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The richness of ordinary life

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At first glance, the words “richness” and “ordinary” do not seem to belong in the same sentence. Yet our faith invites us to believe that there is richness in ordinary life, challenging as it may seem.

In our liturgical calendar, Ordinary Time began after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord which marked the end of the Christmas period.

Hope in the ordinary

In our families and workplaces, we re-enter the rhythm of normal activities after the holidays. As we look to the months ahead, we may experience a mix of emotions: excitement, wonder, and perhaps even concern or resignation, as the familiar routine of daily life returns with a brief interruption by the Lunar New Year celebration in a few weeks.

We are tempted to think that the humdrum of our daily lives is grey next to the extraordinary festivities we just celebrated.

Instead, the Church reminds us that ordinary life has a beautiful colour. Indeed, during Ordinary Time, green is present in the liturgical vestments. Green is the colour of hope. With this choice, the Church reminds us that the ordinary events that lie ahead are not dull or tasteless. They are embraced by the grace of Jesus Christ, who is our hope (cfr. 1 Timothy 1:1).

The Second Vatican Council offered a message of hope to lay people living the ordinary realities of daily life: "They [the laity] live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper function and led by the

spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven" (*Lumen Gentium*, 31).

Interconnectedness

Indeed, our existence is like a web with several threads that intersect, form knots, and make gracious designs. Relationships, work, community, house chores - all give shape to the web of existence. There is no single thread that can be considered unimportant.

Everything, from the smallest to the greatest, is meaningful because everything has been touched by the mystery of Jesus Christ: "For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart" (*Gaudium et spes*, 22).

Christ's grace is like a stream that waters every corner of our daily life. This is a gift, but also a challenge. As Saint Josemaría Escriváthe said, "There is something holy, something divine, hidden in the most ordinary situations, and it is up to each one of you to discover it... Either we learn to find our Lord in ordinary, everyday life, or we shall never find Him." (*Conversations*, 114).

Holiness in the everyday

As Christians, we are called to discover the opportunities of loving God in the simple, ordinary things; in those small acts that perhaps are not cherished by the news or social media, but that can truly make a difference for the people around us.

Pope Francis spoke of the holiness found in our next-door neighbours, reminding us that holiness is not rare or reserved for a few. It is present "in those parents who raise their

children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile...” (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, 7).

Christian piety and devotional practices are not meant to distract us from daily life but rather to help us to find God precisely in the everyday. They remind us of Jesus’ presence in everything we do, just as He assured his disciples: “Behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

Practices such as regular mental prayer, reading of the Scriptures, and participation in the Holy Mass help us to see the action of Christ behind the events of the day, and to give thanks and make resolutions to become better disciples.

With these, we can make the most of each moment and discover the richness of our ordinary life.

PRACTICAL TIPS

☑ Begin the day praying a morning offering

☑ Give thanks to God, even for the small events in your life

☑ Attend the Holy Mass whenever you can, and bring to the altar of the Lord your daily joys and fatigues

☑ Find support in community and good friends for the ordinary challenges

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