with those who are lonely and in need of encouragement.

Cooking and Preparing Food -- This form of celebration deals with eating and living; we can share the joy of others who baked and cooked. Among other things I recall kraut-making, cider-making, and sausage-making. Eating the prepared foods together with others is truly a community-making activity. Jesus prepares a meal for disciples who survived a fruitless fishing night; he prepares for their coming together in church and future community.

Crafts -- I have tried few crafts for lack of patience and skill; only wildflower-arranging has come close to being my craft. I never tried sculpting, weaving, pottery-making, metal-working or stitching. Craftspeople make artifacts from native materials through a creative act in which their total person is involved. God creates and

communicates the divine Self as Master Crafter.

Dancing -- I have done very little fancy footwork lest I trip. Most of my bouts of dancing involved square dancing on rare but fun-filled occasions. One of the most entertaining forms of celebration involves a movement of coordination, harmony, and shared fun. This comes as a special model of the eternal "perichoresis," the celebration of the three Divine Persons.

Debating -- Who would celebrate debates? I, for one. I belonged to the debate club at Xavier University and enjoyed every moment of it. Debating taught us public speaking on our feet and a presence that bodes well all through our respective lives. Many battles are not cut-and-dry, but demand give-and-take, and debaters know this often overlooked fact.

Discovering and Learning -- Each day we learn something new and thank God for it. Insight or pure discovery, when the world becomes bigger for us, is a true moment of celebration. Our discovery of the Coming of the Word into our world is another moment of rapture, starting in the present life and extending into eternity.

Distributing Assistance -- It is imperative to give any form of help to those in need, and something worth celebrating -- and to seek their blessing in return. The sharing of our bounty with those in need is a moment of immense joy, for it is better to give than to receive. We participate in the sharing of God's love through the Spirit and help share even more with others.

Dramatic Performances -- In high school we were asked to take part in plays. Performers communicate in bold symbolic form specific emotions and struggles so that the audience will participate vicariously in the theatrics. We enter into the dramatic self-communication of God to us in Jesus' wonder-working.

Dreams and Visions -- Many of us forget our dreams, and yet daydreaming stimulates our creative urges. Emerging reality involves dreams, the anticipatory celebration of the New Heaven and New Earth. Earth-healers must see visions in order to help bring them about and to participate in the ongoing history of salvation.

Electronic Communications -- Modern ways can be appropriate forms of communication (phone, e-mail, etc.) for connecting and forming community over great distances at an instant's notice. We find here a bonding that resembles God's constant connecting with us in our prayer and meditation. We can bond with other peoples and affirm our brother- and sisterhood.

Energy Conservation Measures -- Saving energy can be a chore and duty, and yet when we do it well it can be worthy of celebration. If we remove more of the energy-wasting bulbs at home and office, we are achieving a notable conservation measure; when we do not use air-conditioning in the hottest summers on record, we ought to raise

a toast. Savings are needed in so many ways.

Ethnic Data-Gathering -- All have hobbies that are satisfying in some ways. Gathering statistics seems to be one of my fortés. In researching the various ethnic groups of this country, the basic goodness of people of a wide variety of backgrounds becomes evident. We are all one family even though we can each honor the other's uniqueness. Tolerate and celebrate differences.

Feasts -- We all like a feast on special occasions. Provided this is not excessive, feasting is a prime way to celebrate an event together with others. It is a continuation of God's covenant relationship founded in the Passover Seder and continued all the more in the Last Supper and our everyday Liturgies.

Feeding Fish -- We are not supposed to do this, but it is something that appeals to many of us in times of great wildlife stress. It is pure joy when hungry fish show such energy in getting fish food in their fishy sort of way. God delights in feeding us in the Eucharist, and in our satisfaction in communicating within the Divine Family. Fish teach us something.

Fire-Building -- I have always gotten a thrill out of building a fire. Our most primitive instincts hark back to the discovery and conservation of fire for heating, lighting and cooking. Our God is the Creator of fire, Light of the world and the Furnace of Love; You draw us near as moths are drawn to light.

Fishing and Seining -- I have had some good times fishing in the past, though hunting has never been part of my agenda. Let wildlife be. The Lord celebrated with Peter and the disciples when they had an unexpected heavy catch of 153 fish, and so celebration of catching fish (provided we consume them) is in order.

