

## *Saturday "Sermon"*

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### **From Season to Season**

Last week Georgetown College held its first-ever reunion for alums who are or who have been in Christian ministry. I found this to be a delightful way to catch up with friends whose vocations have also been related to the Church.

One of the best parts of the reunion was being with Joe Price, one of my former roommates. Joe is Professor of Theology at Whittier College in California, and he gave me a copy of his latest book, *From Season to Season: Sports as American Religion*. Chapters include such subjects as "The Pitcher's Mound as Cosmic Mountain," "The Super Bowl as Religious Festival," and "The Final Four as Final Judgment." If Joe lived in Bristol, he'd also have a chapter on "Racing and Wreckage as Ritual Renewal," or something like that.

Thinking about Joe's book caused me to wonder about what it is that we're really teaching our children these days. It seems to me that many of the activities in which we involve our kids, whether it be sport, dance, music, or even scouting, may have unintended effects in their lives. Have you ever wearily wondered why we spend our afternoons, nights and weekends hauling our children from one frenzied activity to the next?

We do this for many reasons, of course, but I wonder whether some of the unspoken ones might be that (1) everyone else is doing it; (2) it reflects well on us as parents to have kids who excel; (3) there might be scholarship money down the road; or even that (4) having wealthy children is a part of our retirement planning. The difficulty with these less examined motivations is that they don't have to do with benefits to our children at all—they have to do with benefits to us!

Sometimes I wonder whether what we're really teaching our children is that materialism and fame are the only things that matter very much. I wonder what would happen if we reshaped our lives around those things our children really want from us: spending unhurried time together; knowing and being known in the depths of their being; loving and being loved for who they are, not for what they do.

I'm all for extra-curricular activities, but I wonder what would happen if we refocused our family life on making our children's experience with God more vital and alive; if we helped them to understand that living in joyful and faithful relationship with God is the only anchor that will hold fast in the years that lie before them. That might make "from season to season" a very different experience for them—and for us.