

Introduction to **ORDINARY TIME** during Fall



The Season

There is nothing ordinary about Ordinary Time, or is there? Ordinary Time is not about a ho-hum liturgical season, but rather, it is about *ordinal*, or counted, time. The weeks of Ordinary Time are counted and provide a rhythm to the year, punctuated by the seasons of Advent, Christmas Time, Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum, and Easter Time. It is also punctuated by particular solemnities, feasts, and memorials of the saints along the way. Ordinary Time is filled with food for spiritual thought and reflection. During Ordinary Time, we learn to pray, receive encouragement and instruction, hear the stories of ancestors of the faith, and are plunged into Christ's Paschal Mystery.

The ebb and flow of Ordinary Time shapes the ebb and flow of our lives—if we allow God's grace to work with us through the prayers, readings, and celebrations that make up this season. We might say that it is in Ordinary Time that we find little “wobble room” from the demands of discipleship. Each week, we face both what it means to live as a follower of Jesus Christ and who we are called to be as people of God. Each week, we are presented with a choice: to live and grow in this way of life, or to walk away. Each week, we recommit ourselves to journey with Christ and are nourished through the Eucharist, Word and sacrament, priest and the people.

Ordinary Time during fall has its own particular “rhythm within the rhythm.” As we approach the end of the liturgical year, our focus becomes a bit clearer, more serious, sharper as we walk with Christ, acknowledging that our earthly lives will someday end, and that the Kingdom of God will someday be established once and for all in Christ's

glory. While we keep these “end times” in the back of our mind, we are given clear and compelling direction for our lives now, in this time and place, in the ordinary and not-so-ordinary moments of our lives.

Celebrating Ordinary Time during Fall with Teens

For teens, fall is a time to resume the ordinary routines of classes, sports, work, family life, activities, and friends. Ordinary Time during the fall guides them through a journey with Christ in which they will learn to apply the Gospel to their everyday lives. Just as the youth encounter Christ as he heals, teaches, prays, and blesses, they will recognize their call to do the same.

Preparing the Liturgical Environment

The color for Ordinary Time is green, and this color remains constant throughout this season, while in some areas in the Northern Hemisphere the season of fall is filled with orange, purple, red, and gold. If yours is one of those areas, consider incorporating a few autumn branches into your prayer space, acknowledging the beauty of creation and the way it reflects the magnificence of God's grandeur.



August 4, 2019

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #114C

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Psalm 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14, 17

Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11

Luke 12:13-21

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings. The handout for this Sunday's session is found online. Visit www.ltp.org/lwgr to access the PDF and JPG files. Send to teens by email or upload to social media before gathering for today's session.

Leader's Context

Just before the passage we hear today from the Gospel according to Luke, Jesus has been focusing people's attention on the things that really matter. As a result, his response is particularly striking. Jesus sees through the question posed to him, and responds with clarity, inviting all who hear to recognize the allure of material possessions.

Q FOCUS: *We are rich in what matters to God.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

In these weeks of Ordinary Time, the Sunday readings lead us to reflect on the ways in which faith is to shape our daily living. This week, we celebrate the Transfiguration of the Lord, in which Peter, James, and John were given a glimpse into the glory of God, which awaits the faithful at the end of earthly time.

Church Teaching Connection

We are called to live for Christ, and to prefer God and God's ways above all else. It is easy to fall into the trap of relying on material possessions, rather than trusting in God. Fighting this temptation is essential: "The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory for entrance into the Kingdom of heaven" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2544).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 12:13-21

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to share the inheritance with me." He replied to him, "Friend, who appointed me as your judge and arbitrator?" Then he said to the crowd, "Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

Then he told them a parable. "There was a rich man whose land produced a bountiful harvest. He asked himself, 'What shall I do, for I do not have space to store my harvest?' And he said, 'This is what I shall do: I shall tear down my barns and build larger ones. There I shall store all my grain and other goods and I shall say to myself, "Now as for you, you have so many good things stored up for

many years, rest, eat, drink, be merry!” But God said to him, ‘You fool, this night your life will be demanded of you; and the things you have prepared, to whom will they belong?’ Thus will it be for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God.”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

Have you ever been in a situation in which it was obvious that someone missed the point? Perhaps it was in class, when a question was asked that was off track. Maybe it was at a practice, when a new skill or exercise had just been explained and someone missed a key step in the drill. Have you ever been that person who was off the mark?

