

A close-up, low-angle shot of several interlocking metal gears. The gears are heavily rusted and show signs of wear. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong light source from the left creating a bright, warm glow on the left side of the frame and casting deep shadows on the right. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue.

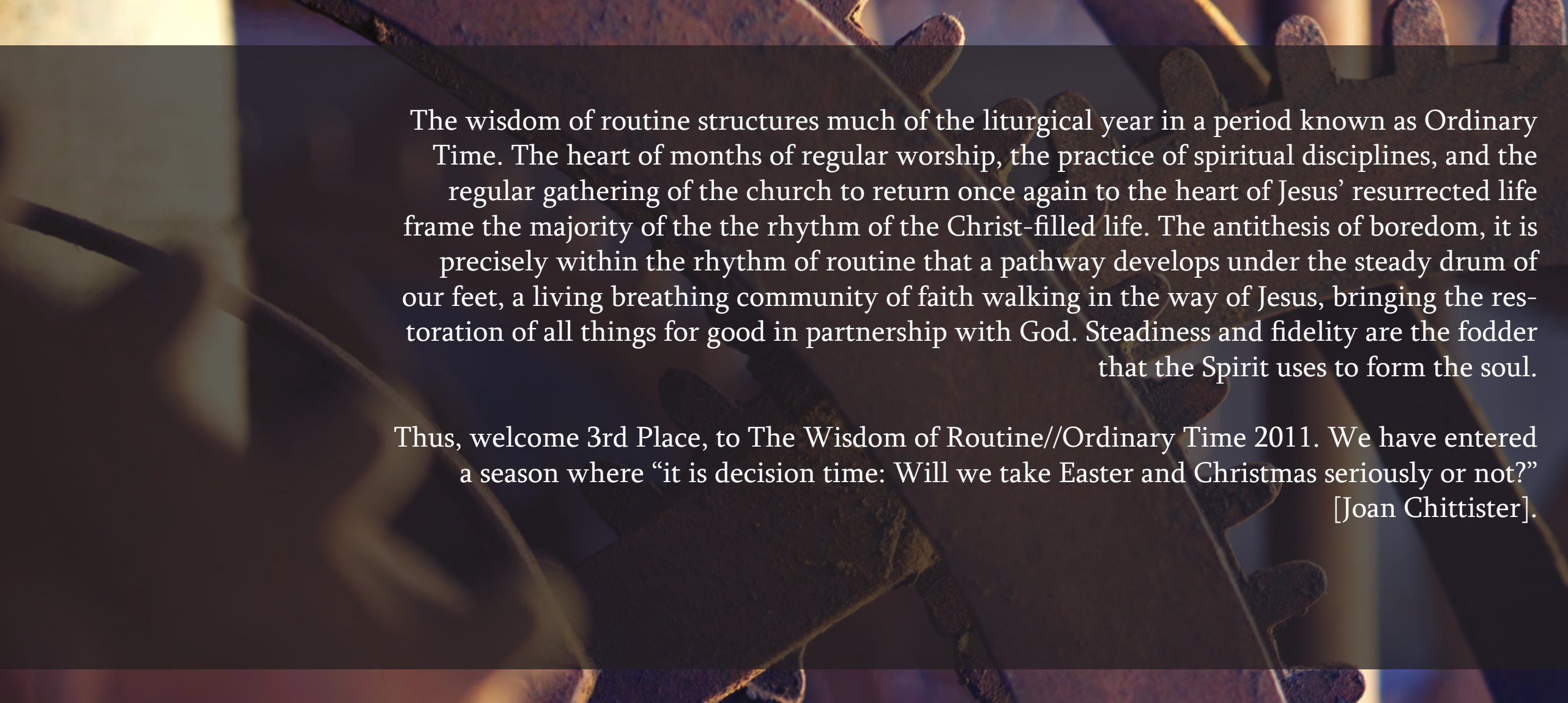
Ordinary time

THE WISDOM OF ROUTINE



Routine |roō'tēn| noun: a sequence of actions regularly followed; a fixed program.
Origin: Late 17th century, from French route, meaning 'road' or way, denoting a regular course or procedure.

“It is what we do routinely, not what we do rarely, that delineates the character of a person. It is what we believe in the heart of us that determines what we do daily. It is what we bring to the nourishment of the soul that predicts the kind of soul we nurture. It's what we do ordinarily, day by day, that gives an intimation of what we will do under stress. It is the daily--the way we act ordinarily, not rarely, that defines us as either kind, or angry, or faithful, or constant. No doubt about it: the daily, the normal, the regular, the common is what gives clarity to the essence of the real self” [Joan Chittister].



The wisdom of routine structures much of the liturgical year in a period known as Ordinary Time. The heart of months of regular worship, the practice of spiritual disciplines, and the regular gathering of the church to return once again to the heart of Jesus' resurrected life frame the majority of the the rhythm of the Christ-filled life. The antithesis of boredom, it is precisely within the rhythm of routine that a pathway develops under the steady drum of our feet, a living breathing community of faith walking in the way of Jesus, bringing the restoration of all things for good in partnership with God. Steadiness and fidelity are the fodder that the Spirit uses to form the soul.

Thus, welcome 3rd Place, to The Wisdom of Routine//Ordinary Time 2011. We have entered a season where "it is decision time: Will we take Easter and Christmas seriously or not?"
[Joan Chittister].



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SEASON OF ORDINARY TIME

At a fixed point each day, light a candle as a welcome reminder that Christ is risen both within us and throughout every corner of the world. As Christ-followers, we seek to live in the way (the road) of God, as demonstrated through the manner Jesus lived his life. We seek to 'give flesh to' this life within our world as Jesus did. Practice the discipline of Lectio Divina (Sacred, Responsive Reading of the Scriptures) through following the weekly Lectionary Year A texts for 'Ordinary Time' at <http://textweek.com>.

THE WISDOM OF ROUTINE IN US: THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

The Prayer of Examen is a centuries old rhythm of prayer designed to open one's consciousness to how God has been moving throughout one's day. In this prayer, we seek to notice what God has been calling us to in our day and how He has been speaking to us. When practicing this prayer rhythm, we may simply be recalling what we noticed at the time, or we may be opening our heart to the ways in which God was moving but that we were unaware of in the moment. Open your heart to the Spirit in prayer through the use of one or more of these questions at some point in your day. Linger where the Spirit seems to be leading you.

- When did I sense Your presence the most in my day?
- When did Your presence seem farthest away from me in my day?
- How were You loving me in my day?
- How were You loving me even when Your presence seemed far away?
- How did I respond to Your love in my day?



THE WISDOM OF ROUTINE THROUGH US: OUTWARD FIDELITY

Deliberately carve out a chunk of time to sit with God in prayer and meditation. Open your heart to the Spirit, asking a simple question: “What outward practice of fidelity are You inviting me into?” in this season of my life? Who are you inviting me to engage in deeper friendship with? What needs surround me that I am invited to meet? How could loving my neighbor become a tangible reality that frames my life in fresh ways? Seek to practice fidelity--faithfulness--in an outward manner in this rhythm of routine.

“God has made everything beautiful in its time.
He has also set eternity in the hearts of men” (Eccl. 3:11)