

ORDINARY TIME

Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions

Formation Series: The Liturgical Year

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1. The Name: Not “Ordinary” at All

- “Ordinary” is an unfortunate translation of the Latin into English
 - Latin: *Tempus per annum* = “Time through the year”
 - “Ordinary” is not equivalent to “ordinal” numbers

- This season is “extraordinary” in that it celebrates the whole saving mystery of Christ
 - Sunday is the primordial feastday; historically, in the early Church it was the only feastday
 - These Sundays used to be numbered Sundays after Epiphany or Pentecost, implying that they derived their meaning from these solemnities (from about the eighth century)
 - Now these Sundays focus on Christ, underscoring the importance of the Sunday celebration
 - Every Sunday is a celebration of the whole mystery of Christ, the Paschal Mystery
... Hence the Lord’s Day is the first holy day of all and should be proposed to the devotion of the faithful and taught to them in such a way that it may become in fact a day of joy and freedom from work. Other celebrations, unless they be truly of greatest importance, shall not have precedence over the Sunday, the foundation and core of the whole liturgical year.
 - Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, December 4, 1963, no. 106 in *The Liturgy Documents, Volume One*, fifth edition (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2012).
 - The May 31, 1998 apostolic letter of Pope St. John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, On Keeping The Lord’s Day Holy, plays on the word “day” in each chapter:
 - The day of creation
 - The day of Resurrection and Pentecost
 - The day of the Church
 - The day of humans for rest and community
 - The day of days
 - These Sundays parallel the Emmaus post-Resurrection appearance of Christ: Word and Table (cf. the Eucharistic Prayer for use in Masses for Various Needs)

2. What Happens during Ordinary Time?

- Counting the Sundays/weeks
 - Begins after Baptism of the Lord; no “First” Sunday in Ordinary Time
 - Ends with the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, which is the Thirty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time
 - Count forward from Baptism of the Lord as first week to Ash Wednesday, then backward from Christ the King as thirty-fourth Sunday to Pentecost
 - Some Sundays/weeks drop out, depending on how Easter falls

43. *Besides the times of the year that have their own distinctive character, there remain in the yearly cycle thirty-three or thirty-four weeks in which no particular aspect of the mystery of Christ is celebrated, but rather the mystery of Christ itself is honored in its fullness, especially on Sundays. This period is known as Ordinary Time.*

44. *Ordinary Time begins on Monday which follows the Sunday occurring after January 6 and extends up to and including the Tuesday before the beginning of Lent; it begins again on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday and ends before First Vespers [Evening Prayer I] of the First Sunday of Advent. N...*

-Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, "Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar," USA English translation November 27, 2011, in *The Liturgy Documents, Volume One*, fifth edition (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2012).

- The movement of the *liturgical year* is an annual cyclic pattern:
 birth → manifestation → beginning of public ministry → death & Resurrection →
 public ministry → final victory & reign
- The movement of *Ordinary Time* is
 call of disciples → first miracles, teachings, healings → journey to Jerusalem
- Time for us to "walk" with Christ from Nazareth to Jerusalem
 - "Disciple" = "learner"
 - Learning what baptismal living means
 - Continue the saving mission of Jesus in our own lives
 - But also, "apostles" = "sent"
 - Being Christ in our redeemed world
 - The "new evangelization" challenges us to be *living* witnesses to the Good News

3. Ordinary Time is Nerve-wracking, but Memorable

- Why might Ordinary Time be nerve-wracking?
 - A very long season, in fact, the longest liturgical season
 - Tempting to think of Ordinary Time as just "filler" time between festal seasons
 - Relentless in its call to Gospel living
 - So easy to miss movement and rhythms within the season
- Challenge: change and grow (but in a different way from the call to repentance and *metanoia* of Lent)
- Since Ordinary Time is so long, it can get tedious/monotonous/"same ole, same ole"
 - Solemnities and feasts bring "respite" from any perceived monotony
 - Do long-term liturgical planning so all aspects of the liturgy (e.g., preaching and music) reflect the movement of the season

Reflective Interlude ...

- I lose a sense of where I'm going during Ordinary Time when ...

- I can keep Ordinary Time alive and fresh in these ways ...

