

Ordinary Time—Winter, 2026

Reflection

The seasons of Advent and Christmas have ended and Lent and Easter are still in our future, so we return to Ordinary Time. You've read here the meaning and purpose of Ordinary Time, but here is another explanation from Ken Canedo at the OCP [website](#):

The word *ordinary* stems from the *ordinal numbers*: Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, and so forth.

Scripturally, Ordinary Time focuses on the words and deeds of Jesus as he proclaims the Kingdom of God to the people of Israel and, through them, to the world. During these weeks, we hear Jesus teach with wisdom and creativity, we witness his effectiveness as a preacher, and we marvel at his miracles. In short, Ordinary Time invites us to deepen our relationship with Jesus as we learn more about who he is and what it means to follow him.



With this in mind, let us use this time this winter to focus on conscience. We often hear within the Church that decisions we make should be based on an informed conscience. Just what does that mean and how do we develop an informed conscience? There is a [website](#) with a very fine response to that question. You might want to read it, and read it again and again, because an informed conscience is something that takes time and study. It is based on scripture and Catholic Social Teaching. It relies on faith and reason. It is both personal and communal. And it is not simply opinion. What better time to cultivate one's conscience than during Ordinary Time?

Happily, there are many opportunities to do so. Consider a choice of job, a field of study, where you stand on access to health care or food programs or housing not just for yourself but for everyone, your position on immigration, your support for or opposition to U.S. global politics, how you treat the environment, how to vote on these and other issues and candidates, and so much more.

And if you're between the ages of 16 and 35 or know someone who is, there's a special opportunity to examine and exercise your conscience. Less than a year ago, Pax Christi USA accepted an initiative of Pax Christi New York State (PCNYS) inspired by PCNYS Council member, Mark Scibilia-Carver, to develop a Catholic Conscientious Objector Registry. The Registry is named the [Ben Salmon No Just War Catholic Conscientious Objector Registry](#) and can be found [here](#). It includes substantive background to conscientious objection to military service, its basis in scripture and Catholic Social Teaching, its legality in U.S. law, for whom it is intended, and how to register. The Registry is a precautionary step for those whose conscience tells them they cannot participate in military action.

Right judgment on our part is a reflection of our informed conscience, so let's get to work. Let's be open to what we might discover in the process, affirming where we are strong and working on where we are not.



Prayer: Embracing Honest Reflection by [Mason Caldwell](#) (adapted)

O God, grant me the courage to embrace honest reflection in my life.
Help me to look within, acknowledging my strengths and weaknesses with humility.
May Your light guide me to understand myself better, fostering growth and transformation.
Let my heart be open to Your wisdom, as I seek to align my actions with Your will.
Amen.

Suggested Actions

- ❖ Read scripture and Catholic Social Teaching, as well as the website article linked above, to learn more about an informed conscience.
- ❖ Visit the PCUSA web page on the Ben Salmon No Just War Catholic Conscientious Objector Registry. Share it with others, especially any young adults in your life.
- ❖ Learn about [Ben Salmon](#), as well as [Blessed Franz Jaegerstaetter](#), two of our more recent Catholic conscientious objectors.
- ❖ Consider an [examination of conscience](#) to help you in the process.
- ❖ Check out the Upcoming Events page at this website for more things you can do, and also visit these other Pax Christi websites for more ways to pray, study, and act: [www.paxchristiusa.org](#) and [www.nypaxchristi.org](#).
- ❖ Share this reflection with others.