

The Flame of St. Francis

See the Church again—for the First Time

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"Seek the Lord in All that You Do!"

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The Extraordinary Ordinary

By Anthony Schefter

In the Holy Mass God exalts the ordinary and the everyday. Plain flatbread and wine mixed with water are transformed into the stuff of God, the very Body and Blood of Christ himself. Nothing could be more extraordinary than the Holy Eucharist, yet it appears to our senses as nothing more than a crunchy piece of bread. Through the Eucharist you and I are being transformed, our ordinariness taking on the glory of God, a process that began with our Baptism and that continues throughout our lives until one day we are finally ready to go home. God loves the ordinary, but he doesn't keep it that way. He infuses every ordinary thing with His glory.

Seen through the eyes of faith, every created thing has a depth to it, a life not its own, and a glory that surpasses everyday life as much as a real dog surpasses a stuffed one. The trees outside my window are alive with a life that comes from the Holy Spirit, the Lord of life, that bathes them with playfulness and inner luminescence. Their leaves are green, and the green is vibrant, possessing a beauty that touches the onlooker in the depths of his heart. Nothing is ordinary; nothing could ever be ordinary—for God lends his glory freely, and every creature under the Sun drinks deeply of it.

I wonder how it is that someone can step outside on an early summer day and then go back in and talk about politics, work, school, what have you, as if



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nothing else were more important. I do pay attention to the news, because I'm concerned about our country and the direction it's heading, but my caring is not an all-consuming worry; rather, it's a concern, one that fits into a larger picture of my life, and the larger picture of my life is informed by the glory of God. God is the backdrop into which everything else fits; and most of the time, everything else seems relatively small. I know where my next meal is coming from, and that is enough. Tomorrow I'll worry about tomorrow.

And so go the ordinary lives of God's faithful people. As the Church enters "ordinary time" in a few weeks, it is good to reflect that the "secular" (things pertaining to life in this world) is not opposed to the "sacred" (things pertaining to God). Actually, because everything belongs to God, the secular is really a manifestation of the sacred. Our secular lives as lay men and women are ordinary but nevertheless holy: we bring our holiness to our jobs, to our neighbors, to our families, to our nation. Just by being where God puts us we are leaven for the world (cf. Mt. 13:33). We find peace by finding ourselves right where we are. And that also means that the world would be a very different and much darker place

without us, God's Church.

These days I know great peace and even happiness, a special treat. Those of you who know something of my background will know that "peace" and "happiness" did not come easily to me; this is the culmination of many years of struggle and difficulty. I am very grateful that God has come into my life, and I do not take it for granted. But it is time for peace and happiness, just as there was a time for suffering. I am grateful for the suffering as well as the happiness; in fact, I might even go so far as to say that true happiness is impossible unless you've suffered something. So it is that suffering is truly a gift. We should not shrink from it; if it unavoidably comes our way, we should allow it into our lives with trust and let God work through it. Give thanks to God for everything, do not be afraid, and remember to glory in ordinariness.



Ordinary Time in the Catholic Liturgical Year

by www.aquinasandmore.com

While the word "ordinary" in popular usage is used to describe things that are nondescript or dull, ordinary rather means customary, regular, and orderly. Ordinary Time may also be called Ordinal Time, which means numbered time. Ordinal comes from the Latin "*ordinalis*," which is a word meaning "showing order, denoting an order of succession." Hence, Ordinary Time is the standard, orderly, counted time outside of the other liturgical seasons. There is nothing "dull" about Ordinary Time!

What is Ordinary Time?

Ordinary time is the longest liturgical season in the Catholic Church, encompassing either

33 or 34 weeks each year. Because other liturgical seasons begin or end with movable feasts, the length of Ordinary time can vary slightly; however, 33 weeks is the more common length. The weeks are numbered, e.g., the first Sunday of Ordinary Time, the second Sunday of Ordinary Time, and so on.

Ordinary time is technically one liturgical season, though it is divided into two periods. Prior to the Second Vatican Council, when the term "Ordinary Time" was formally established, the two time periods were merely referred to as "the Season after Epiphany" and "the Season after Pentecost."

The liturgical color of Ordinary Time is green; however, other appropriate colors are worn on particular feast days.

Ordinary Time after the Baptism

This period of Ordinary Time used to be referred to as the Season after Epiphany. That title and the sometimes-used titles "Season after the Baptism" or "Ordinary Time after the Baptism" are still useful in identifying the time period.

This period of Ordinary Time lasts until the day before Ash Wednesday, which is Shrove Tuesday. This portion of Ordinary Time focuses on the childhood of Jesus and then on the public ministry of Christ.

Ordinary Time after Pentecost

The second portion of Ordinary Time begins after Pentecost and is much longer than the first. This second period of Ordinary Time lasts from the day after Pentecost through the final day before Advent. Because this portion of Ordinary Time occurs after the celebrations of Jesus's Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, this segment of Ordinary Time is focused on the Age of the Church. The Age of the Church is the age we live in now, the time that exists between the Age of the Apostles and the second and last coming of Christ for which we are preparing. This period of Ordinary Time is also focused on Christ's reign as King of kings; the Feast of Christ the King caps off the season of Ordinary Time as the final Sunday before Advent begins.

What is The Flame of St. Francis?

The Flame of St. Francis is an occasional journal of articles, prayers, apologetics, and other written words devoted to moving the reader to a deeper conversion in Christ. The purpose is to inspire, to evangelize, and to re-evangelize the community by showing the beauty and power of the Catholic Faith. Readers are invited to "*See the Church again—for the First Time*" through new eyes and in a way that will bring new hope. Any article that is evangelical, apologetic, or inspirational in nature is welcome to be submitted for consideration. Send all submissions to anthony@stfrancismhd.org.