By Pat Haggerty

For many years, I viewed Labor Day as a time of transition. I was in education, and Labor Day was the demarcation line between summer vacation and the start of school. There was something both sad and energizing about this time. I was sad to see the leisure days of summer come to an end, but I was energized thinking about my new students with all of their hopes, dreams, and challenges. Experiencing Labor Day was like experiencing New Year's Day in the middle of the year.

Parents experience this feeling in a somewhat different way. They look forward to resuming some kind of schedule with their children. They look forward to new opportunities for their children. They anticipate all the new things their children will learn, and they look to this time as one of growth.

As I reflected on the readings at Sunday's mass, I wondered how I could make the connection between the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time and the celebration of the holiday of Labor Day. Was there a connection?"

I took the Communion Antiphon as a pivotal juncture for the meaning of the two. "Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my god. My soul is thirsting for the living God." Our whole existence is a quest for satiating that thirst we have—a thirst for the Lord, a thirst for answers, a thirst for community. Labor Day provides us with a turning point—not only a seasonal turning point but a liturgical turning point.

During this transitional time from summer to fall, we renew ourselves and look to the future. We look to what it is we can do as students, parents, grand-parents, community members. We pause in our lives to reassess what things mean to us. We pause and look to what might be opportunities for us. We pause and reflect on where we are in our lives.

Where are we as workers? Do we view our work life as a chance to share not only our knowledge but our Christianity, as well? As student-workers, do we try to figure out how Christ fits into our lives of learning? As retirees and volunteers, do we assess how our freedom with

time and scheduling provides us with the means to be Christ-like and people-centered in our daily comings and goings? "Like a deer. . .my soul longs. . ."

Whatever our position in life at this time, let's take this time to re-evaluate ourselves and our identities as people of God. We don't have to separate Labor Day, the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time—or even our Christianity. All are one. As the psalm refrain says: "let us sing joyfully to the Lord."