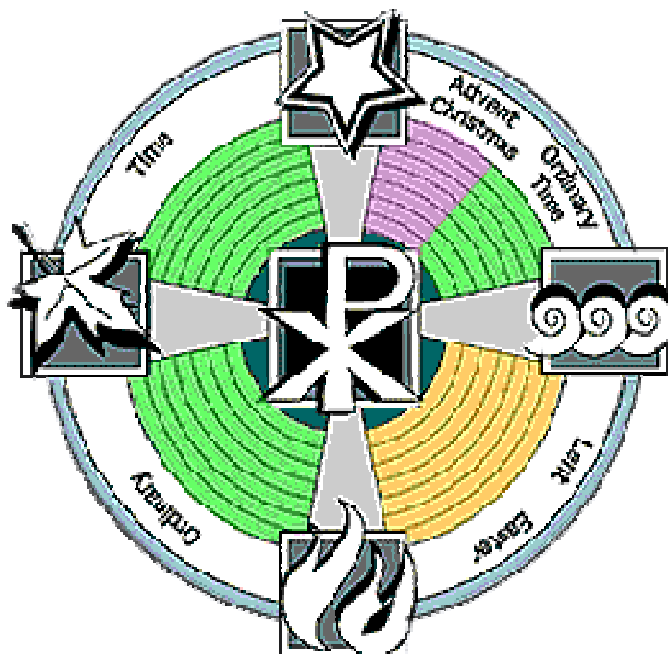


What's So Ordinary About Ordinary Time?



We have been through a succession of feasts in the liturgical cycle recently. We celebrated the feast of Jesus taking His place in heaven at the Ascension. We have said good-bye to the Easter season on Pentecost Sunday when we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Then the next two Sundays saw us celebrating Trinity Sunday and the feast of Corpus Christi – the Body and Blood of Christ. Next in succession is the 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time. What is this Ordinary Time?

A quick look at the liturgical wheel above shows that Ordinary Time, symbolized by the color green, makes up most of the liturgical year. The word “ordinary” is used to show how these weeks are numbered. We have to go back to our elementary

school days in math class to remember the definitions of the words “ordinary numerals” and “cardinal numerals”. Ordinary numerals refer to a position in a series. For example 8th (eighth) in a series or 24th (twenty-fourth) in a series. Cardinal numerals refer to the size of a group. For example 5 (five) or 31 (thirty-one). So we can say that there are 34 weeks in Ordinary Time (cardinal number showing the size of a group) and next Sunday is the 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (ordinal number showing its position in a series of Sundays).

During that time, many saints feast days will be celebrated. Some will be virgins who devoted their purity to the love of God. Others will have been martyred for their belief in Christ. Others are holy men and women, doctors of the Church, teachers, missionaries, those who

worked with the underprivileged, etc. Looking at their lives and the hardships which they endured is anything but ordinary! The color of vestments worn during this season of the liturgical year is green. Traditionally it has been a symbol of hope and new life. This new life is given in baptism, confirmation and, also in a special way, through permanent profession in the SFO. As we live this life, we “hope”, in other words, we wait joyfully – expecting that the Lord’s promises will be fulfilled. Not wondering IF they will be fulfilled, but KNOWING for sure that they will be and waiting for the moment.

As a liturgical people,

Ordinary time gives us an opportunity to count the weeks of time that the Lord gives us grace to live and to love and to celebrate the mysteries of His life. They are weeks when we see the Lord’s life unfolding for us. We do not do this as spectators of the events in Jesus’ life, but as people who constantly sift out the mysteries celebrated in those events. We are drawn into those mysteries, because they have something to tell us about ourselves and our relationships with God.



The Secular Franciscan, as a sister or brother of penance, spends the whole year in trying to find out how Francis of Assisi made his way to Jesus Christ. In his talk on “*Profession in the SFO*” at the General SFO Chapter in Hungary last November, Fr. Felice Cangialosi said, in reference to our following of St. Francis, “ ... the life of the Secular Franciscan depends on the gospel, mediated by the inspiration and experience of Francis of Assisi, who from the beginning of his conversion took it as his rule of life and action.” Ordinary Time gives the Secular Franciscan the time to see the unfolding of the Father’s plan in the life of Christ. It helps us to meditate on how it was that Francis translated this for his life in his time and how it is that God graces us to do the same.

Such drama! What implications for life! Easier said than done ... but hardly ordinary!

