**Sacred Days of Ordinary Time**

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By Lucia A. Silecchia

With a new year still in its infancy, I find myself surrounded by new calendars. In so many different ways, these are tangible reminders of the importance of time. Scripture speaks often about the sacredness of time, with the assurance that *“[t]here is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”* (Ecc. 3:1-8)

Local businesses have distributed them to remind me to buy their products and use their services. Parishes have shared them, filled with pages of sacred art and scripture passages. Charities pass them along with information about their missions. My work calendars --- both online and in hard copy – tell me a new year has arrived. Friends who know me well have given me cat calendars with each month’s featured feline peering off the page with that intense stare that only cats have mastered.

I am a planner. Thus, I cherish the deceptive appearance of order and control found in the neat plats of calendar pages. All these calendars are pre-printed with the dates and events that its creators deem important. Religious calendars note major feasts and liturgical seasons while academic calendars announce when classes begin and semesters end. Nearly all calendars proclaim secular holidays and long weekends, while those from local businesses might include previews of upcoming sales and seasonal promotions.

As I think about the sacredness of time, and as we open our calendars – paper or electronic – to a new year, perhaps there are other dates to add so that we do not miss the chance to recall all of those other more personal occasions that make our days holy.

The dates of our loved ones’ birthdays are both practical reminders to celebrate with them – but also reminders to pray with gratitude for them. Indeed the birthdays of those outside our inner circles and alone on their special days are also important to acknowledge with love and friendship.

Wedding and ordination anniversaries – our own or those belonging to those near and dear – are occasions to celebrate promises joyfully made and gloriously kept.

Beyond these more public celebrations, though, there are also more private notes that we might make on our calendars as we prepare to use them in the new year.

Notes on the days that loved ones passed away are reminders to keep them in our prayers, have Mass celebrated for the repose of their souls, and reach out to their families to offer a word of comfort on a painful anniversary.

Anniversaries of the days that our godchildren were Baptized are opportunities to celebrate with them, renew that sacred bond, and assure them of continued prayer on their journeys through the Christian life.

The dates of our own Baptisms, Confirmations and First Communions might also find their ways onto our 2023 calendars as reminders of the graces of those special days. They are also times to remember in prayer our own godparents, sponsors and the deacons, priests and bishops whose generous vocations make these sacraments possible.

The feast days of the saints after whom our friends and family were named are occasions to greet them with the assurance that they are entrusted to the prayerful care of their heavenly patrons.

The special feast days of our parishes – the ones we now call home or the ones that have played special roles in our journeys of faith -- are also cause for celebration, gratitude, and intercession.

The days that mark another year of cancer remission or sobriety are also occasions to ask God’s blessings on those who are, day-by-day facing challenges and carrying crosses with the strong fragility of silent warriors.

Soon, our calendars will fill up with the busy-ness that 2023 brings. Those appointments and events will be written in alongside those pre-printed dates and occasions that our calendar-makers have already shared.

But, perhaps, before January turns to February there is a time to take those calendars and add to them the special days that are sacred to you and yours for reasons that, perhaps, only you may know. They are the sacred days of ordinary time.

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