

DO IT AGAIN!

The heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1).

Question: Because something happens repeatedly does that make it inconsequential? We earthlings find it all too easy to dismiss as unimportant an occurrence that is repeated over and over again. The mere fact of its repetition makes us think that the phenomenon is thereby of minor significance. But think again. If one giraffe suddenly developed a 7-foot neck, everyone would marvel in wonder. But because *all* giraffes have 7-foot necks, we become bored by the monotony and blind to the sheer magnificence of this amazing animal.

October is here. During the next few weeks God is going to put on a lavish display of delicate colors and intoxicating aromas the likes of which haven't been seen in upstate New York since... well, last October. A few will pause and marvel in wonder at the breathtaking beauty and praise God for what He has done. Others will yawn and go about their routines completely oblivious to the multisensory symphony of grace all around them. "It's just the annual change of seasons," they'll say. "It happens all the time. It's the laws of nature, you know. It's no big deal."

In his spiritual classic *Orthodoxy*, G. K. Chesterton examines this whole question of things that recur. He is especially enamored by the way children love repetition. Whether it is a song, a game, or an activity, he notices that children delight in doing the same thing again and again.

Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every evening, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we. The repetition in Nature may not be a mere recurrence; it may be a theatrical encore ("The Ethics of Elfland," pp. 264f.).

So, let me make a humble suggestion. Take a walk in the woods this month and experience the wonder of what God is doing again for the umpteenth time. To get the full benefit, you are going to have to become like a child again (Matthew 18:3). But don't miss the spectacle because "it happens all the time." Rather, "exult in the monotony" of this glorious moment of splendiferous majesty.

*Earth's crammed with heaven,
and every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes -
the rest sit round it and pluck blackberries.*

(Elizabeth Barrett Browning)

Pastor Stan