



THE ARCHDIOCESE *of* BIRMINGHAM

Office for Ethnic Chaplaincies and Eastern Catholic Churches
Co-ordinator: Monsignor Daniel McHugh

The Season of the Saints

Reflection for the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
18 January 2026

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“I delight to do your will, O my God.” (Ps 40 : 9)

We have just begun “Ordinary Time” in the Church’s Year; it follows on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (the 1st Sunday of Ordinary Time). It can seem like a “come-down” after the wondrous celebration of the Nativity and the Epiphany. However, a recent article in ‘Aleteia’, an online publication providing a Christian vision of the world, has this heading, “The surprisingly deep spiritual meaning behind Ordinary Time”. Rather than being a generic season in the Church with no specific focus, the writer, Philip Kosloski, quotes the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which explains:

“Christmas Time and Easter Time highlight the central mysteries of the Paschal mystery, namely, the incarnation, death on the Cross, resurrection and ascension



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of Jesus Christ, and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Sundays and weeks of Ordinary Time, on the other hand, take us through the life of Christ. This is the time of conversion; this is living the life of Christ”.

The USCCB continues: “Ordinary Time is time for growth and maturation, a time in which the mystery of Christ is called to penetrate ever more deeply into history until all things are finally caught up in Christ. The goal, toward which all history is directed, is represented by the Final Sunday in Ordinary Time, the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe.”

Kosloski writes: “Ordinary Time is a specific season in the Church that focusses on the life of Christ during his three years of public ministry. The colour of the liturgical season is green, which is most associated with growth. It is a time ordered - from the Latin word ‘Ordo’, hence Ordinary – to spiritual growth, walking in the footsteps of Jesus’s public life.”

So, while the season’s name may appear to be an afterthought, it is not without meaning. On another occasion, Kosloski wrote that this season is connected to the “Universal Call to Holiness” and a particular focus on the celebration of saints’ feast days. He wrote “with that in mind Ordinary Time can easily be called the season of saints”, where the Church highlights the lives of particular saints who stand out for us as examples of holiness. It should remind us that we are called to be saints, no matter what profession or state of life we find ourselves in. The key during this season of the Church’s calendar is to grow in our life of faith and attach ourselves more firmly to the Body of Christ, allowing the holiness of Jesus to



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permeate every aspect of our lives. The saints show us the way, and it is up to us to follow in their footsteps. I like to draw on the lives of the saints listed for commemoration in our Diocesan Ordo (the guide for the celebration of Mass) when I celebrate weekday mass and to highlight some in the weekly vlog “Burning Bush”. For example, this coming week saints are listed every day for commemoration, and I have selected St Sebastian for particular note in the vlog. St Sebastian was an officer in the Imperial Army of Emperor Diocletian, but when he was discovered to be a Christian, he was sentenced to be shot through with arrows. His martyrdom in terms of Renaissance Art is depicted in many places. His burial place was on the Via Appia in Catacombs named after him. He is indeed a wonderful example of one who followed the “light of the nations”, spoken of in the reading from Isaiah for the 2nd Sunday. Like John the Baptist who pointed out Jesus as the Lamb of God in the Gospel for the 2nd Sunday, so foretelling his passion, death and resurrection, and communicating His Spirit definitively, so St Sebastian and other great saints point to the same Jesus. John’s witness is an excellent example of what it means to be a disciple. By our Baptism, we are called to make Jesus known to all the world by our words and by the witness of our lives (cf Sunday Connection).

Looking back on my time as a Parish Priest, I recall the dedication of parents and grandparents to their children, and the love without limit they showered on them. This extends to having them baptised and brought up in the spiritual life of the Church. And, that is where they are sometimes disappointed at the lack of response as the children grow through teenage years.



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In response to a Catechist pointing out to Pope Leo the difficulty of getting parents more involved in the life of the Church, the Pope offered encouragement to all who experience similar difficulties. “As Christians, we always need conversion. And we must seek it together.” He recalled that the true door of faith “is the Heart of Christ, always wide open.” Vatican News says Pope Leo’s concluding appeal is rooted in the legacy of Pope St Paul VI: “what we can do is to bear witness to the joy of Christ’s Gospel, the joy of rebirth and resurrection.”

Let us make our own the words of the Psalm for the 2nd Sunday: “I delight to do your will, O my God.” (Ps 40: 9)