

Homily

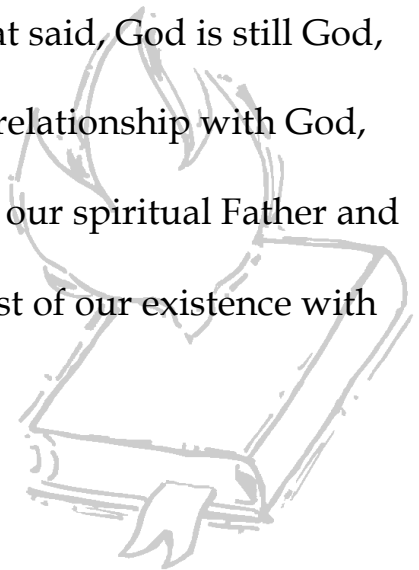
2nd Sunday OT - A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
January 17-18, 2026

Is 49: 3, 5-6
Ps 40: 2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10
1 Cor 1: 1-3
Jn 1: 29-34

As we once again begin the season of Ordinary Time, we shift liturgical colors focusing on the color **GREEN**, focusing on the daily interaction with God and our growth, kind of like the grass outside, when we see grass grow in the summer or the spring. The color **GREEN** reminds us that every day we need God, especially during the “mundane” days of our life (those without special worldly significance) – if we abandon God, whether it is during the summer or any of the seasons, when we forget about God.

The beginning of Ordinary Time means that Christmas is over, people have continued on their merry ways. That said, God is still God, and the whole purpose of our lives is to build a relationship with God, have God teach us, and lead us, and guide us, is our spiritual Father and to show God that we really wish to spend the rest of our existence with



the divine in heaven if we are dedicated to following God's ways here on the earth. If we follow this path, then we have a chance to get to the kingdom of heaven. if we do not, then we are going to lose what we have.

This is what St. Paul is trying to teach the Corinthians in today's first reading. Every season of Ordinary Time begins with Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. In this letter (as well as 2 Corinthians), Paul has already visited the people in Corinth, he has taught them the way of Christ and the ways of the faith. St. Paul already had converted numerous individuals in the city, one that use to be a hub or activity since it was a "pier location" where ships of that time would dock to provide resources for shopping and trade. Corinth was a very bustling place of activity during the First Century.

Paul spent a great deal of time in Corinth, but, as soon as he left that bustling area, the communities, outside forces (and some on the inside) would corrupt the life of faith that God taught them through St. Paul. As a result, the people of Corinth began doing things that were contrary to what St. Paul was teaching.

These two letters Paul wrote to the Corinthians (which St. Paul never intended to be included in what we call “The New Testament,” since the concept of “The New Testament” did not exist during the time of his writings. For St. Paul, the purpose of these letters were to correct, remonstrate and educate and the people of Corinth to get them back on the right track. In these letters, St. Paul was trying to guide the faithful to learn that if they followed God’s way, they get to heaven, but if they did not and if they became negatively influenced by those offering what St. Paul called “false teachings,” then a pox upon them, so to speak.

During St. Paul’s time, he often referenced the heretics and false teachings at the time, especially within the Church, and those of false teachings happen even today, in forms we might call “Relativism” or “Modernism” (called the synthesis of all heresies” as stated by St. Pope Pius X; Modernism rejected tradition and embraced experimentation to reflect modern industrial life). Even today, some outside the Church and even some within the Church offer false teachings that turn others away from the “Tradition” which we are supposed to follow. Sometimes we ordained clerics or religious end up stirring the faithful away from this

“Tradition”; this internal friction takes place even in today’s age, which is why it is so important to attend weekly Mass and be formed correctly by the teachings of the faith.

We constantly are taught in scriptures to be attentive to God as if we were waiting for “a thief in the night.” We are challenged to be attentive to what God is teaching us to do on a constant basis, which is why St. Paul had to correct the faithful of Corinth concerning the false teachings and ways of faith that sometimes they were living after he departed from them.

As we start this liturgical season of Ordinary Time, we will put our focus on the Gospel of Matthew. That said, today’s Gospel focuses on the Gospel of John, specifically today the words of St. John the Baptist who instructs the faithful that one greater than he that would come into world.

When this gospel of John was written a great dissension existed among the members of the faithful, questioning whether God himself actually died on the cross and whether God actually took flesh and died of the flesh. One reason why the gospel of John was written was to

combat a First Century heresy called “Docetism,” which claimed, among other things, that God did not die on the cross, that God appeared as a “phantasm” without human flesh.

Both the gospel of John (and the first letter of John, which many scripture scholars claim were written by the same author) would attest that “the word was made flesh and dwelled among us.” In today’s gospel, St. John the Baptist told the people under his care to be ready, because who is going to come ahead of him infinitely was greater than he, that he, St. John the Baptist, was not even worthy to untie the sandal strap of this person.

Church Tradition also teaches us that the one who came after St. John the Baptist lowered himself below St. John the Baptist, so that he could serve us and love us and model the example of the way we need to live, which is illustrated for us in the Holy Thursday Liturgy, when Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. When Jesus feeds them at the end of this Mass, we are challenged at this liturgy and commissioned to take this message out to the world. You are called to do it and I am called to do it.

When we live this message together as a body of Christ, with Christ as our head, bonded together by the Holy Spirit, then what we do makes all the sense in the world. When we forget about Christ, which often takes place this time of our Liturgical Year, when we decide to focus on our needs and the earthly needs rather than God's needs, that is when our understanding of God and the Catholic faith falls apart. When we turn away from God, it is then we have fall into our sins and our problems within the world.

Every single one of us is a sinner; every single one of us has issues in life, from the pope all the way down to me, you and each person around us. We are taught that as a Catholic institution where God brings us together so we can support each other and bind ourselves to each other through the power of the Holy Spirit, then we understand what our purpose is in life and why St. Paul wrote his letters to the Corinthians, to forgive them, to educate them and then to get them back on the right track.

The First Letter to the Corinthians teaches us that we are a body of Christ with many members. 1 Corinthians teaches us about this meal

that Jesus offered, and how he calls us to share this meal memory of him, Church Tradition teaches us that this mass is a memorial, that same sacrifice that Christ offered 2,000 years ago. We start this season in Ordinary Time by reminding ourselves that with God, all things are possible, and without God, we are dust and under dust we shall return.

So, as St. Paul admonishes the Corinthians, and us as well, to stay true to the faith. not by abandoning the faith of the church, but by investing ourselves in the faith with the meal set before us, we understand why we live this faith together. At the Border Town Parishes, this is why we celebrate our parish Appreciation Dinner each year in February and the Irish dinner each year in March. This is why we celebrate St. Anne's Novena and Feast Day each year in July. For all the wonderful festivals that we have throughout the year, we do this together to unite us all as one and to build community.

Please know, I will do what I can to live and teach the faith, but for all of this to work as a Christian community, we all have to live this faith together. That is what the scriptures tell us to do. Each one of you has been called – I have been called, and so have you, even if you cannot

join us for Masses in Church and are confined to your homes. I challenge you all to be prayer warriors for the sake of those who need it, so that we can take that grace that God has bestowed upon us, and empty ourselves by taking this grace and offering it to the people that we meet. This is our prayer.