

A top-down photograph of a white ceramic bowl filled with a light-colored, flake-shaped cereal. The bowl is placed on a dark-stained wooden table. To the right of the bowl, a silver spoon with a decorative handle lies on the table. The text "THE WEEKDAYS OF OUR LIVES // Ordinary Time 2012" is overlaid in white on the right side of the bowl.

THE WEEKDAYS OF OUR LIVES
// Ordinary Time 2012

Fidelity [fəˈdelətē] noun: **Faithfulness to a person, cause, or belief, demonstrated by continuing loyalty and support:** "He sought only the strictest fidelity to justice." Sexual faithfulness to a spouse or partner. **The degree of exactness with which something is copied or reproduced.**

"For those of us who live in the rhythm of the liturgy week upon week all our lives, the question must be, so what? What has happened to us as a result? Who have we become? Who are we on all the rest of the weekdays of our lives?" We do not live a liturgical life to look good to other people. We do not develop a liturgical spirituality to affect a kind of spiritual dimension to our lives. And we certainly do not go to Church regularly to avoid hell. We live a liturgical life in order to become the One whom we follow from the manger to the Mount of Olives. We live a liturgical life to learn to think like He things. To do what He would do. To make Him the center of our lives-not our work or our money or our status. In the cycle of the liturgical year we learn about what it means to live a Christian life. We learn to distinguish the important from the superficial things of life. It's not a history book; it is the celebration of the spiritual development of the soul." (Joan Chittister, The Liturgical Year)



The beauty of week after week designated as "Ordinary Time" in the rhythm of the liturgical year is simple in design, yet difficult in execution: Will we, as the beloved sons and daughters of God, act on what we believe? Will our belief become realized in the normality of our days, in the "Tuesdays" of our lives? Profession of faith in front of others on Sunday is one thing; action of said faith in the struggle of the week is quite another. Following the trail of the One from the manger to the Mount of Olives requires a period of settling, of testing, of solidifying. It is for this reason that almost half of the calendar year is filled with the regularity of walking with Jesus as His life is formed in ours in fidelity, a steadfast faithfulness that is not moved or lost.

Welcome, 3rd Place, to THE WEEKDAYS OF OUR LIVES, the season of Ordinary Time, when what we profess becomes real to the degree we pursue it with fidelity.



INWARD FIDELITY: THE PRAYER OF RECOLLECTION

The Prayer of Recollection is a centuries-old prayer discipline designed to return us to the truest reality of our lives: *We are the beloved sons and daughters of God*. Often, it preceded Lectio Divina (Sacred, Responsive Reading of the Scriptures) as a means by which to still the soul, readying one's heart in fresh openness to the living Word of God. Receptiveness precedes engagement, and thus throughout the season of Ordinary Time, we invite you to practice this discipline of prayer prior to letting the Scriptures read you through Lectio Divina.

Prayer of Recollection

Adapted from John Coe, Institute for Spiritual Formation.

A Prayer to rouse your soul and prepare you to meet with God in truth.
A Prayer to be open to falsehood and personal idolatry in the presence of God's love.

1. Affirm that you have a finite physical body.

I have a body that is here. My body has limitations. I am not infinite. I cannot grant everybody's wishes. I am grateful for the truth that I am not God. Only God can meet all the needs that surround me. Thank you, Lord, for being there in my weakness and for meeting my needs. (Confess any idolatry).



2. Affirm that you are a finite spirit.

a. **Disregard all the potential idols of your soul. Expose and invalidate the false identities which give you a false sense of who you are.**

At the core of my spirit, I am not a father or mother. I am not a husband or a wife. I am not a daughter or a son. I am not a friend. I am not a student. I am not a kind person. I am not an angry person. I am not a....

b. **Affirm the reality of your soul's true identity.**

I was created for union with God. I came into the world as a naked spirit, longing for perfect love. I am clothed with Christ's righteousness and long for a deepening oneness with God. I am precious in God's eyes. He holds me with an everlasting embrace. God calls me His beloved. That is who I truly am. (Confess any idolatry).



3. Examine how you have been approaching God.

a. **Ask your soul in the presence of God:**

Have I been praying to God as if He was a genie? Have I been praying to God knowing that He, too, has a will? Has my will alone been consulted? Have I been using God as an idol to meet my needs? Have I been acknowledging Him as if He is the Good Shepherd of my life? (Confess any idolatry).

b. **Resolve to keep your heart and mind attentive to God. Align your will to His will. Be receptive, silent, and still.**

4. **Hear the Living Word of God (Lectio Divina).**

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).



"Liturgical spirituality is about learning to live an ordinary life extraordinarily well. Fidelity to the liturgical life is the cement that keeps us grounded in Jesus, no matter what other elements of life emerge to seduce us as the years go by. It gives us the sense of balance we need to choose between things spurious and things sacred. By its very unremitting regularity, it dings the Word of God into our very souls until we can finally hear it. Then, alive in that Word, we find ourselves becoming what we seek. It is fidelity that keeps us on the road when we would most like to simply sit down in the dust and let the world pass us by. Steeped in the life of Jesus, we come to conform our own to it." (Joan Chittister, *The Liturgical Year*)



LECTIO DIVINA

(SACRED, RESPONSIVE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES)

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 B texts for 'Ordinary Time' at <http://textweek.com>.

Lectio (Read): Read one of the weekly Scripture texts slowly & prayerfully 2-3 times. Pause when a word or phrase catches your attention, allowing God's living word to read you.

Meditatio (Ponder): Reflectively chew on the word or phrase the Holy Spirit highlighted in your soul.

Oratio (Respond In Prayer): Express your response to God. Be open & truthful; share your feelings with Him.

Contemplatio (Rest): Rest in the Spirit's presence, letting Jesus sink deep into your soul; yielding to His work in you. Purpose to revisit God's living word in you throughout your day.



“Are you Jesus?” people ask us silently every day. And the answer liturgical spirituality forms in us if we live it with constancy, with regularity, with fidelity, is surely, yes.”

(Joan Chittister, *The Liturgical Year*)



OUTWARD FIDELITY: TANGIBLY LOVING MY NEIGHBOR

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 (steadfast faithfulness) in an outward manner in this rhythm of the weekdays of our lives.*

*"Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."
(~Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:1)*