4. The Ordinary Time Lectionary

- The Roman Lectionary
 - Three-year cycle for Sundays, solemnities, feasts of the Lord, and a few other festivals
 - Normally, first reading and gospel accord
 - During festal times, second reading accords with season
 - During Ordinary Time, second reading is semi-continuous from an epistle
 - Usually, first reading is from Old Testament (during Easter from Acts of the Apostles; on some other days, from an epistle)
 - During Ordinary Time on Sundays, the gospels are semi-continuous readings of a synoptic gospel (see chart on p. 4)
 - Two-year cycle for weekdays
 - First reading is a semi-continuous reading from either an Old Testament book or New Testament epistle
 - The gospel is the same for both years
 - The *Book of the Gospels*
 - Highlights the centrality of the gospel in the Liturgy of the Word
 - Only carried in the entrance procession
- The Common Lectionary
 - Similar to Roman Lectionary and based on it
 - Main difference is that during Ordinary Time, the first reading does not accord with the gospel as in the Roman Lectionary, but is a semi-continuous series of readings (usually) from the Old Testament
- The Revised Common Lectionary (1992)
 - Gives an option for the first reading during Ordinary Time to accord with the gospel (as in the Roman Lectionary)
 - On any given Sunday, a good number of Christians are hearing the same proclamations at their worship services

Reflective Interlude ...

- Understanding and following better the structure of the Lectionary helps me to ...

- The Lectionary inspires me to ...