Food Preservation -- I like to pickle cucumbers along with green beans, carrots and peppers. Through various preserving techniques we can save our surpluses along with texture and taste over the non-producing season. This desire to save perishable bounty emphasizes food as gift worthy of sharing.

Food-Sharing -- Sharing the plenty of food is both a duty and a cause for celebration for we are privileged to feed the hungry.

Forest Protection -- We sought to protect the forestlands at the ASPI Nature Center during the years I was director. Preserving trees is a work of pure joy and a long-term duty. Recognizing the unique beauty of fragile lands (forests, rock formations, streams, etc.) makes us aware of the vulnerability of our Earth and our God-given responsibility to care for it.

Forgiveness -- Giving and receiving forgiveness are both part of life's greater blessings. We stumble, we fall, and we somehow with God's grace have the energy to start all over, and fresh starts can

be worth celebrating. A blessing in life has been to see people who truly believe that they are forgiven by a merciful God, and to know that I have contributed in a small part to this.

Funerals -- We celebrate those who live long and productive lives; when the funeral is for an infant, or for lives cut short by accidents or suicides it is far more challenging. Prayers for the dying, funeral wakes, and services show the desire to have company on the passage to eternity and a special respect for the deceased.

Gardening -- My garden is the primary location of re-creative activity involving the Earth and celebrating gardener. This includes sowing, tilling, protecting from the elements, and gathering in the produce. Gardening is an opportunity to teach, to indulge in physical exercise, and to touch the soil respectfully; it is the prime analogue of healing our troubled Earth.

Genealogical Research -- I have delved in this for a number of people and, together with others, I find the work fascinating. We are all ultimately brothers and sisters and so can find some common ancestry back in history, if we just go back far enough.

Gift-Giving -- Christmas and other times trigger our appetite to give to others from what we have. Selecting, wrapping and presenting gifts are all part of the sharing celebration of special events and occasions. Why not offer our days with all the efforts and sacrifices for the good of others, a special spiritual gift?

Harvesting -- We all like to celebrate the gathering of the fruit of the field: apple-picking, wheat-threshing, corn-shucking, silage-making, nut-gathering, even tobacco-housing, and on and on. Let each harvesting venture be a time of celebration.

Hiking and Backpacking -- Nature can best be celebrated when immersed within it. Few ways are better than to hike, alone or with others. A goal of hiking is a deeper appreciation of all of God's creation and our role in recognizing, preserving, and proclaiming its value. Immersion in nature beckons us, if we but take time.

Homecomings -- We like to return home and welcome others who do the same. Reconnecting with home runs very deep in human longing and unveils the hope and yearning to return to our true eternal home. Some are overcome by the effort it takes, but going home is a blessing and celebration for those striving in hope.

Homemaking -- We have to work to keep our house in order, but the effort is worth celebrating. Likewise we must keep Earth more homelike for all to enjoy. Spring cleaning can become a celebration, and so can improvements of our local environment. We implore God, our creator, to create in us a clean heart as a seat of a New Creation prepared by earthhealers on sacred mission.

Homilies -- I have given over four thousand homilies on Sundays

and holydays and special occasions. Each is a celebration of the Word of God -- and each is internally moving. Taking the Word of God and reflecting upon it with others is a sacred form of ministry. This continues the sacred instructing by the Risen Savior to the Emmaus disciples and is carried on to this day.

House-building -- In my younger years, I assisted my family in building about eight houses; later, along with others, I put up buildings at the ASPI Nature Center. Although construction involves effort in designing, foundation-laying, and building the structure, the emerging building is a sight to behold. Furthermore, we build houses when we build community.

Hugs and Kisses -- Coming together and departing are always moments of thoughtful remembrances and intimacy in which each of us participates. These are human ways of expressing profound emotion with others in a most personal way. God's love for all of us is a hug of comfort in consolation freely given and a kiss of acceptance in merciful forgiveness of our wrongdoing.

Jogging -- After forty-three years of jogging, I must confess I still bear the hope that heaven includes jogging. I took part in a number of races but it was the long bouts alone that made the activity so enjoyable. We run a race, as St. Paul says, with a goal in mind -- the goal of completing life's journey successfully.

