

## TIME FOR ORDINARY!

**Time for ordinary!!** Last week, I wrote to you about "time for a change" the longest-ever column I wrote in my nearly nine years at OLHOC (out of a total of about 450 columns from mid-September 2010 till now). Yes, there is a time for change and a time for stability, in the same way there is a time for happiness and a time for sorrow. God is in charge, we are not! Some of you have told me that they found it difficult to read the written text in the weekly bulletin, as it was typed with the smallest possible font to fit into one single, full page. And the only excuse I can make for such a long column is that I did not have time to make it shorter. I am in good company. The great writer Blaise Pascal (philosopher and mathematician who lived in the 17th century) famous for his book "LesPenees" ("Thoughts" written in form of short letters), once apologized for having written a very long letter, "I did write such a long letter because I did not have the time to write a shorter one..."

This week, I have chosen to write to you about "time for ordinary". Yes, there is a time for "ordinary" and a time for "extraordinary". There is a time for continuing doing things in a simple and kind-of-routine way. There is also a time to do things in an extraordinary way that goes much beyond the simple way to approaching life in a natural way. You may say: so what? Since there is a time for everything and it is always because we are totally in the hands of God! Or you may ask, what is wrong with the "little way" promoted so powerfully by Little Flower (St Therese of the Holy Child Jesus, better known as St Therese of Lisieux, one of the greatest saints of the 19th century, and still much beloved by many Catholic families throughout the United States)? Or does that explain Little Flower's constant desire to do "ordinary" things with an "extraordinary" love? Or is it a key to understanding "The Way" promoted by St Jose Maria Escriva, the founder of **Opus Dei** in the 20th century, where a central theme is that we can all become saints while doing ordinary jobs in the non-religious, secular world, as opposed to the traditional saints who were mostly in religious orders (whether monks or nuns), a revolutionary thinking for Catholics? Or is it what it is all about St Teresa of Calcutta who wrote "The Simple Path" enabling us to move forward from **Silence** to Prayer to Faith to Love to Service to **Peace**?

There is also another way to look at **ordinary time** vs. **extraordinary time!** I am referring to the **four main seasons of the Liturgical year**, which in many ways are similar to the four secular seasons: Advent (Fall), Christmas (Winter), Lent (beginning of Spring) and Easter (the summit of all: full Spring, anticipating and ending with Pentecost Sunday, which could be seen as the Fire of Summer through the Holy Spirit).

There is also "**ordinary time**", which could be seen as a Fifth Season, though it is not continuous, as it is divided into two mini-seasons, as it first fills in the time between the end of the Christmas Season and the beginning of the Lenten Season (Ash Wednesday), and then all the time between the Solemnity of **Pentecost Sunday** (end of the 50 days of the Easter Season) and the last and 34th week of Ordinary Time (final week of the Liturgical Year always beginning with Sunday celebrating the Solemnity of **Christ the King**).

When we entered this second mini-season on the Sunday after Pentecost, I mentioned at the first daily Mass that we as priests will from now on will wear essentially green vestments until the Solemnity of Christ the King (this year, falling on November 24)! However, I also mentioned that the first two Sundays after Pentecost have been traditionally two Solemnities, which we have just celebrated: **The most Holy Trinity** and **Corpus Christi** (last Sunday, with the traditional outdoor procession of the Blessed Sacrament in honor of that Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ). The Priest wears "white" vestments on any "Solemnity".

So, you may be surprised (as I was too) that we just are having **four Solemnities within this current 12<sup>th</sup> week of ordinary time!!!** Am I serious? Just look at the Monthly Liturgical Calendar we gave to each one of you last December. Here are the four Solemnities in less than 7 days of Ordinary Time: Corpus Christi (last Sunday), The Nativity of St John the Baptist (the following day, Monday as always June 24, seen traditionally as the longest day of the year), The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (this Friday June 28 - always the Friday following the Second Sunday after Pentecost)

and the Solemnity of St Peter and St Paul Apostles (always on June 29, and falling this Saturday). I have said many times that there is nothing "ordinary" about "Ordinary Time". The word "ordinary" comes from the Latin word "ordo", which simply means "order". "Ordinary Time" in our Annual Liturgical Cycle is simply the 34 weeks that occur every year outside of the four Liturgical Seasons: Advent (four weeks before Christmas Day), Christmas (the weeks following Christmas Day until the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord), varying in length depending on the calendar Lent, and Easter (50 days until Pentecost).

We all love the four natural Seasons we have in Waldorf.. They provide a natural rhythm of change of leaves, flowers, and fruits from one season to another. These are times for change that we enjoy. I recall coming back home with my family after 3 years of hardship in Bangladesh (former East Pakistan) where there are only 2 seasons: dry, sunny winter and then monsoon season (constant torrential rains for two months), and feeling what a joy to discover the charm of the changing four seasons.

In addition to the beauty of amazing Scriptures chosen to allow us to enter into a new changing season, we also have the added uncertainty/ movement of what we call "**Moveable Feasts**". A "moveable feast" is an observance in a Christian liturgical calendar that occurs on a different date in different years. It provides a healthy pattern of change. Most of these movements of Feasts from Year to Year come from the fact that the date of **Easter Sunday** is chosen as being the first Sunday following the full moon of March, which means that Easter can occur as early as 3rd week of March or as late as the 3rd week of April. Do you like changes? This changing Easter Sunday has an effect on all other moveable feasts, such as **Palm Sunday, Paschal Triduum, Ascension, Pentecost, Blessed Trinity, Corpus Christi, Christ the King**, etc. Another factor for change is the fact that the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (last day of Christmas Season) is also moveable... All this reminds us of last week's column: **time for change**, and the beauty of avoiding constant repetition from one year to the other.

A good definition of the Season of Ordinary Time is that " besides the four main liturgical seasons that have their own distinctive character, there remains in the yearly cycle 33 or 34 weeks in which no particular aspect of the Mystery of Christ is celebrated but rather the Mystery of Christ is honored in its fullness, especially on Sunday's (definition given in Universal Norms, 43- as quoted in the annual **ORDO** published by the Archdiocese giving the Order of Celebration of the Eucharist in a particular year.

What does the Changing Cycle of the Annual Liturgy bring to our Faith and to our Weekly Worship of God on Sunday? It brings a sense of newness every new season every year. Imagine if the Church were to decide that it will no longer use a lunar calendar (like the Jewish people) to select the annual date of Easter, and Easter Sunday would become for example always the First Sunday of April! It would be a revolution! The moveable Easter Sunday reminds us that every Sunday Mass is indeed also an Easter Sunday, celebrating the mystery of our Lord's Resurrection!

I invite you all to meditate this week on the spiritual meaning of an Eucharistic procession as we did on Corpus Christi last week, and also reflect on the Gospel of the forthcoming Sunday June 30 (Luke 9:51-62) so that you can be better prepared for participating actively at Mass this Sunday. May God keep blessing you and your entire families in the next five months as we continue to worship together during this mini season of Ordinary Time (ending November 24 this year).

**Come Holy Spirit! Come! Fill our hearts with the Love of the Father for the Son!**



*One in Christ,  
Fr. Alain*