

ORDINARY TIME

Do you realise that according to the Lutheran Liturgical Calendar, we are now in **ORDINARY TIME**?

9th June 2019 was the Day of Pentecost. 16th June 2019 was the 1st Sunday after Pentecost and 17th November 2019 will be the 23rd Sunday after Pentecost. Thereafter, we will usher in Christ the King Sunday (November 24) followed by the First Sunday in Advent (December 1).



The **ORDINARY TIME** is long season with numbered days. Here is an explanation of what **ORDINARY TIME** means:

*"The period between Pentecost and Advent is called **ORDINARY TIME**. This season makes up almost half of the church year. The word "ordinary" used in this*

*context does not mean unremarkable, but rather comes from the word "ordinal" meaning "counted." During **ORDINARY TIME**, we move from Sunday to Sunday, with each one standing on its own. The Sundays in **ORDINARY TIME** are the called the Sundays after Pentecost."¹*

¹ <http://blcfairport.org/ordinary-time-what-and-why/>

When the calendar has periods set aside as **ORDINARY TIME**, then those other periods outside of the **ORDINARY TIME** must have their distinct meanings that are not “ordinary”: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost.

Specifically, each of the seasons outside of **ORDINARY TIME** tells an amazing story. In recalling each story, we either get into a joyous mood with feasting (e.g. at Christmas) or a penitent mood (e.g., during Lent) with deep meditation to help us grow in our spiritual insight of Christ’s suffering for our redemption.

This said, we must understand that **ORDINARY TIME** is not the end of all stories for our spiritual edification. It is not a time when we sit back and relax from any effort to develop our spiritual formation. Rather, there are still stories in the **ORDINARY TIME** from Jesus’ ministry and teachings, stories ranging from the mundane to the miraculous events from which we draw important lessons as we study the Scripture passages of the weekly Church’s lectionary readings. These lectionary readings are relevant to the stages of the **ORDINARY TIME** in correspondence with the continuing happenings in the ministry of Jesus personally or through His apostles.

The world has its many calendars, each type marking out event days that are deemed important to be observed. The calendars are not produced for no reason. For the reasons that our liturgical calendar is produced, surely it is good for Christians to treat the events on the calendar as worthy of attention. Well, we do pay heed to Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and some such events we consider to be “too important to be unnoticed”. However, events in the calendar like the Baptism of our Lord (13th January 2019), His Transfiguration (3rd March 2019), Ascension Sunday (2nd June 2019), etc. are also worthy for our engagement every

time the related Scripture passages are read in the Church. They are significant enough not to be missed out in the Gospel. Paying heed to the whole Gospel storyline as one event leads to another in a connected stream, without gaps in between, certainly helps us grasp the holy message better. If every Christian does so, the producers of the liturgical calendar and the related lectionary readings will be happy that their works are not in vain. ☺

(Admittedly, we are all imperfect in our attention to all events in the calendar. We don't have to be guilt-ridden; however, we can try to be a little better, ongoing with time, and we will see ourselves improving whenever we look back.)

In another sense, when we say "ordinary time" (in common usage), we mean that the moments that we go through are unexceptional. It is time that mankind has known since creation. ("In the beginning ..." – Gen. 1:1 – was when time began.)

Yes, in the **ORDINARY TIME** that is set out in the liturgical calendar, we too go through our life moments in our regular patterns. There is nothing remarkable in this regard.

However, while "ordinary time" passes by unremarkably in our commonplace patterns of daily activities, what is "ordinary time" can become a complex entity when we contemplate its relationship with space according to Einstein's famous theory. As finite created beings, there are some things that we can never fully comprehend. So, let us just settle with the plain notion that there is more than meets our thought about the ordinariness of "ordinary time".

Similarly, we don't have to fully comprehend the sophistication of what **ORDINARY TIME** is, in the liturgical calendar, but just settle with accepting a plain notion that there is potentially more than the "ordinariness" that meets our first thought.

With the divisions of time in the liturgical calendar for our different spiritual postures (joyful; penitent; “ordinal” as in **ORDINARY TIME**), we imbibe the awareness that there is the appropriate time for everything – time for feasting, time to be solemnly meditative, and **ORDINARY TIME** to be free from the emotions for a sober and thoughtful processing of the many ministry experiences of our Lord. So, in this sense, **ORDINARY TIME** is not simply ordinary (as “unremarkable”). In fact, **ORDINARY TIME** is quite remarkable for occupying two big chunks of the whole year in the liturgical calendar (as you can see in the chart above). It is remarkably serious time (a huge portion of the calendar) with emotions set aside to engage the Gospel with dedication to maximise our spiritual formation gain.

So, **ORDINARY TIME** is not so ordinary to be neglected after all.

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