

# Quit Complaining About the Weather

It's wintertime in the upper Midwest. Aside from the fact that I'll be waking up to snow on the ground every morning from here until, oh, probably mid-March, I'll also be hearing people complain about the cold weather until it dies a slow, painful death in the spring. But even then, I suspect my fellow Michiganders will find something else outside that bothers them. Come April, they'll likely be groaning about the briskness of the wind or the fact that they still must wear a jacket because its only 50 degrees and overcast.

If my 35 years of life have taught me anything, it's that nothing so unites complete strangers more than criticism of the weather. Rarely is it to everyone's liking, even on sunny, 70-degree days. If the weather were a person, it would be simultaneously the most popular and most bullied kid in school.

Which is why I feel bad for the weather. Constantly expressing our shared antipathy towards it is no way for a society to behave. It's time for someone to stand up for the weather again, as others have done in the past.

St. Alphonsus is a one of my favorite Catholic saints. A child prodigy who gave up a career as a successful Italian lawyer to become a priest, and now considered a Doctor of the Church, Alphonsus wrote thousands of pages on spiritual warfare. One piece of advice he had for those who were striving for holiness was to stop complaining about things. In one particular essay, he [encouraged Christians to abstain from saying](#), "What intolerable heat! what horrible cold! what a misfortune! what wretched weather! or other words expressive of repugnance to the will of God. We ought to will everything to be as it is, since God is he who orders it all."

St. Teresa of Ávila, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish nun, also commented on this subject. "Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you," [she wrote](#). "All things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things." Regarding the weather in particular, [she purportedly once said](#), "There is no such thing as bad weather. All weather is good because it is God's."

It's not difficult to have positive feelings when we're enjoying the weather. Who doesn't enjoy watching a peaceful snowfall while sipping hot chocolate by a roaring fire, or playing among the brilliant fallen leaves of a crisp autumn day?

Granted, people don't want to be inconvenienced. And weather inconveniences all of us. Snow forces us to shovel our driveway and leave early for work in order to navigate the slippery roads. Rain makes us stay indoors when we'd rather be outside walking our dog or throwing the frisbee with friends.

It's easy to be grateful for pleasant weather, but how often do we thank God for those times of weather misery? If God chooses to send us a rainy afternoon or a 95-degree "dog day of summer," we should thank Him for that situation. Not only do we not know if that particular day will be our last, but there's beauty to be found in each of them, as they help instill a sort of unseen rhythm of life. Just as there is a time for sadness and a time for joy, so there is also a time for the slowness of winter and the melancholy of fall.

Seasons also help us gain greater appreciation for enjoyable weather. "[O]nly if you have been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain," [former President Richard Nixon once said](#). I think it's fair to say that only when you've experienced the harshness of the coldest winters can you truly appreciate the glories of the warmest summers. I wish more people lived in the Midwest for this reason alone, and that my fellow

Northerners would stop being snowbirds, migrating to the South from November through March. It's natural for folks to want a leisurely retirement, but let's not kid ourselves: so long as we're on this side of eternity, nothing's going to be completely stress-free, not even the sunny skies of Florida.

The next time the weather is less than ideal, instead of rushing to the nearest person to complain about it, let's each take a second to thank God for letting us live one more day to enjoy His majestic creation. Even if the weather isn't entirely to our liking, we should never forget that it is to *God's liking*, and by that fact alone, we shouldn't be criticizing it.

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