

From the Pastor:

Today's Gospel features Jesus calling his first disciples. The invitation is welcoming and intriguing: "**Come, and you will see.**" This brings up the question that each one of us must answer... **How are we called by the Lord?** How do we respond? Spending time in prayer with these questions might be a good way to frame our prayer this week – and always. God is always calling us, Jesus invites us to come and see, to stay with him. May we always do so!

Today on this Sunday in mid-January, we have responded by attending mass – either in person or online. It is hard to believe that we have been worshipping in this way for so many months. We listen to the Word proclaimed and we participate in the Eucharistic, even with Spiritual Communion. I pray that we continue down this path until circumstances change, with our hearts and minds fixed on Christ.

I am grateful to all those who helped transform our churches from Christmas Time to Ordinary Time last week. It didn't take long for all the Christmas decorations to be removed and gently packed away. As beautiful as the churches looked around the holidays, it's always nice to go back to Ordinary, or if you will, "regular," time. I offer my sincere thanks for the many who gave their time and talent to our communities. With the poinsettias and pine trees out of the sanctuaries, we return to green plants and green vestments. *Simply Catholic* tells us about this season:

"Prayer involves all of our senses. It involves being alive to touches of God's grace everywhere around and within us. Color in a church is more than decoration. In public worship, it has a role similar to music, art and architecture of a church — **to teach, to inspire, to help gather our thoughts.**

Green is used as a liturgical color during the weeks known as Ordinary Time. Generally, this period of time occurs from the end of the Christmas season until the beginning of Lent, and from the end of the Easter season until the beginning of Advent. Far from being a filler between other liturgical seasons, Ordinary Time has its own meaning, signified by its own color.

At its etymological root, the word "ordinary" has a rich meaning, far beyond the usual understanding of humdrum, commonplace or everyday. The word has its source in a Sanskrit, or Indo-European, word, which entered into Latin as the verb **orior**, meaning to rise up, to be stirred up and to grow. The word for "east" in Latin, **oriens**, conveys the same rich meaning: It indicates the rising of the sun. Hence, Ordinary Time is, for Catholics, the opportunity to allow the Lord to stir up our faith, to allow our spirits to rise and to grow in our spiritual life. The color green brings this meaning to the fore, since it is a color that evokes life and growth."

The USCCB promotes the **9 Days for Life Novena** around the Jan 22 anniversary of Roe v. Wade. This year it is Jan 21-29. This looks like something good that we can do in the parish in these times; information is in this bulletin. Respect for life means to respect all life from conception to natural death. Abortion is a major component of our teaching, without question. That said while we may focus primarily on making sure that life begins, the Church teaches us about respect for the dignity of all human life, for each and every person. Given recent events we might all pause to reflect on how we perceive and treat others by remembering that we are all made in the *Imago Dei*, or Divine Image.

Monday is MLK Day and all parish offices are closed, but Monday mass will be offered as usual, at 9 am, in person and online on Immaculate Conception. We are grateful for all of our parishioners from all three parishes, worshipping with us in various ways.

Until next week, be well, do good deeds, and say your prayers.

Fr. Jerry