

Missionary Commentary

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 22, 2024

Sunday Readings

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20
Psalm 54:3-6, 8
James 3:16-4:3
Mark 9:30-37

[USCCB link to Readings](#)

Becoming “Ordinary” Saints

Today is an “Ordinary Sunday.” In the Church’s liturgical cycle “ordinary time” is the series of 34 weeks, two-thirds of the 52-week calendar year; it is devoted to reflection on the mystery of Christ and our mission of daily living our faith.

“Ordinary Time” appears so common, humdrum, routine, prosaic; it implies the uneventful, the “nothing special” season of the year. This period is outside the Advent-Christmas and Lenten-Easter major liturgical feasts; it seems so anticlimactic. We settle into regular, daily life—yes, into the ordinary.

Intimate Connection. There is a profound relationship between the major Church feasts and ordinary, daily life. Because of Christ’s coming, no time is ordinary; *all time* takes on new meaning and significance. Seemingly ordinary, daily life and everyday existence have been profoundly transformed; they have become “Christic,” renewed and transformed in Christ. Indeed, for perceptive, reflective Christians, *no time is simply ordinary*. God makes all things new in Christ.

Our faith affirms that Jesus totally shared our ordinary existence. Taking on human flesh and blood (our ordinary humanity) was God’s design in Jesus. Profound and fantastic! Overwhelming and humbling! Beautiful and meaningful! Human language can only stammer and stutter; it fails to capture the depth and significance of the Incarnation, God’s being for us, with us, one of us, both in life and death. No longer is life “ordinary,” in the sense of lacking profound importance; every day is a day of living in Christ’s life.

Living the Ordinary. We realize that our lives—life itself—are filled with routine, repetitive, monotonous, ordinary activities. Herein lies our vocation and mission, our spirituality; we are called to be “saints of the ordinary.” We are called to walk the unspectacular path to sanctity.

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta has said: “We cannot do great things; we can only do ordinary things with great love.” Thérèse of Lisieux, the saint of the “little way,” developed a spirituality of ordinariness in which one offers each moment and action to God.

Closer to home, we recall our own mothers and fathers; they are truly “saints of the ordinary.” Mothers prepare meals, do laundry, care for children, say their prayers over and over and over again. Fathers labor daily as clerks, security guards, farmers, office workers (often even in times of sickness); their care of the family is a constant concern. We are all

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served by people doing ordinary jobs (drivers, gardeners, postal workers, teachers). If only we had open eyes and sensitive hearts, seeing God's presence in the daily, the ordinary!

Daily Commitment. Many Christians follow that beautiful tradition of praying the morning offering when they awake each day: "O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer you all my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day...."

We are ordinary people. Your life, my life, is very ordinary; it will most probably remain very ordinary and commonplace. Yet, we are invited to fill the ordinary with God's transforming presence. It is our path of "humble holiness," our way of "living mission." Honestly, I like feasts and celebrations; I also appreciate "ordinary time" very much; that is where I feel comfortable. It is precisely through the ordinary that I hope to reach that sublime goal: being an "ordinary" saint!

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading — Wisdom 2:12, 17-20 – The Book of Wisdom was written in the Greek language about 100 BC. Christians see a profound connection between the sufferings of the righteous person and the passion of Christ.

Responsorial Psalm — Psalm 54:3-6,8 – This psalm affirms that "the Lord upholds my life," reflecting Christ's own faith and prayer when he is persecuted; we express the same faith in our times of suffering and difficulty.

Second Reading — James 3:16-4:3 – Here Saint James encourages us to be persons of peace, living in a simple, prayerful, unselfish manner, avoiding conflicts and disputes.

Gospel — Mark 9:30-37 – In today's Gospel from Mark we see Jesus telling the apostles that he is the Messiah who will suffer and die and rise; they fail to understand. We appreciate Jesus' tenderness as he embraces a little child, setting an example for all disciples.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James H. Kroeger, who recently published [Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language](#) (Orbis Books – 2023) and [A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis: Exploring Twelve Pivotal Documents](#) (Faith Alive Books – 2024).

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