

## ORDINARY TIME?

This Sunday we return to what is often called “Ordinary Time.” Its distinctive liturgical color is green, as opposed to the purple, white/gold, and red of the more reflective and penitential seasons of Advent/Lent, the joyous times of Christmas/Easter, and the festival of Pentecost. These last are referred to as “privileged times” since they are cornerstones of the Church’s liturgical year.

But are the other Sundays (33 or 34 of them, depending upon how the calendar runs in a given year) really “ordinary”?

For myself, I dislike the term, and when the Sunday celebration of Eucharist begins I typically welcome people to “The X<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Church Year.” This is because of my conviction that in Jesus Christ nothing is ordinary.

Green, after all, is the color of fertility, of new life, and (therefore) of hope. St. Paul reminds us, “For in hope we were saved” (Romans 8:25). So the Church’s Year is really a celebration of hope and salvation. What could be less “ordinary” than that?

St. Paul (also in Romans 8) reminds us that hope is hope (not present reality) because we do not yet see (= experience). But he assures us categorically that nothing will cause that hope to fail (Romans 5:5; 8:38f.). We can journey hopefully precisely because our arrival is guaranteed, so long as we remain faithful and hold on to the plough, not looking back (Luke 9:61-62).

The word “ordinary” calls up connotations of “boring,” “tedious,” “plain,” or a host of other terms suggesting the attitude “Who cares?” But it’s all about our salvation, and that is never a question of “Who cares?” for those who are attached to Christ. He died and rose for us; He died and rose for me! Let’s together celebrate the Sundays of “not-so-ordinary” time.