



Extraordinary graces mark ‘ordinary’ time

This past Monday, the liturgical season changed once again and we find ourselves this weekend celebrating the “Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.” All the festive celebrations surrounding our Lord’s birth at Christmas now have quieted down and the poinsettias, crèches, and wise men are no longer visible. We find ourselves celebrating Ordinary Time for a period of less than a month before we are catapulted into Lent on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 6.

So, with the limited amount of time how can we properly celebrate Ordinary Time? Preachers will often struggle to make this transition and use the cliché “there is nothing ordinary about ordinary time; it is rather extraordinary.” And it is.

Our readings this Sunday provide us with a wonderful reflection and culmination of our celebration this past week of National Vocation Awareness. In Isaiah, the anonymous servant speaks of his vocation, set before birth, and how it was meant for all nations. God’s plan is to use the life of one to touch the lives of many.

St. Paul, personally

rebuffed by the church at Corinth, remembers that God has set him aside for a higher purpose and addresses the church in terms of their higher calling. John the Baptist sees in Jesus the fulfillment of his call as he points out Christ to others.

As we grow in maturity, we begin to discern what God is calling each of us to do with the gifts with which we have been blessed and the gifts of the Holy Spirit received at our confirmation. Our relationship deepens with the Lord as we become keener on what

Christ at school, at work or whatever ordinary place we find ourselves.

And yes, there is nothing ordinary about this calling, it is rather extraordinary because the Lord has chosen each of us, before our birth, to touch the lives of many. When we discover the beauty of our calling, it brings about peace in our hearts and lives.

As together we begin our celebration of ordinary time, let each of us take some quality time in the ordinariness of our days and lives and reflect on the extraordinary graces we have received from the Lord. Grace is the gift of the reality of our God who is ever-present and active in our lives. On this Second Sunday of Ordinary Time, I write to you, the church of Wilmington, and extend the “grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!” And there is certainly nothing ordinary about that grace and peace.

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Readings for January 20, the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 49:3-6; 1 Cor 1:1-3;
John 1:29-34

Each of us, as we begin this cycle of Ordinary Time, should pause and reflect on the beauty and uniqueness of our vocational callings. Beginning with our baptism, we receive our primary vocational calling to become Christians, followers of Christ. This vocational calling is probably our greatest challenge in daily life. The promises made at our baptism by our parents and godparents and renewed at our own confirmation are a constant reminder to say no to “*Satan and all his empty promises*” and to say yes to Christ.

God is asking us to do with our lives.

The Word of God this Sunday supplies each of us with an answer — our vocation is to do exactly as the anonymous servant in Isaiah, as St. Paul, and as John the Baptist did — to point out the Lord. No matter what our vocational calling is, we are compelled to point out Christ to others, to show others his presence in our world and in our lives. And so often we do it in ordinary ways by living our vocations as married couples, single people or the ordained. We live out this beautiful calling to point out

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