

Pentecost – No 'Ordinary' Time  
May 23, 2021, Pentecost  
Gospel of John 15:26-27; 16:12-15  
Fr. John

In our Church calendar year we observe a number of different seasons:

Four weeks of Advent, a Christmas time of two weeks, a Lenten period of forty days and an Easter season of fifty days. These amount approximately to about 130 days that are centred around the different phases of the life of Jesus - extending from the time of his birth to his resurrection and ascension.

This leaves about two hundred and thirty-five days that we refer to as 'Ordinary time.' But the term, 'ordinary' is problematic because it gives the impression that there is nothing special happening. The Sundays of Ordinary time have no visible symbols like Advent wreaths, Christmas crèches and manger scenes, ashes imposed on foreheads, painted Easter eggs and the like to signal a specific mood or theme. All we have for this 'ordinary time' is an opening Sunday called Pentecost which unfortunately places a distant third in comparison to Christmas and Easter in the minds of many. And yet it comprises almost two thirds of our Church calendar year.

As such, it is, or should be, the most engaging of **all** the seasons, because [to use a tennis analogy] -'the ball is now in **our** court'. God has done His part, insofar as He has revealed His human face to us in the person of Jesus Christ. And now it is up to us to respond. And how do we do that? And where do we go to find the energy to follow up on what God has first done for us?

During the last fifteen months of the Covid pandemic, we have come to realize the importance of oxygen for those who have been severely affected by the virus. We are still hearing about the thousands dying each day in India for the lack of oxygen supplies.

Pentecost is that very 'oxygen' that God gives to us in the Holy Spirit, not just to keep us alive but to awaken and energize us to be instruments of His love and caring for the world.

The disciples, after their initial amazement at Christ's resurrection, were not to just sit around and discuss what a wonderful time this was for Jesus and then go back to the 'regular programming' routine of their everyday lives. **No**. Life would **never** be the same. It wouldn't look the same and things wouldn't just return back to 'normal' for them.

That's the reason why Pentecost Sunday shouldn't be regarded as the 'back door' of the Easter season but rather the **front door** - opening for us to now engage in the extraordinary things that Jesus modelled for us .

We might object to that by stating that we are just ordinary people not capable of doing heroic things like the apostles and the saints that we venerate in our Catholic tradition. I think it may have been Mother Theresa that said that holiness mostly consists in doing ordinary things **extraordinarily** well.

As it has been stated, God comes to us disguised as our life and there should be nothing 'ordinary' about that. Each day that we live becomes an opportunity to do something new and creative - to make some effort to extend God's love to others.

Recently, we produced a short video for our parish Catholic schools on the Marian Centre in Regina. Normally the staff, the people of the Madonna House Apostolate, are able to invite their daily guests into the building and serve them a hot lunch. But during the pandemic, this was not possible. So each day they prepare dozens and dozens of bag lunches to give out to those who come to their door. Included in those bag lunches are muffins that some of our St. Cecilia parishioners have been baking on a weekly basis over these many months. Recently, the children in our parish who are preparing for their Confirmation and First Communion even made greeting cards to be placed in many of these bag lunches.

These may be viewed as small acts of kindness, but when done in love, they are not small in God's eyes. Indeed, they are the oxygen that ignites the fire of the Holy Spirit in our world.

How do we know that the Holy Spirit is at work? Jesus said, "By their fruits you shall know them." And the fruits of evidence of the Holy Spirit are peace, patience, kindness, joy, love, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and goodness. Whenever these are being practiced, we know the Spirit is present.

So as we embark on a new Church season, the Pentecost season, the Season of the Holy Spirit, may there be nothing 'ordinary' about it . May we make it, with the help of the Holy Spirit, a time of grace and an extraordinary part of the church year.

*Lord, send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.*