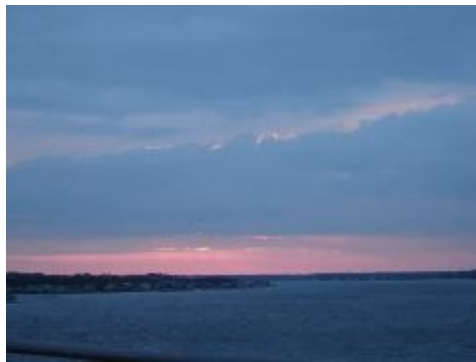


I'm at the Beach!

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By : Matthew Zabala

This was the first descriptive essay I wrote about a family vacation to Ocean City, Maryland in July of 2010.



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Anyone who has never gone to the beach before is missing out on the opportunity of a lifetime. The ocean is a plethora of natural wonder and is a utopian experience. No matter how hard I try I cannot properly describe the beach to someone. I can use a dictionary, thesaurus, and every adjective and vivid verb in the English language, trying to describe the scenery and still would not give it justice. I went to Ocean City, Maryland two years ago with my girlfriend and family and it was a truly amazing experience.

The night before we left my girlfriend Kristen, and I were so excited that we could barely sleep. My parents, Kristen, and I, woke up at 8:00 a.m. to pack the car with our clothes, food, and the absolute essentials, my fishing rod and gear. Two hours later and as usual we were waiting on my sister Dee, my brother-in-law Randy, and my nieces Hannah, and Krissy. It was the beginning of July, and even at ten oâ clock in the morning the humidity was so high that my t-shirt was sticking to my back like a stamp to an envelope. This was just the start of some sizzling, record-breaking temperatures that I am not sad to say I experienced on our vacation.

My parents, Kristen, and I, prayed up before we pulled out of our driveway and headed southeast from Johnstown, Pennsylvania toward Ocean City, Maryland. Before I knew it we arrived at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge just in time for a downpour of rain. As I looked out of the window, I noticed that the hammering rain had changed the hue of the brackish water from a soft gray-blue to a deep aquamarine. The gusting wind had caused the usually small waves to become white capped and abnormally large. As we drew nearer to our destination, the rain subsided and the humidity was almost unbearable, but I did not mind. We were on our way to the beach!

Finally, after seven and a half hours we pulled onto Coastal Highway, the spinal cord of Ocean City, which runs adjacent to the coastline. Coastal Highway, not unlike the ocean, seems to go on endlessly. As is my tradition when I pull onto Coastal Highway, I put my window down and let the smell of the sand and sea waft into the car. The rain had started again, but now it was only a light mist. The temperature had cooled off now too. It was no longer a stifling 99 degrees, but a reasonable 82 degrees. My nieces, Kristen, and I, decided to take an evening swim in the ocean, which was making swishing and sloshing sounds like a washing machine on spin cycle. Looking out at the turbulent waves we all got a little shaken. Some of the waves were breaking close to twelve feet high. There were even warnings announced on the local radio stations about how strong the riptide was. I was not scared though, I was at the beach! When I entered the sea, I was surprised at how comfortably warm the water was. This lukewarm water was deceiving though, because it only seemed warm due to the misty rain and drop in temperature.

The waves were rushing toward me like a bull to a matadorâ s red flag. The swells crashed violently into my legs and hurled the grainy salt water into my mouth. My mouth tasted as if someone dumped a whole shaker of salt on my tongue. I was waist deep in the ocean now, and could feel the riptide playing tug-o-war with my legs. I felt helpless while the power of the sea stricken my every movement. I mustered my strength and carried on. After all, I was at the beach. The only way of not getting slammed down to the sandy bottom of the ocean floor was to dive straight through the waves. Whenever a wave raced toward me I pointed my arms straight out, tucked my head in between them, and lunged forward, slicing through the wave like a samurai sword. Finally, I made it out past the break line where I could just float around effortlessly. I was exhausted from fighting the angry swells of the sea. I got a chance now to take look at the scenery of the beach from a dolphinâ s perspective. I was having so much fun that I was now 100 yards down shore from everyone else. Instead of exchanging more blows with the riptide I just swam straight toward the beach and walked weary back to Kristen and my nieces.

As I sat down on the coarse beach and pushed the tepid sand between my toes, I looked out across the endless expanse of sea. I was starting to come down from the surge of adrenaline I felt from wrestling with the tide, and my hands trembled as a result. Suddenly, a wave of serenity rush over my mind. â Am I dreaming?â I wondered. No. This was not a dream. It is the brush stroke of God. Iâ m at the beach.

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