

LITURGICAL LIVING

Series 21: January 14-21

Prayer in Ordinary Time

As mentioned last week, we are now in Ordinary Time until the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday (February 14). During this time, especially as we enter a new year, we can be tempted to think of this time as “just ordinary time” and even think of this as a lesser season in the Church and in our lives. We can easily lose that sense of hope and expectation we fostered in Advent and the joy of the Christmas season. We can “waste” this season by spiritually coasting or looking past it to Lent - thinking about what I will do for Lent instead of what I will do today!



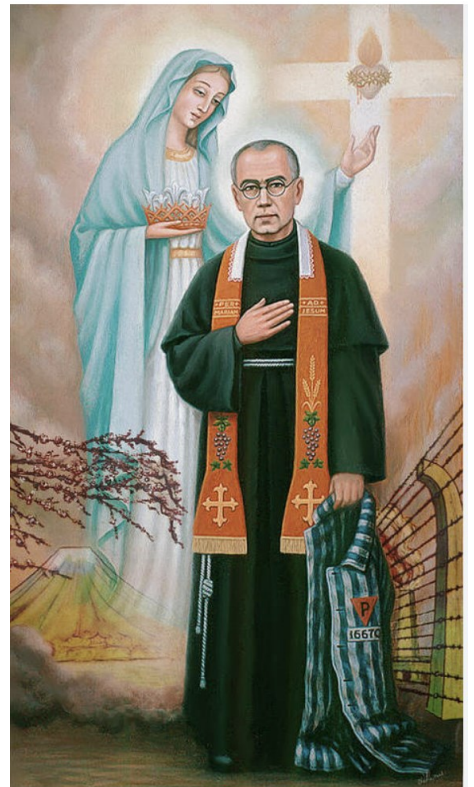
Fr. David Michael Moses

However, this time between Christmas and Lent is anything but ordinary. During this time the Church focuses on the “ordinary” life of Jesus in His mission: His calling, the instructions he gave his disciples, how he healed the sick, performed miracles, and brought good news to the poor. This is anything but ordinary! We are called to allow Jesus to bring the extraordinary out of us in this ordinary time! To allow this season to grow in Christ! To accept Jesus in our lives more and more deeply. And this will look different for everyone. Where do you think God is calling you to grow during this Ordinary Time?

One thing we can focus on is prayer, something we should never lose focus on. Let’s make this an extraordinary season of prayer! We will look to the Saints for three ideas to make this season between Christmas and Lent more holy. We will cover one each week. These three ideas are from an article found on Focus.com.

1. "Never be afraid of loving the Blessed Virgin too much. You can never love her more than Jesus did." — [St. Maximilian Kolbe](#)

As we liturgically return to the ordinary times of Christ’s life, one person we should look to is His Blessed Mother. With her “yes” to the Lord, Mary accepted and welcomed God into her ordinary earthly life, and by doing so God was able to do extraordinary work through her to change the world for all time. We, too, should follow Mary’s example in welcoming God into the ordinary. Our Catholic tradition holds many beautiful devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Praying the rosary daily during Ordinary Time and [meditating](#) upon each of the mysteries is a beautiful way to walk and pray through the life of Christ alongside our Blessed Mother. Other [Marian prayers](#) and [novenas](#) can offer us an opportunity to pray for Mary’s intercession, asking her to help us as we strive to model our lives after Christ her son.



St. Maximilian Kolbe with Mary

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St. Sebastian (January 20)



Saint Sebastian by Raphael

St. Sebastian is the patron saint of soldiers, archers and athletes.

St. Sebastian was a third century captain of an elite guard in the Roman army that was charged with protecting the emperor, Emperor Diocletian. During his time serving he converted fellow soldiers, local leaders and Roman prisoners but kept his faith secret from his superiors.

Eventually, he was discovered and was sentenced to death by a firing squad of archers. After being fired upon he was left for dead, but St. Irene recovered his body and discovered that he was not dead. She nursed him back to health. Once recovered, St. Sebastian felt called to go to the emperor. He felt regret as he swore to protect the emperor but never shared Christianity with him.

As soon as he was able, he went to him and implored him to stop persecuting Christians. But, he did not listen and had St. Sebastian executed again and this time he was martyred. His body was recovered by St. Lucina and buried in an abandoned mine underneath Rome. This became the Catacombs of San Sebastiano, a Christian burial ground that has been continually accessible to the faithful since that time. You can learn more about this catacomb [here](#).



Catacombe San Sebastiano

Celebrate

“Catholic All Year” recommends eating Shish Kabobs to celebrate Saint Sebastian. Something about a meal with skewered foods just works for this feast day. Kids can make their own combinations of your favorites like beef or chicken, red onions, bell peppers, squash and cherry tomatoes served with rice.

Pray

O Lord, grant us the spirit of fortitude, so that guided by the example of the martyr St. Sebastian, we may learn to bear witness to the Christian Faith and patiently support the sufferings of life. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

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