

Anniversaries in Ordinary Time

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By Lucia A. Silecchia

With the arrival of Easter, one of the greatest joys in the lives of parishes around the world is the opportunity to welcome new sisters and brothers in Christ through the sacred celebrations at the great Easter Vigil. To all who celebrate this profound moment this year, welcome! May the graces flowing from the waters of Baptism, the sustenance of the Eucharist, and the life of the Holy Spirit fill your soul now and always.

My own welcome to you is filled with great gratitude.

Each year, the faith-filled witness of catechumens and candidates is an inspiration to the parishes that became your spiritual homes and the parishioners who filled the candle-lit pews that evening. I hope that you know how much it means to see you bring your enthusiasm, commitment, joy and devotion to a faith I can too often take for granted because it seems so familiar.

But, if this time of year marks the welcome of new members, that also means that this is the time when many others are celebrating the anniversaries of their own Easter Vigil welcomes. They are marking one year or many years since they, too, were received into the embrace of a faith ever ancient and ever new. To you, happy anniversary! I hope that you will celebrate with great joy.

I mark the date of my own Baptism with gratitude to my parents, godparents, and all who have helped me along life's way since that long ago July when I was five weeks old. Alas, however, I have no recollection of that day.

I hope, though, that you who came to this celebration as adults remember that day with joy and celebrate your anniversaries in special ways.

I hope that you have become active members of the parishes you joined that special day – and all the parishes you have called home since then.

I hope that the godparents and sponsors who supported you as you began your faith journey continue to walk with you in that faith.

I hope that if life has had difficult moments since then, that your faith has sustained you and the sacraments strengthened you.

I hope that if life has had joyous moments since then, that your faith has been at the center of your happiness.

I hope that when the excitement of your first Easter Vigil passed, the same spirit that guided you to the Church inspires your desire to learn more and understand more deeply the faith you first professed that night.

I hope that the members of the parish family who welcomed you with joy continue to be your companions on your journey through this life.

I hope that you have remained powerful witnesses to others as you live out your own life of faith and inspire others to seek greater closeness to God just as others inspired you.

I hope that this year, as you see others make the same commitments you once made, you will support them with your prayers and welcome in the special way only you can.

Thank you for the “yes” that brought you to the faith we share, the hope we treasure, and the love that God alone can give. As we celebrate Easter joy, I hope that you will remember your anniversary, and invite others to share it with you in celebration.

Please remember the joy of that “yes” – whether it was last year, or many years ago. I hope that the joy of that “yes” sustains you through all of your ordinary times.

Happy Anniversary!

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