Jokes and Humorous Discourse -- Here is an activity that takes delicate skill and sensitivity to fulfill, for if we do not take care it can easily become cruel or cynical. The challenge is great for we are to recognize the inherent humor of God, a most difficult attribute to imitate.

Landscaping -- I have liked the process of redesigning the landscape so it will grow edible fruits, berries, nuts, vegetables, and herbs. Re-creating the immediate land environment is a pleasant task full of possibilities, a skill, an art, and an opportunity to be truly creative. Here the land itself can be helped in giving joyful praise to the Creator, and we too can participate as part of the community of all beings.

Laughing -- One or other light-hearted radio show still appeals to me after six decades. Our response to the jokes of others is a proclamation of our oneness with them and willingness to share the deepest sense of healthy joy. We have an opportunity to take ourselves less seriously.

Letter-Writing -- Whether well-phrased as snail mail or e-mail, this act gives a thrill to the recipient and may be a moment of celebration by all parties.

Listening -- Sometimes we have to stop and listen. This is an often neglected art. It is worth celebrating when it permits others to unload burdens or break silence and communicate with their fellow human beings. We imitate our God who calls and is listening to the

cries of our heart and of the Earth.

Liturgical Participation -- We return thanks in a formal way which includes celebratory singing, peacemaking, and communion. This act extends the sacred Passover from slavery to freedom and the Calvary event extended in space and time.

Loving Service -- We all have to be of service and assist others in their acts of love. Those formally united as partners in marriage can do this with mutual support and happy results; they celebrate with the Creator in the grand act of creation, the most pleasurable and joyful form of human/divine celebration.

Mountain-climbing -- Achieving a peak in the Rockies took several tries for me; but, after being told to take our June expeditions from the **south** side of Crestone Mountain in Colorado, the success was obvious. All of life is like climbing mountains and taking advice on how to do it; the climbing is both a single and collective enterprise.

Music Appreciation -- We rest and listen to good music and this relieves tensions. Good musicians and music lovers enjoy getting together and playing tunes through string, percussion, and wind instruments. This universal way of having fun expresses the harmony of God's creation, a harmony found in the Triune God and revealed in the music of all creation.

Peace-making -- Bringing peace to a family is one of the most comforting moments of our lives -- and worth celebrating. To make lasting peace is a holy enterprise with far fewer resources than those needed to wage war successfully. We call on the peacemaking Christ to help us be creative in limited resources and to imitate him who was alone and poor in his mission.

Pet Care -- Having pets at various times in life has been pure joy and one shared with the special animal. Pets give and return unconditional love, something that we could discover is both joyful and worthy of imitation. God gives us animals to soften the hard parts of our lives, and through animal friends we come to respect all creatures to deeper degrees.

Philosophical Reflecting -- Most of us like to delve in the realms of organized thought. Yes, the "second" act of thinking gives joy to all who can appreciate the creating power of mental activity, both their own and that of others. God gives us superior rational power to be used for extending our love to all, and moments of reflection are part of the symphony of rational life.

Photographic Appreciation -- Seeing a beautiful well-photographed scene inspires us to help heal our wounded Earth. The text of each "daily reflection" is accompanied by a carefully selected topic. We need the balance of word and picture, for it tells us that a better world is worth visualizing and celebrating, and that art is an integral part of good ecology.

Physical Exercising -- When we desire to take an hour a day and perform physical exercise, we are able to celebrate the healthy body. We honor the body through integral and healthy activity, thereby accepting bodily stewardship (God's gift and the temporary nature of that gift). We are the Spirit's temple, not merely a dwelling place but a seat of activity to help serve others.

Picnicking -- We like to attend picnics and enjoy the social life and good food. Such gatherings become shared and joyful experiences with others in the great outdoors. It reminds us that the multiplication of the loaves took place in just such settings, and that what Jesus did had lasting value.

Planning -- I take off part of every month and each week to plan ahead. Planning for the future shows that we can look ahead with hope, that we can anticipate future celebration, and that we respect order in our lives. We also show in planning that we can practice Earth-healing through our God-given rational powers.

