



Ordinary Time

INTRODUCTION

Ordinary Time is the time of the year in which Christ walks among us, calling us, teaching us, transforming us. Advent, Lent, and the Christmas and Easter seasons are special periods excluded from Ordinary Time. Ordinary Time begins on the Monday following the first Sunday after the Feast of the Epiphany and runs until Ash Wednesday; it then continues on the Monday after Pentecost Sunday and runs until the First Sunday of Advent, which is when the new liturgical year begins.

Ordinary Time is called “ordinary” simply because the weeks are numbered. Like the word *ordinal*, the word *ordinary* comes from a Latin word for numbers. Ordinary Time refers to the ordered life of the Church; the gospels of Ordinary Time treat all aspects of Jesus’ ministry and sayings more or less in sequence.

Monday, January 8, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

“Holy Spirit, you are the Lord. Touch me, teach me, bring me to Jesus.”

Read the gospel: Mathew 4:12–17, 23–25.

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

“Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,
 on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the
 Gentiles—
 the people who sat in darkness
 have seen a great light
 and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
 light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” . . .

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus begins his ministry as John the Baptist is arrested. He is the great light prophesied by Isaiah. Like John, he urges repentance, the ticket into the kingdom he proclaims. He proves his goodness and his divinity by healing the sick.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, give me your Spirit, that I may be freshly baptized and clean. I pray for the goodness and holiness that comes only by your Spirit, not by my own proud striving . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

My beloved, you are precious to me. Continue to throw yourself upon me. Give me all that you are, and I will form you into the person you should be. Come to me. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Help me repent, Lord. I tend to be slow to respond to you, slow to obey, but you will be with me all day. Amen.”

Tuesday, January 9, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

“Mysterious Lord of goodness and mercy, you triumph over evil. Be with me now in power.”

Read the gospel: Mark 1:21–28.

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus amazes people with his power and authority. He changes the lives of all who come to him.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, change my life. Align me with your goodness. Make me new, pleasing to you. Let me serve others as you served. I give to you these people I love . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

I look at your heart, dear one. To love me is to find me and to understand me. Let us journey together. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

"Lord, my only desire is to follow you and be your own. I want to accept your authority: teach me, cleanse me, keep my will for you strong and pure today. Thank you. Amen."

Wednesday, January 10, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

"Lord, I come to you, searching for you. And here you are. Lead me to true worship, Lord."

Read the gospel: Mark 1:29–39.

As soon as Jesus and his disciples left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus works for, prays for, and commissions those who follow him. The work is to spread the message that the Messiah has come, offering salvation from sin and death.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

"Lord, give me simple faith in you. Let me take you at face value. I need you, search for you, love you, and thank you. I thank you, too, for the work you have given me. I pray now for . . ." (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

Beloved, I love your simplicity, for that is childlike. No one and nothing can shake your faith as long as you remain in me. Visit me often. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

"I have much to do, many distractions, Lord. Let me seek only you today; you will send me forth to serve you and others in peace. I am yours. Amen."

Thursday, January 11, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

"Invisible God, around me and in me now, to seek you is to find you. I open myself to your teaching, your precious Word, Jesus."

Read the gospel: Mark 1:40–45.

A leper came to Jesus begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus chooses to cleanse the leper. God is good to all who come to him. No wonder people flocked to Jesus.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

"Lord, I know many who need your healing touch. I offer my prayers, my thoughts, words, and deeds today, my whole day for the good of those you have given me. I pray for . . ." (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

To offer one's self for others, child, is my way of loving. By losing your life this way, day by day, you save it for eternity. I will welcome you into my everlasting kingdom. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Lord, your goodness is so great that I cannot take it in. Help me to love others for love of you, serving however I can. Lead me, Lord. I praise you! Amen.”

Friday, January 12, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

“Lord Jesus, what do you have for me today? Open my heart to you so that I can receive it.”

Read the gospel: Mark 2:1–12.

When Jesus returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, “Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, “Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and take your mat and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic—“I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.” And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We have never seen anything like this!”

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus knows that forgiveness of sins is more important than healing of the body, so Jesus gives the paralytic what he most needs but doesn't ask for. In forgiving sins, Jesus reveals to all present that he is not an ordinary prophet. He is the Messiah, the Son of God. The people are still seeking to understand that. For now they are astounded and glorify God.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, forgive my sins and keep me from sin today. I want to walk in the wholeness of your love. I want to share your love, peace, and truth with others. Help me do it, Jesus . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

I forgive you, dear friend. Don't you feel my healing grace within? There is no freedom like the freedom forgiveness confers. Walk in that freedom, and you will witness to my glory. You are pleasing to me. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Lord, I accept your freedom. I use it to choose you. I use it to serve others. Help me do so today. Thank you. Amen.”

