

My Dear people of God,

The Christmas Season is now behind us and we move on with the graces we received from it!

Therefore, welcome to the '**Ordinary Time**' of the Liturgical Calendar. Ordinary Time began on Monday January 14, 2019 and will continue until Tuesday March 5, 2019 the day before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the Lenten Season. The Ordinary Time will then resume when the Easter season ends, that is Monday June 10, the day following Pentecost Sunday and will end with the week of the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 24, 2019.

Ordinary Time, comes in the heels of the Christmas Season where we celebrate the incarnation; the coming in the flesh of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Christ Child, Emmanuel is God with us. I have always therefore viewed the Ordinary Time season as the time in which we bring to bear in our daily lives the mysteries the special seasons of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter. That means that we bring to bear in our daily lives the reality of the incarnation- Emmanuel, God is with us. We are therefore to experience and live out our daily lives with the inherent ups and downs with the awareness that, God is with us in it all.

The readings offered to us as we begin Ordinary Time carry over some of the themes we considered during the Christmas season. During the Christmas season, we celebrated the new era God inaugurated through the birth of Jesus. Now we look deeply into our minds and hearts to see just how open we are to the demands of the New Year. Last Sunday we celebrated baptism of the Lord and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit. This Sunday we contemplate the various manifestations of that same Spirit in our own lives. When we do that, then we are brought to realize that this variety of Spirit-filled ministries is intended to be a source of Christian unity and not of fragmentation or division.

We may be inclined to think of Pentecost as the one season of the Spirit, but in reality the newness of God always comes to us through the Spirit regardless of the season of the year. During the season of Advent, we saw that Mary was overshadowed by the Spirit; at the end of the Christmas season (last Sunday) we saw that the Spirit was present at the baptism of Jesus; and now we see that the new community brought to birth by God, manifests the presence of the Spirit within it through various ministerial gifts. The Spirit of God is active wherever God is present to create something new.

In the second reading, St Paul reminds us that God always creates and bestows Spiritual gifts in extravagant variety. We see it in the world around us; we see it in the people who make up the world; we see it here in the gifts that are given to these people. All comes as a gift from God, but not all comes in the same way. There are different kinds of gifts and different forms of service and different workings. In the world of the old age, diversity could be divisive in that what one had could be a source of envy and jealousy in another. In the world of the new age, diversity should be unifying, one performs a service that is complemented by the service of another. It is in this way that the real glory of Jesus will be manifested. When this happens, the whole world will believe in Him.

In the gospel reading, we are presented with a very important lesson on the role of Mary in the life of her son Jesus. In fact the gospel of John depicts Mary as involved at the beginning of Jesus' ministry (as at the Wedding feast in the gospel reading) and again at the end of it (on Calvary). Mary is therefore intricately associated with the ministry of Jesus. In fact a look at the gospels

reveals that she was involved at key moments in His life and ministry. She therefore needs to be involved in our own lives too.

According to the Second Vatican Council: *“A perfect model of this apostolic spiritual life is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles. While on earth her life was like that of any other, filled with labors and the cares of the home; always, however, she remained intimately united to her Son and cooperated in an entirely unique way in the Savior’s work. And now, assumed into heaven her motherly love keeps her attentive to her Son’s brothers and sisters, still on pilgrimage amid the dangers and difficulties of life, until they arrive at the happiness of the fatherland. Everyone should have a genuine devotion to her and entrust his life to her motherly care.”*

As we begin our journey through Ordinary Time, let us be reminded that God is with us and let devote ourselves to our blessed mother, Mary.

Thanks and God bless,

Fr Simon Peter