

Living the Spirit  
Ordinary Time

*I am offering this insert rewritten from a previous one. I am making some substantial changes and additions as space allows.*

The liturgical calendar calls us to celebrate again what is called Ordinary Time. As I have often written, there really is no such thing as ordinary time for all of us who are trying to live in and with the Spirit of God. Most of the year our liturgical celebrations describe the teachings of Jesus during His public life. Those teachings are the basis for our faith. Our faith means our belief in God and the truths He has revealed. Our faith calls us to know Who God is. We must try to know God in our daily, even ordinary, life.

Most of us take it as very ordinary to call God our Father. We have learned during a lifetime what that means. He is Provider, Protector and Creator of our life in its inception. He is described by great theologians in many ways. Our mind goes from thought to thought to try to describe and know Him. Yet, we know, as St. John made clear, that we use more than our minds in this quest to realize God. He is Love. "God is love."

Whatever new lessons or old ones renewed we may learn in this year, we should pray that we come closer to the core meaning of our faith. This is no simple task. It will take a focus on our prayer life, especially our daily prayers. It will include meaningful celebrations of the Eucharist on Sundays. [Remember, every Mass is a real celebration.] It will mean humbly confessing our sins when this is needful. It means being united in a Communion with Jesus as we go about our daily work. Even in our leisure and rest we will seek to find rest in Him. In this, we find the cure for our restless hearts.

When I chose the title for these inserts I did so with an awareness of how many use similar ideas. I recall one journal using for a column "The Spirit lives." Another seemed to be satisfied with "Living with the Spirit." So you see how I simply took the two important words and put them together. We live the Spirit, just as we try to live Christ. Christ as the ever present companion of our life journey. The Spirit is life.

In a little book on the wisdom of the saints, I just happened to read something to remind me of this. "*Christ shield me this day: Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me. Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me. Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every person who thinks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in the ear that hears me.*" [St. Patrick's Breastplate.] How can time with Christ, then, be ordinary in the normal sense of that word?

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The Catholic Register collects notable quotes from each previous year. Let me give you some of these on for your reflection. [From 1214 and previous years]

"We're convinced that the truth is strong enough to change hearts." Maggie Mahrt, actress.

"We need to accompany the people, to be God's presence. Respecting them and seeing how God is truly present in his community." Fr. Kenneth Gavin in Haiti.

"Saying more than the culture understands turns the Church into a lightning rod." David Schindler.

"The biggest persecution of the Church does not come from the enemies outside but is born from sin inside the Church." "Bear witness to all the joy that his strong presence

evokes, starting with your contemporaries. Tell them that it is beautiful to be a friend of Jesus and that it is well worth following Him.” [Pope Benedict.]

“We’re beginning to recognize in our midst we have very holy people, so the Church, in a sense, has come of age. The Holy Spirit has prepared the ground. In the saints we see the concrete working of the Holy Spirit. He’s the ‘Saint Maker.’” [Father Andrew Apostoli, vice postulator for Archbishop Sheen’s canonization.]

“To be a saint is not a luxury. It is necessary for the salvation of the world. This is what the Lord is asking of us.” “The more we allow ourselves to be humbly guided by the Spirit of the Lord, the more we will overcome misunderstandings, divisions and disagreements.” “Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare.” “I am convinced that if the face of the Church is first and foremost a face of love, more and more young people will be drawn to the heart of Jesus.” [Pope Francis]

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This week marks an anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision, resulting in the deaths of countless babes from abortion. Here is some food for thought.

“People are getting more socially conscious on the pro-life issue.” [Rep. Bart Stupak.]  
“More people are seeing the need to stand up for life.” [Greg Schleppebach, Nebraska Cath. Conference.]

“The Catholic Church was at the forefront of this (issue). I am not aware of any other organization that is doing as much as we’re doing and at such a cost.” [Andy Eisenzimmer, chancellor, Archdiocese of St. Paul.]

“Abortion is not just one issue among many.... If we fail to uphold life from the moment of conception, then the rest of our pro-life stance – which encompasses care for the sick and elderly, the poor and imprisoned, the handicapped, and all those who suffer, and opposition to the death penalty – lacks integrity.” [Archbishop Sartain of Seattle]

“An unborn child is not a disease. While the medical professions should certainly try to save a pregnant mother’s life, the means by which they do it can never be by directly killing her unborn child. The end does not justify the means.” [Bishop Olmstead of Phoenix]

“To help thoughtful people reconsider their views, we need to show that the Catholic position on a variety of topics, including contraception, [and abortion] is not stupid. We have to bring a prayerful dimension to everything we do, realizing that it’s not about crushing the enemy, but reaching out to people and inviting them to become a part of our family.” [Cardinal Sean O’Malley]

We should understand that a nation that kills its children is one that cannot ultimately endure. While I mention all this, I would like to ask you to remember those women who have had abortions. So often they were under terrible stress, and left without support and understanding. Once renewed and reconciled, may they be the best proponents of life in all its forms.

On Monday of this week we will observe the birth of Martin Luther King, Jr. It is a time to remember his work to find non-violent solutions to the racism that denied so many their civil rights. His approach was based on a deep respect for moral and theological principles derived from Christian faith. Let us pray for continued appreciation of the respect due to all our fellow citizens.

*God bless and love you always!*  
*Monsignor David Morrison*