

It seems such a short while ago when we were in summer, planning or going on holidays, and the children carefree from the rigours of school. But here we are—half-term is already over and shops are all but ready for Christmas. (Have you ordered your turkey?) As I write this in October, we have just celebrated Harvest Festival in all three churches in the benefice—I hope that you managed to make one of the services. All the churches were beautifully decorated, and resonated with grateful thanks to God for his goodness and mercy towards us. Of course, all this joy and merrymaking is tinged with sadness at the thought of so many people worldwide who go without enough food and clean water much of their lives.

In the church calendar we are currently in the period known as Ordinary Time; a time in the church year where there are few festivals and special events (Harvest excepted, of course). But what does 'Ordinary' mean? The dictionary says, 'with no special or distinctive features, normal'. It goes on to say, 'common, routine, day-to-day', etc. We call ourselves 'ordinary', don't we? Even when we are congratulated on a special endeavour, we mumble humbly, "Oh, it was nothing, anyone would have done it." We paint a rather grey picture of ourselves and our activities when in fact our lives should be full of bright colour. Human beings are capable of wonderful deeds of sacrificial love each and every day—how can that be 'ordinary'? Not just those we read about in newspapers or hear about on the news, although there are many instances of great bravery reported. But every day we face the world, cope with its heartache and enjoy its gladness. The Bible says that we are made in God's image—and as there is nothing ordinary about God, there is nothing ordinary about us. Remember the story of Genesis about Creation: So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God, he created them; male and female he created them.

In Psalm 139 we read, I praise you ***because I am fearfully and wonderfully made***; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. We are beautifully made—in the image of God—and there is nothing ordinary about us.

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Rev Glynis Beckett