

Church of Saint Joseph Bulletin Supplement

February 6, 2011

Ordinary Time

Wasted time is not a prized commodity in American society. We are a people ruled by the clock. Time is money because time is to be filled with purposeful—controlled activity which is productive of things which can be sold. We are convinced that we must be in control of time. The last thing the productive American would want to do is waste time playing around with relatives that do not produce a saleable commodity.

But the Creator of heaven and earth is described by the scriptures as the original and the best of players. Creative activity is playful, and creative people do not feel that what they do is a job. Creative people also have a sense that their creativity and all that they fashion in the creative spirit are gifts they have received. The Christian can speak of this and the contemplative vision which sees all reality as gift or grace. Our thankful response we call worship or Eucharist.

We cannot speak of Ordinary Time without speaking of Sunday. The every seven-day celebration of the Lord's Day is the basic structure upon which the Church Year is built. The great liturgical seasons of Advent-Christmas and Lent-Easter are more expansive celebrations of particular aspects of the one paschal mystery which we celebrate every Lord's Day. These special seasons focus our attention upon critical dimensions of one mystery, a mystery so overwhelming that we are compelled to separate out its various elements for particular attention. These seasons in no way minimize the critical importance of the Sunday celebration throughout the rest of the year. Ordinary Time is not very ordinary at all. Ordinary Time, the celebration of Sunday, is the identifying mark of the Christian community which comes together, remembering that on the first day of the week the Lord of Life was raised up and creation came at last to completion. Sunday as a day of play and worship is a sacrament of redeemed time. How we live Sunday proclaims to the world what we believe about redeemed time now and forever.

What happens in our churches every Sunday is the fruit of our week. What happens as the fruit of the week past is the beginning of the week to come. Sunday, like all sacraments, is simultaneously a point of arrival and departure for Christians on their way to the fullness of the kingdom. This is not ordinary at all. This is the fabric of Christian living.

—*The Saint Andrew Bible Missal*

Looking ahead to Lent...

As a Benedictine faith community, we continue to strive to build a solid foundation by forming ourselves as witnesses to the Gospel and responding to the message of Jesus. One of the ways we do this is to look to the example of the monks of Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, who are committed to this same vision. In the Rule of Benedict, there is a tradition for the entire community to be engaged in spiritual reading of the same book, together: "Reading will always accompany the meals of the brothers (chapter 38)..." In this spirit, we invite all parishioners to engage in a reading of the book, *Five Loaves and Two Fish*, as a spiritual preparation for Lent. *Five Loaves and Two Fish*, written by Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, contains reflections on the Cardinal's prison experience of suffering and hope from his 13 years in prison in Vietnam, nine of which were in solitary confinement. His great love for Christ and for his beloved Vietnamese people illuminated the darkness of his suffering and now shine from every word of this small and profoundly beautiful book. In September 2007, the Roman Catholic Church began the beatification process of Cardinal Van Thuan. Pope Benedict says of the cardinal, "During thirteen years in jail, in a situation of seemingly utter hopelessness, the fact that he could listen and speak to God became for him an increasing power of hope, which enabled him, after his release, to become for people all over the world a witness to hope—to that great hope which does not wane even in the nights of solitude."

We will begin our journey together with *Five Loaves and Two Fish* the week of February 20. Reflection questions will be posted on our parish website and weekly in the bulletin for you to reflect on. You may reflect on your own or meet with a few people of your choosing to discuss the book. Locate a copy of the book online at www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com or call Dawn Carrillo in the Faith Formation Office (363-7505 x152) by *Friday, February 11* to order your copy.

"Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own."

"You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world." These two passages are from today's Scripture readings and they remind us of how much God relies on each of us to have God's work accomplished on this earth. On Saturday, January 22, hundreds of volunteers from the surrounding area packed 148,000 meals at the Kids Against Hunger Event held at Salem Lutheran Church in St. Cloud. These meals will be sent to Jamaica to be distributed to orphanages and destitute families. The volunteers who helped, ranged from the very young to the very old. Thanks to the members of our parish who helped and to those of you who donated over \$1,000 for this project. Thank you! Thank you!

If you visit our local food shelf, you would notice a generous supply of food, cleaning supplies, and a variety of other goods often needed in one's home, all of it donated by generous Christians from the area. Each month, several parishioners donate monies to pastoral ministries to be used within the parish to help other parishioners who are experiencing hardships of one kind or another. God does not call us to be perfect. God calls each of us to be faithful. By word and deed we become the light of the local world and the salt of the local earth, and God's work is being accomplished. Thanks to all of you who are so generous and kind as we serve the needy of the area and of the world. God's blessings and peace be with you on your journey.

S. Joyce Iten, Pastoral Minister