Nothing Out of the Ordinary?

Dear Friend of Annunciation Parish & School,

In our Liturgical Calendar we have the Incarnational Cycle (the Advent and Christmas Seasons), and the Paschal Cycle (Lent, the Triduum, and the Easter Season). The time outside of these special seasons is called Ordinary Time.

When we refer to something as being ordinary, we usually mean there is nothing special about it. It is routine. However, that is not the reason the time outside of the special seasons of the Church Year is called Ordinary Time. Here, the word “ordinary” refers to “ordinal” – a way of counting or ranking something. We are counting the Sundays and the weeks between the seasons of the Church Year. Thus we are able to keep track of where we are in our Lectionary Cycle and we can locate the appropriate prayers in the Roman Missal.

There are two blocks of Ordinary Time during the Church Year, giving us thirty-three to thirty-four weeks of Ordinary Time each year. The first block of Ordinary Time occurs between the Christmas Season and the Season of Lent. The second block of Ordinary Time is much longer, beginning at the conclusion of the Easter Season and continuing through the remainder of the Church Year. The primary liturgical color used during Ordinary Time is green, which expresses hope and trust.

Throughout the entire Church Year we are celebrating the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. The Sunday Lectionary Cycle is set up so that during Ordinary Time we have a fairly continuous reading of a given Gospel, as well as other New Testament writings. And there are wonderful feasts in Ordinary Time. To say there is nothing out of the ordinary we are celebrating during these weeks is just extraordinary!

Sincerely,

Dr. Sandi Chakeres, Director of Faith Formation

The Female Saints in Our Sanctuary Mural

Have you ever taken a good look at the five female saints featured in our sanctuary mural? What do you know about each one? Saint Cecilia’s feast is November 22; Saint Agnes’ feast is January 21; Saint Lucy’s feast is December 13; Saint Agatha’s feast is February 5; and, Saint Perpetua’s feast is March 7. All five were young early Church martyrs.

Special points of interest:

- Make sure to mark your calendars for our upcoming annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper & Mardi Gras Celebration on Tuesday, February 9 from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Tickets are $5 each; no charge for children under 2; $15 per family maximum. All are welcome - spread the word!
- Follow us on Facebook to get all the latest news and see all the latest photos from Annunciation!

**Icon at top left of page: Archangel Gabriel (Annunciation), 16th Century, Russian Heritage, Location: Andrey Rublev Museum in Moscow. Used with permission of St. Isaac of Syria Skete (Orthodox Byzantine Icons, Inc.); 25266 Pilgrims Way, Boscobel, WI 53805 www.skete.com**
Saint Sebastian: Patron Saint of Athletes (+ our Phys. Ed Classes)

January 20th is the feast day (an optional memorial) of Saint Sebastian. Sebastian lived in the third century. We don’t know a lot of historical facts about his life, but he was already venerated by Christians in the late third century, and there are a number of legends about him which Christians have held to throughout the centuries.

Sebastian was a Christian who lived at a time when the Christian Church was being severely persecuted. He wanted to be able to both strengthen Christians who had been sentenced to martyrdom for their faith, as well as speak out about their cruel fate. He decided the best way to do both was to become a soldier. He even became the chief of the Praetorian Guard, who served as the emperor’s personal guardsmen. He had great sympathy for the Christians who were imprisoned, and brought them great comfort.

Eventually Sebastian confronted the Emperor Diocletian about the cruel way Christians were being treated. When Diocletian heard this and realized Sebastian was a Christian, he was enraged. He ordered the execution of Sebastian. Sebastian was stripped, tied to a tree, and the emperor’s archmen were ordered to kill him by using him as practice for archery. This is why in art you usually will see Saint Sebastian pierced with arrows.

His executioners left Sebastian for dead, but actually he had survived this terrible attack. Another Christian, Irene, nursed him back to health. But his near death experience did not stop Sebastian. Once he recovered he hid along the way he knew the emperor would pass. He then once again confronted the Emperor Diocletian about the cruel treatment of Christians. Diocletian was shocked and enraged that Sebastian was still alive, and once again ordered him executed. This time he was clubbed to death, and his body was thrown in the sewer. His body was recovered and he was buried along the Appian Way in Rome, near where a church now stands in his honor.

Due to his strength and endurance, especially in surviving the first attempt to execute him, Saint Sebastian is the patron saint of athletes, as well as archers, soldiers, and police associations. He is the patron saint of our Physical Education classes at Annunciation Catholic School, as well.

Upcoming Events

- Monday, January 18: Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday; No school; School Office is closed; Parish Office is open.
- January 18-25: Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- Wednesday, January 20, 7:00-8:30 p.m.: RCIA gathering for those interested in becoming Catholic
- Thursday, January 21, 9:30-10:15 a.m.: Morning Prayer & Liturgical Catechesis.
- Wednesday, January 27, 7:00-8:15 p.m.: Eucharistic Holy Hour
- Sunday, January 31, 12:30-2:30 p.m.: Annunciation Catholic School Open House
- Tuesday, February 2: Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas); Mass at 8:15 a.m.
- Tuesday, February 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m.: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper & Mardi Gras

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

January 18–25, 2016, is the annual observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The theme chosen for 2016 is “Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of the Lord.” (cf. 1 Peter 2:9) Throughout 2016, join Christians everywhere in praying “that they may all be one” joining our prayer with that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity gives Christians an annual opportunity to continue their quest for the unity they already share in Christ. It is also a time to gather in praise of the Triune God and to deepen the understanding of the ecumenical movement. By joining in this annual celebration Christians raise their voices, hands and hearts to God seeking the fulfillment of the prayer of Jesus, the Son of God, “that they all may be one.” Find more information here.