

Reuniting for Ordinary Times

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By Lucia A. Silecchia

I looked around my home and could not help rejoicing that so many people I loved were in the same place at the same time. The challenges of schedules and geography often prevent such happy gatherings. Yet, there we were, reunited.

These busy days of Advent and Christmas are the times for many reunions. Families come together to enjoy festive meals and share old memories while making new ones. Friends gather for parties to catch up on the past year. Co-workers unite to celebrate at office parties. Parishioners come to the many events planned to draw them to each other and to God in these sacred weeks. Alumni and students join each other at celebrations planned by their universities. Strangers – hopefully in good spirits – unite in the misadventures of traveling homeward together on crowded highways, planes and trains.

In this season of coming together, it strikes me that the word “reunion” is one of the most beautiful words that we have. It means, quite literally, “becoming one again.” This special time of the year is one that gives us so many opportunities to become one again with those we love at the festive events that we plan and the celebrations that we attend.

Yet, beyond this myriad of obvious reunions, perhaps this is a time of year to invest in more quiet, gentle reunions of other kinds – reunions that may not fully yield their dividends until we return to ordinary times.

This may be the time to become one again with friends with whom we have lost contact over the years – either because the busy-ness of life has kept us apart or because we have started to believe that friendships lived on social media are the same as real life encounters.

This may be the time to become one again with difficult relatives by seeing that they may be facing struggles we do not notice.

This may be the time to become one again with those against whom we have quarreled in the past and whose places in our lives remain empty in the ways that only they can fill.

This may be the time to become one again with the strangers we see in the streets every day who ache for a simple greeting or smile.

This may be the time to become one again with those whose kindnesses have helped us on life’s path by saying thank you (even if long overdue) and showing that same kindness to others.

This may be the time to become one again with those who have left this life by taking some quiet time to pray in gratitude for the gifts they were to us and in hope that they and we will be one again in eternity.

This may be the time to become one again with those we have hurt by action or inaction even if it means the risk of offering an apology that is not immediately accepted.

This may be the time to become one again with a hope or a dream we have abandoned by summoning the faithful confidence to pursue it again.

This may be the time to become one again with a parish community if it has been a while since we gathered around the table of God together with our neighbors. It may also be the time to invite others to join us there so that they, too, can be one again with the God who – like all loving parents -- rejoices to see His children together.

This may be the time to become one again with God in that most important of reunions that happens when we can put aside the mistakes, fears, faults and doubts of the past and say to Him, once again, “I’ll be home for Christmas.”

I hope that all the reunions of the weeks ahead hold much happiness for you as you reunite in all the many different ways unique to this season. But, more than that, I hope that the peaceful joy of becoming one again in quiet, unnoticed and often unplanned ways, lasts far past Christmas. I hope it is a blessing that hallows your ordinary times.

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