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The Value of Ordinary Time

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We have just entered the lengthy stretch of **Ordinary Time** in the Church’s year. For the next five-plus months, many of the faithful will be wondering when Advent begins. “When will father start wearing purple again,” they might ask; or “Can we celebrate Christmas, already?”

While many of us tend to look forward to the hope of Advent and the joy of Christmas, we really ought to focus on the value of Ordinary Time. **It is a season in the rhythm of the Church’s life that affords some wonderful opportunities for deepening spiritual growth.**

At the outset, we need to remember that “ordinary” means “ordered,” not “blah” or mundane. Order helps all of us accomplish the goals and objectives we have set. **Our aim as**

baptized Christians is to be united with Jesus Christ in His Paschal Mystery (that is, His suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension). In order for that to be accomplished in us, we must submit to the ordered development of the Lord's life before those magnificent events. To become like the triumphant Christ, we must know the "ordinary" Jesus.

So, how can we get to know the "ordinary" Jesus during this period of months? Here are several suggestions.

First, everyone ought to **commit to Mass, at least every Sunday.** During the Church's three-year lectionary cycle, we will read through almost the entirety of the three synoptic Gospels, those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. These readings allow us to glean the full contours of Jesus' public ministry.

In addition to Sunday liturgy, we probably could sprinkle in **at least a few daily Masses, too.** Whether catching an early-morning Mass before work, or finding a memorable nearby shrine while on a family vacation, **we will always benefit from hearing the Word of God proclaimed, and receiving Our Lord in the Eucharist. Actively engaging in the worship of Jesus Christ will inevitably cause us to desire to worship Him more, and more fully.**

A person who wants to know Jesus more fully could also **commit to reading the Mass readings every day of the week.** Beyond that, if he or she is really adventurous, the **Liturgy of the Hours** is a great way to become familiar with the Psalms of the Old Testament. Either of these avenues of prayer **will bring a seeker into an encounter with the Messiah who is the fullness of all that God has to say to humanity.**

Beyond worship, these months are ripe for **growing in our knowledge and understanding of Jesus, His Church, and the divine revelation that they proclaim.** In order to know Jesus more fully, **it would help to know the covenant history of Israel more fully.** To that end, engaging in a

summertime Bible study would be eminently valuable. For example, someone might want to start with *Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible*, from Ascension Press, or one of the [free studies available from the St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology](#). A brilliant mentor once told me, **“You can never love someone more without knowing more about that person.”** This is true of Jesus as well. **If we want to love Him more and become more like Him, we must know His story.**

If a monograph book is more palatable than a multi-session Bible study, look no further than Venerable Fulton Sheen. In 1934, he published *The Eternal Galilean*, which was meant to illustrate for readers how humans become divinized through Jesus. Then, in 1958, he published the magisterial and majestic *Life of Christ*. This latter book was intended to point out “a virile Christ and a leader worth following” in the midst of a challenging, even hostile, modern culture. Both books allow reader to encounter the Word-made-Flesh in a real, transformative, and inspiring way.

Finally, **all this connection with Jesus, in liturgy and study, impels us to act like Jesus in the world**, toward our spouses, children, co-workers, and, yes, even strangers. This season of Ordinary Time, especially the summer, **offers a great opportunity to make habits out of the works of mercy.** Choose just one of the [seven spiritual works of mercy](#) and one of the [seven corporal works of mercy](#), and try to practice them multiple times throughout the next few months. These are especially helpful in showing our children that our faith is lives, not just understood.

These are just a few ways that **we can transform Ordinary Time into extraordinary time, to prepare for the glory of eternal life by growing and living fully in this life.** Ordinary Time is supremely valuable for our transformation into “little Christs.” Let’s be sure that we don’t miss out on the opportunity!



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