

## ***Ordinary Time: Making the Ordinary Extraordinary***

With the end of the Christmas season our Church calendar returns to what is called liturgically *Ordinary Time* {see the heading on page 32 of the *Breaking Bread* book}. The first Sunday listed for *Ordinary Time* is actually the Second Sunday of *Ordinary Time*, as last week's feast of the Baptism of the Lord was the first Sunday of this liturgical season. This year it will continue until Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, then resume after the Easter season ends, this year on May 20<sup>th</sup>, the Monday after Pentecost Sunday. The term "*Ordinary Time*" may be misleading as the liturgical term "*ordinary*" does not mean "*usual or average*." Here ordinary here means "*not seasonal*." That is, *Ordinary Time* is the part of the Liturgical Year that falls outside the seasons of *Lent-Easter* and *Advent-Christmas*. In *Ordinary Time* the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ, rather than one specific or particular aspect of it, as we do in the seasons of *Lent-Easter* and *Advent-Christmas*. This is another example of our Catholic "sacramental principle" at work as we use the yearly cycle of time to structure our prayer around the mystery of the Christ-life in its many dimensions. The scripture readings during the liturgies of *Ordinary Time* also help guide us in how to live our Christian faith in daily life. During the Liturgical Year, the scripture readings at Mass for the seasons of *Lent-Easter* and *Advent-Christmas* have prominent themes, but during *Ordinary Time* the readings are not chosen according to a theme. Rather, they present in an ongoing manner the life and work of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the Gospels of either Matthew, Mark, or Luke. John's Gospel is read principally during the other liturgical seasons. The liturgical color for *Ordinary Time* is green, the color of the living earth, a sign of life and hope. Despite its name, *Ordinary Time* is not at all ordinary as we gather weekly (but not *weakly*!) every Sunday as the Body of Christ to celebrate the extraordinary life and dignity bestowed on us by God in Christ.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.  
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