

Mission Connections: Special Catechetical Leaders Edition

Youth Connecting in Mission

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Ordinary Time

The purple of Lent seems a distant memory already. The white and gold and vibrant colors of those glorious 50 days are gone. Even the splash of red of last weekend's feast is already taken down in many sanctuaries. Now, once again, our churches are draped in the green of ordinary time.

Similarly, the season of Confirmations and First Communions is winding down. The hustle of Faith Formation programs is wrapping up. And the excitement of the last days of school is felt all around. Many catechetical ministries are, once again, draped in a quieter calm. And yet, this quiet, this "ordinary time," may be more adventurous than we realize.

Upon investigation, I found two definitions for ordinary. The first explains ordinary as, "with no special or distinctive features." While this season of the-end-of-festive-seasons may seem that way—a time in our church and ministries without anything too special or distinctive about it—I beg to differ. There is still so much to celebrate and ponder during this season. Trinity Sunday this weekend, when we recall how our GOD—Father, Son and Spirit—calls us to follow the example of relationships, and the mission of Unity in Diversity that the Divine set for the Church. Corpus Christi the following week, when we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and dedicate ourselves anew to what it means to be a Eucharistic people, sharing blessings together with GOD and with others. The Visitation, when both Mary and Elizabeth's and John and Jesus's companionship with

one another, even while still in the womb, showed us a path of support and relationship that Christ would continue to follow throughout his life, and his death. Not to mention the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and numerous other feasts and memorials for the great saints and martyrs who have gone before us. So much to celebrate—wild, radical, amazing things!

And these things which we celebrate during this "ordinary time"—whether they are accompanied by special colors in the sanctuaries, cake receptions and big to-do's, or not—are to be, as the second (and my preferred definition) suggests, the norm. "**Ordinary: what is commonplace or standard.**"

Right relationship and unity, communion, blessing and thanksgiving, companionship and support, devotion and self-giving love, holiness and sacrificing for our faith—all of these things which we celebrate in the coming months—should be our *every day living*. They are to be our common-place and standard practice as we live out our faith, both as individuals and communities. It is no wonder that Ordinary Time fills the majority of our liturgical calendars. These lessons, virtues and gifts we strive for are at the very heart of what it means to be in "ordinary time." A time not marked by lack-of, but by abundance—of faith and of adventures in living it out.

I pray as your years draw to a close, and your summers begin, that whatever the coming months hold for you, it will feel "ordinary" in the most blessed of ways!

Words of Wisdom:

"Ordinary Time is a time of quiet hope – a lush green meadow of hope. As you know, the Liturgical color for Ordinary Time is the color of hope-green. It is a change from powerful "mountain top" liturgical experiences in Christmas and Easter and "deep valleys" during Advent and Lent. Now we are asked to encounter the Lord in the lush green meadow of our lives." (Deacon Tom Frankenfield, of the Diocese of Omaha)

Don't Forget:



May 28: Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe Shrine in LaCrosse, WI; fundraiser for the diocesan partnership with Maracay, Venezuela

May 30: Mission Office closed; happy Memorial Day

June 4: Diaconal ordinations

June 18: Priestly ordinations

June 19-24: A Call to Service week for youth

Give it a Try!



Try incorporating these resources, projects or activities into your ministry.



Mission Education Resources & Ideas

Don't let mission take a "summer vacation!" There are still plenty of ways to incorporate mission into your community these coming months. For example, if you have not yet selected a VBS curriculum, consider using "Animal Crackers," a Scripture-based program put out by Heifer International, that strives to help young people appreciate the ways that people and animals live in harmony on God's Earth, and the ways in which we can make a difference in people's lives through simple actions to help end hunger and poverty around the world. Visit <http://heifer.org/crackers> to

download your free leaders guide.

Invite your community to participate in the pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in LaCrosse, WI for a great cultural experience later this month (open to all ages), or to be a part of A Call to Service event for youth (grades 9-12, with adult leaders) to learn more about our Catholic Social Teachings and service.

Or stay in touch with the Mission Office about what missionaries are coming home to the diocese for visits this summer, who may be able to come and share with your VBS, youth, women's or men's group, or parish community about their life and ministry in mission.