



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are coming to the end of the Liturgical Year. The Church breaks up the year into special seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter), and the rest of the year is Ordinary Time. During this time, we are called to reflect on the Paschal Mystery – the life, death and resurrection of Christ. Every year, we begin with the mystery of waiting – waiting for Christ at the end of time, waiting, like Israel, for the coming of a Savior, waiting, like Mary, for the coming of the Christ-Child. Christmas brings with it rejoicing for Emmanuel – God-is-with-us. Lent prepares us for the death and resurrection of Jesus as we walk through the 40 days in the desert. This culminates with the Paschal Triduum – Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Then we gloriously move into the mysteries of Easter – Jesus risen from the dead, conquering sin and death so that we might have life forever.

Ordinary Time, though, seems so ... ordinary. Yet, it is a call to walk with Jesus through His whole life. Of Jesus' thirty-three years of life on this earth, thirty of them were spent in obscurity – unknown by the world. It is a reminder in the daily grind of our lives to walk with the Lord when we do the same chores day in and day out. This weekend is the thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time – a symbol of the thirty-three years of Jesus' life. Next week, we will celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe and the thirty-fourth week in Ordinary Time. This celebration points not to the earthly life of Jesus, but to His Kingship in eternity.

All this being said, this is why the lectionary (the readings at Mass) point to the end times: the Church wants us, at the end of the Liturgical Year, to keep focused on the whole purpose of our lives here on earth – to get to heaven. You remember that God made us to know, love and serve Him in this life, so that we may be happy with Him in the next. When we ponder the end of the world and the end of our personal life on earth (which may or may not coincide), we are invited to reorder our priorities. Are our priorities geared toward eternal life?

Jesus also talks about being called to give witness (from the same Greek word as "martyr") before kings and governors, being taken to prison. We are not to worry, though, because Jesus Himself will give us wisdom which others will be powerless to resist or refute. This doesn't come automatically, though. Fr. Walter Ciszek found this out when he was questioned over and over again by Russian Communist authorities (see *He Leadeth Me*). He found he was left without an answer. But over time, he discovered that it was because he was relying on himself, not on Jesus. If we are to have the "wisdom in speaking" it will only come from reliance on God, not reliance on ourselves. This comes from trusting in God, which can only come from relationship with Him. This means that every day, in the small and large things of our lives, we have opportunities to practice trust in Him. Again – reprioritizing our lives.

There are things over which we have no control – we can entrust them to Him, saying "You take care of it." There are things over which we have some control. In those moments, we can look to God to see how we are supposed to act (or not act), and then entrust all to Jesus.

Take the time this week – today, even – to practice trusting in Jesus. Every act of trust draws us closer to Him, and allows us to get out of His way so that when we encounter big struggles, we will have His Wisdom to lead us through. And when we are facing death, we will see it as the way into the arms of our loving Lord and God, to whom we have entrusted our whole lives.