

Getting back to normal

In these early weeks of September, the summer holidays are quickly becoming a distant memory as families all over the country have been getting back into the old routine that the new school year brings.

The time has arrived for us all to be 'getting back to normal.'

This 'normal' time can often be perceived as mundane, dull and boring. The phrases, 'Roll on October half term,' or 'I can't wait the next holiday,' are ones that I have heard a lot this last week. As one holiday ends, our minds look forward to the next break in the old routine. This longing for the next break is natural. Holidays give us the time and space to relax our bodies and minds and to recharge our batteries. Holidays are important.

Any yet I am learning not to dismiss the routine and ordinary aspects of our lives but to relish them. Why? Because it is here in the normal and ordinary that our true lives are lived. So many wonderful moments of grace take place in our daily routines if we but dare to notice. We are in danger of missing out on them if our minds are always set on the extra ordinary and the big occasions in life. This is not easy in a society where what we achieve and what we possess are both often used to measure our worth. But Christ calls us all to be 'child hearted.'

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." John 19:14

Child hearted means being open to the simple and the ordinary things in life. Of having an open mind and an open heart. Of living in the present moment with delight. If you are lucky enough to be around children then it soon becomes apparent that their minds are not cluttered but open and free. In his poem, To a Child, Christopher Morley reminds us of the wonderful divinity in being child hearted:

***In your unstained, transparent eyes
There is no conscience, no surprise:
Life's queer conundrums you accept,
Your strange divinity still kept.***



To be child hearted is to be less engrossed with the content of our lives and more focussed on God's powerful presence in and around us. With time and practice and an emerging sense of wonder I am beginning to realise that 'being' in this way can make us more open to the 'queer conundrums' that each day brings and see them as graces. And these experiences of grace are in all places and in all situations.

In my day as a secondary school teacher I can teach up to 125 different young people in one day. In this time I am trying to develop their understanding and the student's minds so that they can learn and make progress and contribute to our world and to the society they are living in. And all the while they too are influencing my life, with the gifts that they bring and the challenges they present.

One such day may be accurately classed as ordinary, but it is far from that. It is sacred and holy and a day filled with blessings.

Make humanity your journey and you will arrive at God. St Augustine

When we start to see our daily journeys as a way to meet God face to face in the people and places we live and work in, then our days become far from ordinary. They become our journey into the fullness of our selves. An opportunity for God's powerful presence to be released in us and through us. God calls all of us to have a deeper understanding of what it is to walk humbly, act justly and love tenderly in the everyday moments of our lives. And when our hearts and our minds are set on doing this, then we begin to gain an understanding of what it is to truly love and be loved. Of whom we really are and how we are called to live. Of the very essence of our nature that is God.