

THE EXTRAORDINARY ORDINARY

Many feel that they are wasting their lives, that their work is unimportant and their contribution to Christ's saving act just about nil. Their motto seems to be that of the defeatist: "I hope not to do too much harm before I die."

True, the vast majority of us are called by God all through life to do little things, unimportant things. To get up in the morning to another day of lifting, carrying, washing, cooking, cleaning, painting, hammering, teaching, nursing—repeating over and over again for years on end the same mechanical gestures.

Our eye is not clear and we judge by the standards of worldly prudence. We feel unimportant perhaps, and we would like to be important in the eyes of the world. We want to do something that will make others sit up and take notice; we want to feel important.

Many say: "My life is useless," "I'm only a housewife," "I'm just a factory worker or clerk or office worker," not realizing sufficiently that the infinite God himself was "just a carpenter," and that our Lady was "only a housewife."

How beneficial to look at the Holy Family of Nazareth on those days when dissatisfaction with the ordinariness of daily living takes hold of us. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mother of God, and St. Joseph were



doing little things! Their every act was clothed in greatness because of love—love received from above and given back in perfection, each moment filled with its full measure of faith, trust, and love: a perfect circle, a constant movement.

All of us are called to repeat daily the most important actions ever performed, to use our hands as Christ and Mary and Joseph used them, making gestures infinitely sanctified. These daily actions are made holy, precious, redemptive by the One who made them in Galilee—thousands of years after He had decreed from all time that they should be the lot of man.

There are many ways of sweeping a floor or stacking boxes or doing anything that is in itself indifferent. There is a pagan way, an evil way, a mediocre way, a redemptive way. It all depends on the intention, on the love in the heart of the doer.

Doing little things well, with love and with prayer, will set the world on fire. For such is the power of love, of divine grace, that it does transform ordinariness into extraordinariness. It transforms unimportance into greatest importance, and little things into big things. Years ago Benny Goodman popularized a one-line tune: "It isn't what you do, it's the way you do it." That's a good line to make our own.

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Pass It On! #26



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#26

What is great? To do the will of God the Father irrespective of the form which it takes in various lives, or in our life at any one time. Joy comes with this. In it we find the redemptive cross and the greatness of a beloved son or daughter of a loving Father.

Let us rejoice that our life is useful, valuable, redemptive, important. And rejoice that, in the eyes of the world, we may be unimportant, small or weak. Let us rejoice at our needs and our inability to fulfill them, for we have a Father who takes care of all the needs of

his little ones. We have a Father who reveals his secrets to little children and to adults who have become as little children. We have a Father who insists on using those whom the world considers weak to shame the strong (1 Cor 1:19). We have a Father like no other father.

A day spent in doing little things with love is a day well spent. A person can go to bed in peace. The Father has been well served, well loved, and He is well pleased.

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