

Simply One Page-How Peculiar People Tell Time

This piece was created from my own reflections and vision. I used ChatGPT as a tool to help shape the text from my original concepts and structure. The final form is the result of thoughtful revision motivated by my one page intent. Mike Haddorff 2622

Christians have carried many labels and one cracks a grin with a wink, “a peculiar people.” This term is from an old and playful reading of I Peter 2:9.

One of the most obvious ways this shows up is in how we tell time.

Most sensible people begin their year in January, right after the holidays, neatly aligned with calendars, budgets, and tax season. Christians, on the other hand, begin the church year somewhere in the fourth quarter of the calendar year, well into pumpkin spice season, football schedules, and IRS year end preparation.

Who does that? Only peculiar people would decide that the best way to start a new year is not with a noise maker or resolutions, but with waiting.

The Christian year begins with Advent, not accomplishment, but longing. From there we move through Christmas, Epiphany, and into Lent, where we slow down again, tell the truth about ourselves, and resist the urge to rush toward Easter without passing through the Cross.

Then comes Resurrection Sunday, joy, surprise, life where death had the final word. For forty days we live in Easter's light, until the Ascension, when Jesus leaves, not as an absence, but as a new way of being present. Ten days later comes Pentecost, the gift of the Spirit, fire and breath and movement.

And then... nothing dramatic happens. Which raises a reasonable question. What do we do with the rest of the year? Roughly half the church year is left. There is no manger, no tomb no flames, just... weeks.

This is where many of us quietly drift back to “normal life,” as if the story has been told and now we wait until the Christmas adds to remember it again. But the church calendar has other ideas.

The long stretch after Pentecost is called Ordinary Time. I'm not kidding. It's not ordinary as in boring, but ordinary as in ordered, structured, repetitive. Green is the color of the season because green indicates growth. Ordinary Time exists for one reason: formation.

The church doesn't just ask us to remember what happened. It asks us to live inside it-to practice resurrection in ordinary days, to embody forgiveness on Tuesday afternoons, to learn patience, courage, mercy, and love in traffic, kitchens, meetings, and disagreements.

Advent teaches us to wait. Lent teaches us to let go. Easter teaches us to trust life. Ordinary Time teaches us how to live.

So no, we don't go back to “normal.” We go forward into alignment.

This is where faith stops being an event and starts becoming a way of being human. And perhaps this is part of our peculiarity:

To believe that the most important work of God happens not in the extraordinary moments, but in the long, green, ordinary ones.