Poetry-Writing -- On rare and spontaneous occasions I attempt to write poetry. Our words can be arranged so as to express harmony through our speaking them in a unique pattern that says who we are. In composing poetry we come to appreciate the harmony of all of nature and strive to express this in our own poetic way.

Praying and Thanking God -- The supreme moment of all celebration is to go out and thank God for the little things of life, for the chance to pause from work, through a deepened breath, and our willingness to see goodness in the person next to us. We pray too often by begging; we need to pray by thanking God. Let our life be a ministry of gratitude preparing for future celebration.

Public Speaking -- I have always enjoyed public speaking more than being passive in the audience. A proclamation of what is within us is needed when silence can no longer be contained; it is bearing witness. It is a participation in the specific act of God expressing divine pleasure through the Incarnate Word being spoken in our midst. God speaks publicly in the words of Jesus.

Reading -- Those of us who like to read a book a week know the thrill of turning the pages. When we read, we are learning, relaxing, and being inspired; we celebrate both the art of the writer and the skill of the reader to assimilate knowledge. Being people of the Book, we find God's word in Scripture as worthy of our reflective reading. Would that all people could and would read.

Recycling -- Each month I recycle metal, glass, paper, cardboard, and plastic. Returning resources so they can be reused gives joy to our hearts and allows us to celebrate the goodness of all creation where there is no waste. An all-good God sees all creatures as good. Lord, have mercy on us the wasteful ones.

Resting and Sleeping -- Our flagging energy levels mean that we ought to get quality rest when beckoned. My problem is that I like to work rather than sleep. However, just refraining from activity can be worth celebrating. When done in a prayerful manner, rest imitates the Creator of the Sabbath who wants us all to take time off to rest and appreciate that what exists is good.

Rock-work -- Working with rock was in my blood. The beauty of shells in our native inland limestone rock was always amazing to behold as a child. I found joy in choosing rocks, fitting them in place, cementing them, and standing back in admiration. Stone is foundational material and, when we work with it in paths or walls or structures, we are imitating the God who made the Earth. Rockwork, like planted trees, will outlive us and will make us aware of our mortality.

Scientific researching -- I often dream of continuing the research I performed in my earlier chemistry period -- though I was not as talented as other peers. The organizing, the executing, and the joy of results appeal to us. A job and competitive project for others, a striving for fame or fortune by still others, but for the scientific-minded this is a rolling back of the veil of mystery. The scientist delves into deeper Mystery, an unexpressed celebration.

Sight-seeing -- When travel is not burdensome, sight-seeing is a moment of great joy and celebration. Many spend time in nature, not damaging or threatening it, but viewing it from a distance. They are able to see with the gift of sight the glory of God shining up at us from all of creation, and they can proclaim this as good. They may even be the virtual tourists of the world.

Singing -- I like to sing in Church, an art I arrived at late in life with the encouragement of our parish music director. The soul is refreshed in singing by both the performer and the listener. Our voices can produce a harmony that goes out and invites others to participate. In celebrating together we sing with singing birds, rippling brooks, and whispering trees.

Smelling Flowers -- Few of us consider the exquisite scent of the rose or the marigold or the dandelion as bringing back memories of long ago. Fragrances haunt us and call for celebrations.

Smiling and Greetings -- This comes hard for some of us with bad teeth, but our smile, whether strong or weak, can encourage others to do the same on a deeply personal level. God smiles on us in the freshness of creation; in the consolation of our own hearts we communicate by smiling back. Let's all keep smiling.

Solar Applications -- Using the solar rays for space and water heating, cooking, food drying, and operating vehicles and pumps is worthy of celebration. The sun, a source of life, reflects the vast goodness of God in creating an Earth on which we could live and flourish within the radiance of a gentle sun.

Star-Gazing -- Sometimes we simply look up at the heavens; sometimes we look up and wonder. The questions arise as to vastness of distance and the multitude of heavenly bodies. To look out and realize the immensity of the universe is to find our own humble place before the awesome majesty of our Almighty Creator.

Story-telling -- I love to tell stories, but in early years would confess the somewhat over-stretched truth of mine. People are naturally captivated by stories because these link us to our past and invite us to carry the tales on to future generations. The stories, in turn, enhance sacred tradition and God's showing mercy from generation to generation through story-telling.

