

Deacon Martin writes...

On Tuesday this week, we entered the period of the Church's year, called "Ordinary Time". "Ordinary" here doesn't mean "commonplace", but refers to the numbered, serial weeks of Ordinary Time: this coming Sunday is the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time; next Sunday, the Third. (Those who are curious about what happened to the first Sunday, can ask me separately!). "Ordinary" comes from the same Latin word that relates to our English word, "order" – so these weeks are "in order". The Latin version of the Roman Missal refers to this period as "*tempus per annum*": "time through the year".

The green of the vestments worn by the priest and deacon, and the cover of the ambo, symbolise hope, and also life and growth.



This green gives a clue to how we can approach this period: it can be an opportunity for "re-greening" ourselves – to be renewed, refreshed, given colour, become ready to bear fruit.

Ordinary Time might be thought of as the green "valleys" of the Church year, sitting between the "mountains" of Advent and Christmastide on the one hand, and Lent and Eastertide on the other. Like the "green pastures" of [Psalm 23](#), Ordinary Time allows us to "take time" to take things in, to consolidate the spiritual benefits of the other, more intense periods of preparation and celebration. And perhaps after a couple of extra-ordinary years, the gradual, unceasing procession of Ordinary Time can help to give us the perspective of the Lord, to Whom "a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years a day" ([2 Pet 3:8](#)) – so that we can see that even these times will pass ([1 Cor 7:31](#)), and the Lord will remain with us through hard times and good times.

In this way of thinking, Ordinary Time is not humdrum or uneventful – rather, we can take advantage of the progression of time, benefiting from routine and repetition day by day, to mature in our life in Christ, and to be formed by God into the image of His Son, Jesus. Such "formation" is not just for priests, deacons and religious, but for all of us (see [Rom 8:29](#); [2 Cor 3:18](#); [Gal 4:19](#)).

So, how can each of us take advantage of this Ordinary Time we have just entered, making it an opportunity to be “re-greened”, and bear fruit for Him?

Here are a few phrases from the scripture readings from this weekend’s [Second Sunday of Ordinary Time](#) (year B), which give us some good suggestions:

1. **“Come and see”** ([Jn 1:39](#))

Jesus is inviting you and me. He wants us to “come and see” what He is offering us. He wants us to spend time with Him, to get to know Him better. All we have to do, is accept the invitation. Who knows what might happen as a result? For the seeker Andrew, the encounter with Jesus was life-changing, and he wanted his brother Simon (Peter) to share it too (see more below). Why don’t you make this Ordinary Time into an extra-ordinary time, by accepting Jesus’s invitation?

2. **“I waited for the Lord”** ([Ps 39\(40\):1](#))

How can I know what the Lord is asking of me? One way is to spend time each day – even if it’s only 5 minutes – reading and prayerfully pondering His word in the Scriptures. There’s a variety of ways: if you don’t already have it, install the [Universalis app](#) on your phone, and read the Scripture readings that are used at daily Mass. Another way is to follow the daily Mass readings with a reflection from Pope Francis, on the [Vatican News web site](#). But any way that gets you started is a good way. As you read the Bible, ask the Lord for the grace to know His will for you, and for the courage to follow it.

3. **“Your justice I have proclaimed”** ([Ps 39 \(40\):9](#))

The underlying Hebrew text of this psalm is literally “I have told the good news of your right-doing”. God always does right by us, and He wants everyone to know it. Can you and I be the means of helping others to know? Today’s readings make it clear that each of us is called by God in our own way to be a witness: it’s not just a job for mighty figures like Samuel, Andrew & Simon in our Scripture readings, nor only for Fr Mark and Fr Benedict and Deacons Tony and Martin. You might not even be called to “proclaim...in the great assembly”, but in a more low-key, day-to-day manner. Indeed, the best witness can sometimes be simply doing what Andrew did for his brother Simon: “he took Simon to Jesus” ([Jn 1:42](#)). Whom, of your family and friends, can you “take to Jesus”, and let Him do the rest?

To keep the idea of “re-greening” in the front of your mind, maybe place a green plant in your place of prayer (and if you don’t have a regular place of prayer, this Ordinary Time is the right time to establish one!)

I hope and pray that for each one of us, Ordinary Time can help us to be “inwardly transformed through Him Whom we recognise as outwardly like ourselves” (Preface of the feast we celebrated on Monday, The Baptism of the Lord).

Note: if you’re reading this online, please do click on the links and read the scripture references – and allow the Lord to speak to you in His word.