Saturday, January 13, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

“Jesus, you are a wonder-worker, the Lord here among us, showing us the truths of God. I long to learn from you today.”

Read the gospel: Mark 2:13–17.

Jesus went out again beside the lake; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.

And as he sat at dinner in Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” When Jesus heard this, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus must have had an incredibly attractive power, for when he says to someone, “Follow me,” the person stops what he is doing and follows. Here he calls a despised tax collector. Of course the self-righteous Pharisees criticize him for it, especially because he goes to Levi’s house for dinner. Jesus responds to them, “I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Jesus, the price of entry is to admit to being a sinner. I am a sinner. I thank you for calling me, for dining with me, for loving me. Help me love you as you deserve . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

My friend, I have called you out of your life to live my life. I have called you to love, to pray, to work for the good of others. The secret is to stay near me in your heart and mind. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Let me walk closely with you today, Lord, so I may do your will. I do not trust my own ways. I do trust yours. Lead me, Lord. Amen.”

Sunday, January 14, 2018

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

“Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on me. God has anointed you and you are Lord of all. Teach me.”

Read the gospel: John 1:35–42.

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!” The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

John points to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Disciples follow him, calling him “Teacher.” Jesus invites them to the place he is staying, and he continues to show that he is master of every situation.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, let my life be meaningful as your life was. Teach me, Teacher, and guide me into meaning that I may please God and do God’s will. I know it is God’s will that I pray for those you have given me, including . . .”
(Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

Nothing is small, my child. Loving me, obeying me, getting to know me better—that is what gives meaning to your life and fruitfulness to God’s glory. Let yourself be mine. I love you. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Lord, you make it sound easy and simple. Give me the childlike faith to trust you and love you with all my heart today as I do your will. Praise you! Amen.”

Monday, January 15, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

“Jesus, you make all things new. Thank you for this new day. I reach out to you for something that will make me new, closer to you.”

Read the gospel: Mark 2:18–22.

Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to Jesus, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus said to them, “The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

“No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.”

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus compares himself to a bridegroom—while he is with us, we rejoice; when he is not, we fast. This is the great opportunity to be renewed in him.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

"Jesus, you promised to be with me always, even to the end. Therefore I rejoice. If I need to draw closer to you, let me fast and pray. But let me always be ready to be made new, a vessel of your Spirit . . ." (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

You are my beloved. I rejoice in you. I made you for this love we have between us. There is no one like you. Your purpose is to love God, our Father, his Son, your Savior and Bridegroom, and the Holy Spirit, your mighty Sanctifier. Love God. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

"Lord, I don't love you enough. Give me a stronger sense of your presence with me to help me walk in love all day. Thank you. Amen."

Tuesday, January 16, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

"Lord, teach me your truth, that I may be free of all rules and limitations and human judgment."

Read the gospel: Mark 2:23–28.

One sabbath Jesus was going through the cornfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

Jesus, who fulfills the law and the prophets, is free of artificial human strictures. He is obedient to his Father in all things. His Father is Love; Jesus is Truth. In God, his followers are free to obey.

Pray as you are led for yourself and others.

“Lord, let me know your freedom as I should. If I do all for love of God and others, how can I go wrong? Let me show love through prayer and action to these people . . .” (Continue in your own words.)

Listen to Jesus.

These ideas are brittle in the mind but easy in the soul. I give you my peace. When you worry, come to me and love me. You have nothing to fear. What else is Jesus saying to you?

Ask God to show you how to live today.

“Lord, I have so much to learn, so far to go. I won’t make progress in holiness, obedience, freedom, or love without your constant guidance. Be with me today. Amen.”

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

Know that God is present and ready to converse.

“Lord, be with me now and soften my heart to hear your Word and grow in understanding and love.”

Read the gospel: Mark 3:1–6.

Again Jesus entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, “Come forward.” Then he said to them, “Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Notice what you think and feel as you read the gospel.

The Pharisees continually attempt to catch Jesus violating some of the man-made laws of Judaism, and this occasion is no exception. As Jesus prepares to heal the man with the withered hand, he questions them about the Sabbath laws. They cannot answer him. They are more concerned with their own sense of self-importance than with the suffering of others. Jesus grieves at their hardness of heart, then heals the man’s hand. For that, the Pharisees conspire with the Herodians to destroy Jesus.