

Fr Justin Driscoll *Homily for the 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time (Year A)*

January 17th - 18th 2026

6.00pm & 9.00am Ballarat East, 10.30am Buninyong (Baptisms)

I must admit to loving these January days- I know that's not the first time you may have heard me say that, but after the frenzied end of year celebrations and the build up to Christmas, it's the days that follow that I savour the longest when in our Australian way, January can give us the moment we need to catch our breath, albeit this year amidst the extreme weather conditions that have resulted in fires and floods and the losses that they bring and devastation that they leave behind. We know that in another week or so, the holiday season that many are enjoying will come to an end and the cycle of work and school, community activities and sporting commitments will resume. So too you might notice with our church year, we've returned to the season that we call Ordinary time which is about 30 weeks of our liturgical year and like the rest of our lives, it's the season in which we live most of our time after and preceding the great feasts and seasons of Advent and Christmas, Lent and East.

David Steindl-Rast's book, The Music of Silence, highlights how each hour of the day has its own special light and its own particular mood and how we are more attentive to the present moment when we recognize and honour these "special angels" lurking inside each hour. He's right. Every hour of the day and every season of the year have something special to give us, but often times we can't make ourselves present to meet that gift. And this isn't true just for special seasons like Christmas and Easter. It's true too, perhaps especially true, for the season we call Ordinary Time, a season within which we are supposed to meet the angels of routine, regularity, domesticity, predictability, and ordinariness. Like seasons of high feast, this season too is meant to bring a special richness into our lives.

But it's easy to miss that season and its intent, both of them. The term “Ordinary Time” sounds bland to us, even as we unconsciously long for precisely what it is meant to bring. We have precious little “ordinary time” in our lives.

For many of us the very expression, “ordinary time,” draws forth a sigh along with the question: “What's that? When did I last have 'ordinary time' in my life?” For many of us “ordinary time” means mostly hurry and pressure, “the rat race,” “the treadmill.”

Many things in our lives conspire against “ordinary time;” not just the busyness that robs us of leisure, but also the heartaches, the obsessions, the loss of health, or the other interruptions to the ordinary that make a mockery of normal routine and rhythm and rob us of even the sense of “ordinary time.”

Today there's a rich literature in both secular and religious circles that speaks of the difficulties of being attentive to the present moment, of meeting, as [Richard Rohr](#) puts it, “the naked now,” or what David Steindl-Rast calls, “the angels of the hour.” The literature varies greatly in content and intent, but it agrees on one point: it's extremely difficult to be attentive to the present moment, to be truly inside the present. It's not easy to live inside “ordinary time.”

This Sunday, our liturgy is something like a hinged door – the readings push it open to allow us to gaze back at the significant figure of John the Baptist, who points to the one we have celebrated as coming among us in the flesh in the Advent and Christmas seasons and the readings also direct our gaze forward to our ongoing call to be servants of God among the nations for the long haul of Ordinary time.

What is stressed in today's readings is appropriate as we move out of the festival highpoints: we are called, in all seasons, every day, to live what we are by the grace of God – chosen and gifted people. St Paul says this succinctly in

the first three verses of his Letter to the Corinthians – he introduces himself and his brother worker, Sosthenes (I don't ever remember baptising a Sosthenes?), as called by God to minister to the Corinthians. The initiative is always God's; the response is ours. The Corinthians, likewise are called to be saints, in the Pauline way of understanding this identity. It's an identity not to be reserved to those who might be perceived as almost unattainably holy "peak dwellers," remote for those of us trudging across the plains. Paul sees being a saint as responding in every season of our life, in its heights and depths, to God's longing for each of us.

John the Baptist, who we meet yet again today, knew his place in salvation history, pointing out Jesus as the lamb of God. Those who heard this would have been sensitive to the Hebrew biblical, cultic, and liturgical symbol of the lamb which recalled both the messianic Suffering Servant tradition and the Passover lamb in this history of their liberation. Gathered today as the eucharistic assembly, we affirm our faith in the One to whom John pointed, who is coming to us not in the banks of the Jordan river but as the centre of this eucharistic action. The biblical scholar, Joachim Jeremias held that the original word for "lamb" in Aramaic (the language Jesus spoke) was "*talyā*," which meant not only "lamb" but also "slave" or "servant." Maybe the Baptist intended both meanings! Jesus, the servant of God, in whom we have our servant mission and witness – to affirm others so that they are able to believe that they too are saints, to be a light in the dark days in the lives of our sisters and brothers that helps them see through us to the love of God for them; to create peace and bring the saving grace of God into our relationships and communities. The Isaian Suffering Servant, Paul and John the Baptist all respond to God with lives that are offered through the words we too pray in our Psalm today – Here I am, Lord, I come to do your will.