

## Jerry's Journal



When we are children time seems to move so slowly. After all, when you are seven years old, one year constitutes one-seventh of your life. A year is a long time, or seems like a long time when you are young. In your forties, sixties and eighties, one year is a much smaller fraction of your life. The end result of this is time speeds up as the years seem to pass by like a blur. You want things to slow down as you age. You also come to the realization you don't possess the same energy level you had in past years. Additionally, things you used to enjoy just don't seem to have the same meaning or are no longer quite as special. You long for festive occasions to be over with, for visitors to go home, and for distractions to cease so you can return to the ordinary rhythms of daily life. Routines might seem boring to some, but the reality is we sleep better when the angels of the ordinary visit us in our dreams. And yet, every hour of the day, every season of the year has something special to give us, but we cannot always make ourselves present to the gift that is being offered to us. We know what someone means when it is said: "This year I was just too pressured and too tired to get into the Christmas spirit. I just flat out missed Christmas this year!"

The older we get, the less we like distractions. And this isn't just true for special holidays like Thanksgiving and Holy Days Christmas or Easter. It is true as well for the season we are now in, the season the Church has chosen to call "Ordinary Time." Each year the church calendar sets aside more than thirty weeks for what it calls "Ordinary Time" - a season where we are to meet the angels of predictability and familiarity. And yet, like seasons of celebration and great joy, "Ordinary Time" is meant to bring a special richness into our lives. But it is easy to miss this season of "Ordinary Time" and its intent. Truth be told, we have precious little ordinary time in our lives. As we take on new responsibilities and grow more pressured and tire more easily we long for "ordinary time." We crave solitude, quiet and distance from the hectic pace of life. In fact, for some, the term "ordinary time" leads to a sigh and the asking of this question: "What is this ordinary time you are talking about? I don't have any ordinary time in my life." For yet others, ordinary time means grinding things out, surviving the rat race, dealing with the day-to-day burden of trying to make ends meet.

There is a Chinese expression you have probably heard which functions both as a blessing and a curse. You make a wish for a person by saying "May you live in interesting times!" For a child this is a blessing because there is the possibility of there being something new, exciting and thrill-seeking just around the corner. For an adult this is more of a curse than a blessing. It means there is the potential for interruptions, dealing with unwelcome changes or problems that will disrupt your life in some way be it large or small.

So here we are, preparing to enter into yet another week of "Ordinary Time" in the Church calendar year. Ordinary, as that term is used by the Church, does not mean unimportant. The normal liturgical color for this portion of the Church calendar year is green. Green vestments, green plants and green colors in the Sanctuary area of

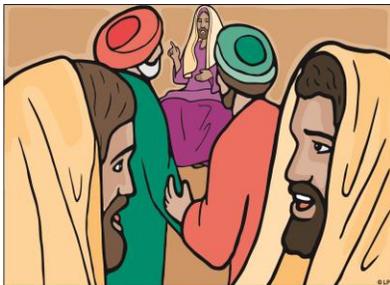
the church. Green implies growth, specifically growth in holiness. Ordinary Time is a period when we can strive to be extraordinary messengers of the Gospel.

Here are some exceptional ways to live in “Ordinary Time.” **1. Make a novena.** A novena is nine days of public or private prayer intended to obtain a special grace or favor. You can find novenas for everything from world peace to healing. All you need to do is go online for more information. **2. Read something with moral value.** Have you ever read *The Confessions* by St. Augustine? *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoevsky? *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch & Jeffrey Zaslow? Ordinary Time can be an opportunity to read what others have written about God, faith and life. **3. Pare down your wardrobe.** Most of us have coats in our closet we hardly ever wear. During Ordinary Time simplify and declutter your life by giving away to a charitable organization those items which you really don’t need or wear very often. **4. Keep the Sabbath.** Without the pressure of holidays or holy days the weeks of Ordinary Time are ideally suited to creating family rituals that keep the Sabbath as a special day. Think about instituting a Saturday evening dinner (after Saturday evening Liturgy) or a Sunday morning/afternoon brunch after you have gone to church.

Ordinary Time is only ordinary if we think of it that way. If we consider these weeks not as long boring stretches of time before the Advent/Christmas season, but as a time to refocus our energies on our spiritual growth, then Ordinary Time will be an extraordinary way of growing in holiness.

Fr Jerry Slowinski

### “Marc” My Words



I like to watch the TV game show *Jeopardy*. I like the challenge of trying to get the correct “question” before the contestants do. Sometimes I do but most of the time I don’t. I have been astonished many times with the correct responses to the most obscure clues that come up on the big board. I’ll take “The Gospel Truth” for a thousand, Alex. The clue, “Wisdom beyond all wisdom, both fully human and divine.” The correct response, “Who is Jesus?”



They said, “Where did this man (Jesus) get all this? What kind of wisdom has been given him? What mighty deeds are wrought by his hands? Is he not the carpenter, the son of Mary?” I haven’t seen a carpenter become a *Jeopardy* champion. I have seen many people whose wisdom well exceeds mine become contestants and eventually a champ. I have questioned, at times, how their minds became full of the trivia, facts, figures, and knowledge that they display. Do they prepare by studying numerous reference materials perhaps? Maybe.

Who has experienced a recall beyond what your normal comprehension or ability is? I know I have. I wonder, "Where did that response or answer come from?" I believe when we think, act, or respond out of our comfort zone and beyond our ability there is a power above and beyond us that renders aid, and intellect, and information. It is inspiration by the Holy Spirit!

Life constantly throws unusual, unexpected, unanswerable situations at us and we find ourselves in "jeopardy." Not in the middle of a game show but potentially in physical, mental, or even spiritual jeopardy. Do we have the faith enough to trust Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Father to let go and trust in the workings of God?

The Gospel tells us that Jesus was unable to perform any mighty deeds in Nazareth. This was not because he was limited. No, to the contrary; it was the people's lack of faith that resisted and denied his work. It had everything to do with them and not Jesus. That is why it is so important that we trust and have faith in Jesus and just let the will of God take root and work in our lives.

When we find ourselves confounded, bewildered, at a loss on how to respond, and in jeopardy, remember to take The Most Holy Trinity to the maximum level. Have trust and faith and let God's will be done in, through, and for us so that we will be a champion and full of God's...

Peace, Love, and Blessings,  
*Deacon Marc*