

One of the most difficult adjustments that I had to make as a New Englander living in Florida is the way in which we view September. As a young man, September was relief from the stifling heat (high 70's), going back to school, the turning of leaves to vibrant reds, yellow and orange, comfortable sweaters and the smell of bon fires. Now, as the August dog days crawl to their end, I think about the 5th month of unrelenting summer and the serious onset of the worst part of hurricane season. Friends are wind proofing the windows, clearing the gutters and suspiciously eyeing the low areas in the streets and yard for signs of flooding. It is the time when we turn our homes into sanctuaries, and prepare the safe spaces within them against the coming storms.

This year, I am also thinking about being in the September of life, closer to the end than the beginning, seeing the difficulties of life as tragedies instead of as adventures, looking for the safe places in my heart and soul to shelter against the storms we know are coming. The sanctuary for me in life's September has become the Church, our loving parish. There I am strengthened spiritually in the sacraments and prayers that are offered every week. The company of both family and friends are my buffers against creak of older bones, and the losses that come with passage of time. It is there that I can be at peace, though the winds blow, and the floods threaten and the thunder booms, I am safe, close by those I love and in the graceful arms of God.

If in your life, it seems the storms are getting stronger, and the refuge is getting more difficult to find, we invite you to shelter with us, enjoy the love and peace and safety of our parish home.

Yours in Christ,

Father Michael