
No Particular Place to Go

**An article from the Cathedral Times
by Dean Sam Candler**

I don't know the exact history of the "Labor Day" holiday. Perhaps we are supposed to pause and intentionally honor "labor," both our own and others'. But I doubt that most of us follow those rules.

Instead, Labor Day has become the mark of all sorts of things. It is the unofficial end of summertime. It (or the Saturday before it) is the beginning of dove hunting season. Its weekend begins the college football season. Usually, ragweed pollen is in the air, and allergies start.

Many of us, I daresay, don't do much at all on Labor Day. And that "nothing," I suggest, is a good thing. I think of the old Chuck Berry words:

*Ridin' along in my automobile
My baby beside me at the wheel
I stole a kiss at the turn of a mile
My curiosity runnin' wild
Cruisin' and playin' the radio
With no particular place to go.*

Of course, the singer in Chuck Berry's song may indeed have had particular activities in mind, but his words ring true. Having "no particular place to go" can be a deeply satisfying ride. I, too, had no particular place to go this past Monday. And the book I was reading on Monday, "A Gentleman in Moscow," described at that point a man—a poet, in fact—who was walking through the city in the early morning:

And with no destination in mind, I crossed the Moika and Fontanka Canals, I passed the shops, and the rose-hued facades of the grand old homes until, at last, I reached Tikhvin Cemetery, where the bodies of Dostoevsky and Tchaikovsky slumber a few feet apart. (Amor Towles, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, page 182).

No destination in mind.

The end of summer, and the beginning of the school calendar, is also regarded as a welcome return to routines. Over and over at church, I talk with people who are glad for routines to resume, glad for classes to start back, glad for practices and rehearsals and schedules to get back in order.

Yes, there is something good and necessary about having something to do. We need that order and those schedules. We need those appointments and places to go. But we also need to schedule time in which we have absolutely nothing to do, and no particular place to go.

Labor Day, then, can be that loving reminder, occurring just as routines have resumed, that we still can have no particular place to go. And that time with no particular place to go can be a fruitful and loving time.

Church, also, can actually be that place, where we have no destination in mind, and no particular place to go. Of course, we have to make church a destination when we take time to wander over here. But, once we do, our time can be best spent by NOT trying to make something in particular happen. By NOT trying to pray the right way, or trying to talk to the right person, or trying to learn the greatest spiritual truth. And Church is certainly not about trying to get into the particular place we think of as heaven. At its best, Church is that place where we need no other destination.

Yes, it is good to have times when we have no particular place to go, when we have no destination in mind. Some of us also call those times “hanging out,” with no need to determine a purpose at all. Come join me, at church one day, come hang out, when you have no particular place to go, no destination in mind. God might just have heaven in mind for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Candler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Dean of the Cathedral of St. Philip