

## Reflection for the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

This week we as a people of faith celebrate the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time. The last time we celebrated a Sunday in Ordinary Time was on February 14, 2021, when we celebrated the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time. The 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time was followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Lent, February 21, 2021, the Lenten Season and of course the Easter Season also follow. So today we return to a Sunday in Ordinary Time, and it is interesting to note that we do not return on the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time, nor do we restart with the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time. The reason we do not restart with the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time is that there is only one Season of Ordinary Time for the liturgical year, just as there is one Season of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter for a liturgical year. Of course, we never have a 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of a liturgical year because the first week of Ordinary Time always follows the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. It is also important to note that traditionally the Feast of the Ascension of the Lord was celebrated, 40 days after Easter Sunday which would be on a Thursday. The Sunday between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday was celebrated as a Sunday in Ordinary time, this year it would have been the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time. From this Sunday we start counting Sundays of Ordinary Time, and so today for us in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe we once again celebrate a Sunday in Ordinary Time and it is the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Season.

Having a bifurcated Season, that counts Sundays that are not celebrated, and starts with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday and not the 1<sup>st</sup> can cause anyone to wonder just how important this Season is in relationship to the rest of the liturgical year. One can wonder if Ordinary Time is just a fill in between the truly important Seasons of the year? It would be completely understandable to view Ordinary Time as the least important Season of the liturgical year. This Season could be viewed as the proverbial “Cinderella” of the liturgical year. The Season that sings “It is not easy being green” or the other classic “Nobody likes me guess I will eat worms.” This Season in so many ways seems to get the short end of the stick.

If we come to the conclusion that Ordinary Time is a second-rate season in the liturgical year, then we might be totally misunderstanding the season and miss out on a great opportunity. Ordinary Time is the only season of the liturgical year that is connected to all the other seasons of the year. Ordinary Time spans the time between Christmas and Lent, and Easter the end of the liturgical year that leads to another year which starts with Advent. This season provides the time and space between the celebration of the birth of Christ and the Lenten Season that leads to His death and resurrection. Next, Ordinary Time provides the time and space between the Feast of Pentecost and the ending of the liturgical year with the Feast of Christ the King and then a new liturgical year starts with the Season of Advent. These times between Christmas to Lent, and Easter to Advent are times for growing in knowledge and wisdom of God.

This Sunday on the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time our Gospel reading is taken from the Gospel of Mark and the second to last sentence of the Gospel reading states, “*With many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to understand it.*” Jesus spoke to the crowds of His day with parables and as the Gospel of Mark points out the people were able to draw meaning from what He said to them. In this Ordinary Time, it is the same for you and I, Jesus speaks to us in many ways every day of our lives and we can draw meaning and a message from His conversation with us. He might speak to us in parables or in signs and symbols. Know beyond a shadow of a doubt, Jesus does speak to us everyday in many ways just as He spoke to His disciples and the crowds of His day. In this Season of Ordinary Time may we open our hearts to hear Jesus speaking to us and may this time between Easter and Advent be a time of growth and openness to God.