

Thoughts on the Daily Word

9th Week of Year. Monday 1st June. Readings: 2 Peter 1:2-7; Psalm 90; Mark 12:1-12.

We are now back into the time we left in February, Ordinary Time. The Church's liturgy moves us through a cycle of reflection and action in our Baptismal journey. I often think of it as a spiral that moves us onward and upward towards our goal of incorporation into Christ. In other words, becoming more Christ-like. We sometimes think of it as a personal journey and yes, we do have to make personal decisions. However, it is a journey into the Body of Christ. Not just me becoming like Christ but me playing my unique part in the whole Body. That is the root of our Catholic faith, that we are one Body, a Church united through the Eucharistic Mystery, into the Mystical Body of Christ. Our challenge is to live that out day by day.

I like to divide the liturgical year into the four phases that in the early Church were developed for the incorporation of new Christians into the Church. Today we know it as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. We sometimes think that children are the model of growth in faith but from the beginning the Church focuses on adults. Children tend to model and rely on the faith of their parents until, as adults, they begin to make their own decisions. Phase one is built around the Incarnation, Advent to Epiphany, phase two is Ordinary time which surfaces until Lent, then goes underground during Lent and Easter, until Pentecost, Trinity and Corpus Christi, when it re-emerges until the end of the liturgical year. Each phase or stage has an important purpose in the growth of our Christian life.

Each phase adds, or reinforces, a new foundation to our Christian journey. Phase two is traditionally called the Catechumenate when we grow in God's Word and build the foundation of our commitment to the Church community on that solid basis. We don't just move on from each phase but continue to deepen its life within us. Hence this Ordinary Time, dips and yet reappears, not just around Lent/Easter, but also many major and minor feasts of the Church. Literally it takes on a rhythm of its own, changing according to the seasons. Ordinary Time dresses up in green, the symbol of life, a reminder that God's purpose is to offer life in its fulness.