Just before the passage we hear in today's Gospel, Jesus has been focusing people's attention on what really matters. He has challenged the Pharisees to love God and to act justly rather than seeking places of honor and the admiration of people. He has told the crowd not to allow fear to keep them from living their faith, and to rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and strength when being persecuted for his sake. In other words, Jesus is teaching the people what is most important: live for God and his ways.

► How would you describe what is most important for God?

► What does living for God “look like” in real life?

Then, the man comes to Jesus with the request we hear at the beginning of today's Gospel. He seems to have missed the point of what Jesus has just been talking about. Not only does Jesus refuse to be

caught up in a dispute among siblings over their inheritance, he sees through the request, observing the reliance on money and possessions that the request signifies.

► Are you sometimes tempted to rely on things rather than trust in God?

► What shape does this temptation take in your life?

Jesus tells the crowd a parable about a man who has so many crops he decides to pull down his barns to build bigger ones. He does not plan to build the larger barns in order to be able to share his bounty with others, but so that he can “rest, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:19). He is ready to sit back, relax, and find comfort in his possessions.

► Do you know people who live to gain money or material possessions? How have they “missed the point” of Jesus' teaching?

► Do you sometimes fall into the trap of looking up to those who are materially rich?

► Have you experienced a situation, such as an illness or death of someone close to you that gives the drive to acquire possessions new perspective?

Jesus concludes the parable with striking words: “Thus will it be for all who store up treasure for themselves but are not rich in what matters to God” (Luke 12:21). Material possessions can create an illusion of importance and a false sense of security. Those who live for things are actually poor in what really matters.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the “Church Teaching Connection” on page 2.

Who inspires you to live in a manner that is more closely aligned with today's Gospel?

How would your life need to change if you were to take Jesus' teaching to heart?

What one step will you take to live more for God than for things?

Act on the Word

What Do I Own?

You will need magazines, newsprint, markers, scissors, and tape or glue.

The late Archbishop Thomas Murphy (Seattle, Washington) told the story of facing serious surgery and how the experience gave him new perspective on life. He recalled asking himself, “What do I own, and what owns me?” This question gets at the heart of Jesus’ challenge to be rich in what matters to God.

In this activity, divide the group into teams of three or four teens. Invite each participant to divide a sheet of newsprint in half vertically. At the top of the newsprint, label two columns “What do I own” and “What owns me.” Ask each person to spend a few minutes listing the things they own in the column labeled “What do I own?” in categories such as clothing, school supplies, technology, and so on. Tell the teens to illustrate their possessions on newsprint, using photos or by drawing illustrations. For those categories in which the person has many items, the illustration or pictures could be many or large; for those categories in which he or she has fewer possessions, the illustrations may be smaller or fewer.

In the “What owns me?” column, ask teens to write or draw an example of how the possession might “own” him or her—when has this thing been in the way of living for God or others? Encourage teens to be honest with themselves in acknowledging the allure of material possessions in their lives. Also invite teens to recall moments in which things have not had the upper hand in their lives, and to note what helped them to hold things in their proper spiritual place.

Once the teens have created their newsprint, invite them to share their reflections with teammates and to develop strategies together for keeping things in their proper place and perspective.

How Much Is Enough?

This is a large-group discussion and only requires a notetaker.

While every person’s life is different, few do not experience the desire for material possessions in some degree. It is important to note that for some, there is a real need for material things, and it is also crucial to point out that of themselves, material possessions are not bad. Rather, the desire for things can distract us from what is important or become the focus in our lives.

Ask the group to talk together about how many possessions are enough, and how much is too much. Invite them to think together about the things that are most appealing to them—the latest clothing styles, athletic equipment, phone, tablet, TV, or streaming service.

The tone of the discussion can be kept somewhat lighthearted. It is not necessary to beat ourselves up about what we have, even in excess. Instead, use this moment as a time in which to take stock and to resolve to keep things in their proper place in the future.

Invite the teens to make a plan to give what they do not need to a parish or local outreach organization. If your parish has a regular clothing or donations drive, encourage the teens to collect their things and participate as a group.

Closing Prayer

*Lord our God,
joy, hope, love, abundance: these are signs of
your presence.*

*May we be aware that you are with us
and give thanks for your bounty and goodness.*

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday’s Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.