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Retreat Ministry • Parish Missions

"Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile!..." Mark 6:31
Are you ready to accept the invitation?

Ordinary Time

In the Catholic tradition we are well versed in the seasons of Advent and Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. Those are the "heavyweights" of the church year, the ones that get most of the attention, require most of the preparation, and include the biggest celebrations.

But the rest of the year – actually, well more than half of every year – is known simply as "Ordinary Time." Ordinary means routine, day by day, nothing special, which is also how most of us live the greatest part of our lives. And that's a good thing! We need those quieter times and in-between stretches to settle down, catch up, and level out. That is true of the spiritual life as well. Occasionally we are lifted to great heights, sometimes we are thrown into frightening depths; but most of the spiritual life is also ordinary, routine, day by day.

But don't think that means there is nothing happening.

In the Catholic tradition, a color is associated with each liturgical season. The color for the season of Ordinary Time is green, the color of growth, from the green of a backyard to the green of a farmer's field. In the realm of nature, growth is usually slow and unspectacular, which also describes most growth in the spiritual life. Such growth takes time, calls for patience, and can usually be measured (if at all) over the long run, not day by day.



Once again, Nature teaches us God's rhythms. We would do well to make them our own, and give thanks for periods of Ordinary Time, when life, and growth, happen at their own pace.

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This post was originally posted on September 2, 2012 on my friend Richard N. Southworth's blog, Turning Around. (<http://www.turningaround.net/?p=712>) For more about Richard visit his website at <http://www.thegreatjourney.com> and his blog at <http://www.turningaround.net>. To learn about his book, Choosing Authenticity: Religion Is Not Enough, visit <http://www.choosingauthenticity.com>.

