

## LOVING THE DAILY DIVINE

*Introduction to Ordinary Time*

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Remain within the world of which you're made.  
 Call nothing common in the earth or air,  
 Accept it all and let it be for good.<sup>1</sup>  
 Malcolm Guite

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Finally, we come to the last and longest season of the Christian year – Ordinary Time.

In many traditions, there are two seasons of Ordinary Time: one shorter season between Epiphany and Lent, and then a longer one, which this collection celebrates. Given the assumption that many readers of these pages are new to the Christian calendar tradition, I've chosen to keep it simple. We'll explore from the end of the Easter season around mid-May to the beginning of Advent in late November. In truth, the Christian calendar has several varieties and complexities I've not addressed, but which you will discover if you become a worshipping member of a faith community that attends to the tradition in one of its forms.

Ordinary Time, in general, offers a bit of a breather. It does contain significant feasts (Trinity Sunday, the Transfiguration, All Saints, and Christ the King) and saints' days to be celebrated, but it has much less drama than the other seasons. It has a more even keel and offers a chance to integrate the mysteries we encounter throughout the rest of the year.

It is during Ordinary Time that we attend to the holiness of our daily lives. We began by passing through Advent, where we considered the mystery of the human person, whose dignity is to accept the invitation to participate in the drama of salvation as maternal spouse of God, co-operating to bring Christ's life to the world. We then celebrated Christmas, where we apprehended the humble incarnation of the cosmos' Creator and reflected on the astonishing humanity of Jesus. In the season of Epiphany, we meditated on the miracles and events that revealed Jesus' divinity, and we came to understand the two natures (human and divine) of Christ, to whom our souls are wed. During Lent, we pondered the devastation wrought by our infidelities and the myriad inordinate attachments and desires that draw our affections away from our Lord. Then, during Holy Week, we walked alongside Jesus to the cross, where he assumed and redeemed those devastations so that we might again truly and freely love as well as knowing we are beloved by God. Eastertide was a sustained reflection on the miracle of resurrection and the eternally evergreen life on offer through Christ's victory over death. Now we come to Ordinary Time.

The very sound of the words 'Ordinary Time' seems a letdown after the drama that preceded it. The word 'ordinary' suggests the commonplace, uninteresting and featureless. It can describe a

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the poem "Singing Bowl," in Malcolm Guite, *The Singing Bowl* (Canterbury Press, 2013), xv.

person with no special merit or distinction. But if we simply replace the word ‘ordinary’ with ‘daily,’ a new appreciation becomes possible. For Ordinary Time is the season in which we come to realize the astonishing *holiness* of our daily lives as a consequence of all we have previously considered. Here, we begin to understand with joy that the daily is impregnated with the divine.

The first Sunday of Ordinary Time (if we start right after the Easter season) is Trinity Sunday. Although it doesn’t get much press compared with days like Christmas or Easter, I contend that Trinity Sunday is the highest and most magnificent peak of illumination on the landscape of the Church year. Everything that has preceded it points toward, and is a mere foothill relative to, this great revelation. Christ’s birth, life, death and resurrection all conspire to bring us to this moment when we see the community (Father, Son, Spirit) that is God’s eternal love and life, for which we have been redeemed and into which we have been wholeheartily invited. From this dizzying summit, we look down on the plains of daily-ness and see it both bathed and infused with the light of God’s intrinsic mutuality, goodness and love. The whole point of attending to the Christian year is to come to this moment where we awaken to the mystery of a daily-ness which, far from ordinary, radiates back to God’s own being. Ironically, we can come to know in our bones that nothing conceived and sustained under God’s gaze is ordinary.

Novelist Walker Percy, in his essay “The Holiness of the Ordinary,” reflects on how the Christian spiritual tradition confers “the highest significance upon the ordinary things of this world: bread, wine, water, touch, breath, words, talking, listening.” A world which is itself a sacrament and a mystery.<sup>2</sup>

Recently, I was asked to contribute a song to a compilation CD. It wasn’t a “Christian” project, so the assumption was that I’d submit something that wouldn’t be, as it were, *too Christian*. Producer Murray Pulver and I sat down to write a song that simply celebrated ordinariness (daily-ness) as it comes to us: as the *advent-ure* that it is, which of course, at the end of this season, leads right back into Advent again.

## BRING IT ON

*by Murray Pulver and Steve Bell*

Waking to familiar news  
Summer’s gone, long gone  
Some are nursing winter’s blues  
Bring it on, bring it on

Crumble of snow beneath the feet  
Shivering fingers, winter’s cheek  
True north time is bittersweet  
Bring it on, bring it on

Not the youth I used to be  
Marveling how the time has gone  
Yet I’ve never felt so free  
Bring it on, bring it on

Less to conquer, less to do  
Less inclined to suffer fools

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<sup>2</sup> Walker Percy, *Signposts in a Strange Land* (Picador, 1991), 369.

Just happy to grow old with you  
Bring it on, bring it on

Fumbling forward on the way  
Why regret, just journey on  
In the end it's all okay  
Bring it on, bring it on  
Bring it on, bring it on

*Listen to above song at [www.pilgrimyear.com/songs](http://www.pilgrimyear.com/songs): Ordinary Time: Chapter One.*