

## ORDINARY TIME

After a month of special Sundays in June, we return to “Ordinary Time” for most of our Sunday celebrations until late November. Ordinary Time is the longest season of our liturgical year – longer than the other five combined! It’s divided into two sections: first, the 4-8 weeks between the Christmas Season and Ash Wednesday – the exact length depends on Easter’s date each year; second, the approximately six-month period from Pentecost until Advent.

Having focused in other seasons on Christ’s coming, his redemptive self-sacrifice and resurrection, and the culmination of his mission in the sending of the Holy Spirit, we “settle down” in Ordinary Time to deepening and living our faith. We explore the fullness of Jesus’ teachings, see how they apply to us, and witness to the Gospel in our daily lives.

The green vestments of this season are symbols of hope – our confident assurance that we will share in God’s promise of eternal life. This hope energizes us as we put into practice the teachings of Christ proclaimed in our Sunday Scripture readings.

Ordinary Time is a time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ penetrates ever more deeply into history, until all things are finally caught up in Christ. As the Season’s end approaches in November, our Scripture readings focus on the end times and the last judgment. The final Sunday in Ordinary Time celebrates the culmination of all history – the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.

Although Sundays in other Seasons take precedence over feasts that happen to fall on those days, Sundays in Ordinary Time may be replaced by certain celebrations. The year 2014 has five such days:

- The Presentation of the Lord (Feb. 2)
- Saints Peter and Paul (June 29)
- The Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Sept. 14)
- All Souls’ Day (Nov. 2)
- The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica – the symbolic home of all Catholics because it is the pope’s cathedral church (Nov. 9).

Because of intervening leap years, the latter four won’t fall on Sundays again until 2025. Other celebrations that take precedence over Sundays in Ordinary Time are the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (June 24), Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Aug. 15), and All Saints Day (Nov. 1). In any given year, only one of these can fall on a Sunday.

This Time may be Ordinary, but in our lives of faith, it – like all time – is sacred, for during it, strengthened by the gifts of the Holy Spirit within us, we continue our journey towards the fulfillment of God’s Kingdom.