Supervising Projects -- To bring projects to completion always seems an opportunity to celebrate. We need to celebrate the little things of life and to find what others, especially youth, find worth giving special attention to. In doing this we enter into the responsible care that God gives us for all creation.

Visiting the Imprisoned -- Those locked behind bars need a kind word, a smile, a prayer together just to go on in life. Here is an opportunity to be like Christ who acts as our companion and who wants us to extend his graceful presence to forgotten ones, especially those locked away due to an unforgiving culture.

Tasting Food -- Tasting good things enhances the quality of our lives and can be worth celebrating. We are given this sense so that we can appreciate good things and thus we celebrate the gifts that God gives us in our senses.

Teaching Good News -- Opening minds from kindergarten to graduate school and beyond is a sharing in learned treasures received. We imitate God's self-communication of the Son as Word by opening the doors of the Triune God through spreading Good News.

Tilling the soil -- We touch the Earth by being close to the dust of our origin and destiny. The act allows us to have communion with the Earth itself, a solemn moment when we remember our humility and the coming of the Incarnate Word in our lives.

Traveling for Good Reasons -- For some of us, traveling becomes a chore and yet the journey's end is worth celebrating. Travel is a form of movement in our life's passage and allows us to take a variety of routes through the prompting of the Spirit.

Tree-Planting and Care -- It is always fun to plant trees especially with young people. Some of the enduring reminders of God's creation are the trees; they need some care and replacement when they die. However, most of our planting will outlive us -- a reminder of our mortality. Let's make trees part of our lives.

Using Numbers -- For those of us who are compulsive counters of

many things, one more challenge keeps our minds agile. We know there are creative ways of doing the counting and recording the results, as though they matter. But do they?

Video Recording -- About one hundred times I have interviewed experts for TV environmental programs. This acknowledges the good work of otherwise unrecognized people. The interview becomes a blessing and our attempt to make permanent their meaningful efforts to heal our wounded Earth.

Visiting the Sick -- Visiting the sick is a corporal work of mercy. We do this by showing cheerfulness and compassion. We encourage the ill to offer sufferings joyfully to the Lord and therein be powerful instruments of assistance to others.

Walking -- When I could no longer jog, I took up walking at a far slower pace; this exercise allows time to see, reflect, and count the blessings of the gift of mobility. When friends walk dogs they learn to appreciate the animal's celebration of the world of smells. If we walk thankfully we find God walking with us, and discover far more than the faster-paced joggers experience.

Water Sports -- I have delved superficially into a variety of water sports: canoeing, sailing, snorkeling, swimming, splashing, and wading. These activities appear quite fulfilling. Water sports involve touching sacred water from which we evolved; we come in contact with this substance with its life-sustaining properties.

Weddings -- Weddings are meant to be joyful as lives are bonded together so that new life may come forth. Our presence helps affirm this. Weddings are those special events when God and all witnesses bestow special blessings on the married couple.

Wildlife Management -- Let the wildlife live and flourish. Our respect and admiration of them in the wild help magnify God's glory, and this is all the more true when we manage the world's creatures wisely. For those who wish to forego management, recall that the absence of wildlife permits a void often filled by the greedy and exploiters.

Wine-making -- I tried my hand at this occupation once. For those who engage in wine-making or wine-tasting, this is a time of hard work that lapses into celebration. People appreciate a good wine, and so does God who gives wine a special liturgical place.

Winter Sports -- As a youth, I experienced memorable thrills when we sent sledding on the steep hillsides of our farm. Our mild winters rendered the sports somewhat simple in nature and nothing like winter sports further north. Winter sports, happy memories.

Wood-working -- My wood-working has consisted in cutting and trimming trees, sawing and splitting firewood, and constructing with wood lumber. My dad liked to carve with wood, and maybe some day I

will do the same. Wood workers glory in the product and in its durability, beauty, color, texture and grain. Behold the wood of the Cross! Ignominy is transformed into celebration.

Writing -- What we write, we can celebrate. I write a thousand words a day in the early hours when creative juices flow. God writes salvation history in our hearts and those of other creatures, if we but take the time to see and read what is written. Our own writings may have a current purpose and also may outlive us. Jesus is recorded to have written only once and that in sand. Let's always write for a purpose and audience whether now or later.

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