Schema of Sunday Gospels

SUNDAY/FEAST	YEAR A	YEAR B	YEAR C
Advent 1	Mt 24:27-44	Mk 13:23-37	Lk 21:25-28, 34-36
Advent 2	Mt 3:1-12	Mk 1:1-8	Lk 3:1-6
Advent 3	Mt 11:2-11	Jn 1:6-9, 19-28	Lk 3:10-18
Advent 4	Mt 1:18-24	Lk 1:26-38	Lk 1:39-45
Christmas	Mt 1:1-25 (Christmas Eve)	←	←
	Lk 2:1-14 (Mass at Midnight)	←	←
	Lk 2:15-20 (Mass at Dawn)	←	←
	Jn 1:1-18 (Mass during the Day)	←	←
Holy Family	Mt 2:13-15, 19-23	Lk 2:22-40	Lk 2:41-52
Mary, Mother of God	Lk 2:16-21	←	←
2 nd Sunday after Christmas	Jn 1:1-18	←	←
Epiphany	Mt 2:1-12	←	←
Baptism of the Lord	Mt 3:13-17	Mk 1:7-11	Lk 3:15-16, 21-22
[Sundays in Ordinary Time]			
Lent 1	Mt 4:1-11	Mk 1:12-15	Lk 4:1-13
Lent 2	Mt 17:1-9	Mk 9:2-10	Lk 9:28-36
Lent 3	Jn 4:5-42	Jn 2:13-25	Lk 13:1-9
Lent 4	Jn 9:1-41	Jn 3:14-21	Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
Lent 5	Jn 11:1-45	Jn 12:20-33	Jn 8:1-11
Lent 6	Matt 26:14–27:66	Mark 14:1–15:47	Luke 22:14–23:56
Easter Vigil	Mt 28:1-10	Mk 16:1-8	Lk 24:1-12
Easter Sunday	Jn 20:1-9	←	←
Easter 2	Jn 20:19-31	←	←
Easter 3	Lk 24:13-35	Lk 24:35-48	Jn 21:1-19
Easter 4	Jn 10:1-10	Jn 10:11-18	Jn 10:27-30
Easter 5	Jn 14:1-12	Jn 15:1-8	Jn 13:31-35
Easter 6	Jn 14:15-21	Jn 15:9-17	Jn 14:23-29
Ascension	Mt 28:16-20	Mt 16:15-20	Lk 24:46-53
Easter 7	Jn 17:1-11	Jn 17:11-19	Jn 17:20-26
Pentecost	Jn 20:19-23	← [John 15:26-27; 16:12-15]	← [John 14:15-16, 23-26]
Ordinary Time			
2 nd Sunday	Jn 1:29-34	Jn 1:35-42	Jn 2:1-11
3 rd Sunday	Mt 4:12-23	Mk 1:14-20	Lk 1:1-4; 4:14-21
4 th Sunday	Mt 5:1-12	Mk 1:21-28	Lk 4:21-30
5 th Sunday	Mt 5:13-16	Mk 1:29-39	Lk 5:1-11
6 th Sunday	Mt 5:17-37	Mk 1:40-45	Lk 6:17, 20-26
7 th Sunday	Mt 5:38-48	Mk 2:1-12	Lk 6:27-38
8 th Sunday	Mt 6:24-34	Mk 2:18-22	Lk 6:39-45
9 th Sunday	Mt 7:21-27	Mk 2:23–3:6	Lk 7:1-10
10 th Sunday	Mt 9:9-13	Mk 3:20-35	Lk 7:11-17
11 th Sunday	Mt 9:36–10:8	Mk 4:26-34	Lk 7:36–8:3
12 th Sunday	Mt 10:26-33	Mk 4:35-41	Lk 9:18-24
13 th Sunday	Mt 10:37-42	Mk 5:21-43	Lk 9:51-62
14 th Sunday	Mt 11:25-30	Mk 6:1-6	Lk 10:1-12, 17-20
15 th Sunday	Mt 13:1-23	Mk 6:7-13	Lk 10:25-37
16 th Sunday	Mt 13:24-43	Mk 6:30-34	Lk 10:38-42
17 th Sunday	Mt 13:44-52	Jn 6:1-15	Lk 11:1-13
18 th Sunday	Mt 14:13-21	Jn 6:24-35	Lk 12:13-21
19 th Sunday	Mt 14:22-33	Jn 6:41-51	Lk 12:32-48
20 th Sunday	Mt 15:21-28	Jn 6:51-58	Lk 12:49-53
21 st Sunday	Mt 16:13-20	Jn 6:60-69	Lk 13:22-30
22 nd Sunday	Mt 16:21-27	Mk 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23	Lk 14:1, 7-14
23 rd Sunday	Mt 18:15-20	Mk 7:31-37	Lk 14:25-33
24 th Sunday	Mt 18:21-35	Mk 8:27-35	Lk 15:1-32
25 th Sunday	Mt 20:1-16	Mk 9:30-37	Lk 16:1-13
26 th Sunday	Mt 21:28-32	Mk 9:38-43, 45, 47-48	Lk 16:19-31
27 th Sunday	Mt 21:33-43	Mk 10:2-16	Lk 17:5-10
28 th Sunday	Mt 22:34-40	Mk 10:17-30	Lk 17:11-19
29 th Sunday	Mt 22:15-21	Mk 10:35-45	Lk 18:1-8
30 th Sunday	Mt 22:1-14	Mk 10:46-52	Lk 18:9-14
31 st Sunday	Mt 23:1-12	Mk 12:28-34	Lk 19:1-10
32 nd Sunday	Mt 25:1-13	Mk 12:38-44	Lk 20:27-38
33 rd Sunday	Mt 25:14-30	Mk 13:24-32	Lk 21:5-19
34 th Sunday (Christ the King)	Mt 25:31-46	Jn 18:33-37	Lk 23:35-43

5. The Prayers

- Presidential Prayers
 - Collect
 - First half of Ordinary Time: often focus on pleading for the grace to have peace, abound in good works, love one another; in other words, focus on Christian living
 - For last half of Ordinary Time: often focus on the promise of eternal Life
 - Prayer over the Offerings
 - Not as focused as the collects, but speak to the acceptance of the offerings and bringing us to salvation
 - The offerings are our gift to God and God's gift to us ("exchange")
 - Prayer after Communion
 - Most of these prayers pray that we have eternal Life
 - A few of these prayers ask for our renewal, beg for unity, pray for salvation
 - Two prayers move us toward *theosis*
 - 27th Sunday in OT: "transformed into what we consume"
 - 28th Sunday in OT: "make us sharers of his divine nature"
- Prefaces
 - Eight prefaces for Ordinary Time given in the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*
 - Four speak specifically to the Paschal Mystery: Prefaces I, II, IV, VI
- Special solemn formulae of blessings or prayers over the people before the final blessing are not given for the Sundays in Ordinary Time