
Seeing the Presence of God in Ordinary

**An Evensong meditation by the Rev. Canon Salmoon Bashir
The Eve of the Feast of Zita of Tuscany**

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

One of my dear friends is a roman Catholic nun in France. I met her years ago in London, and over time we became close friends. When she first entered her religious community, her assignment for the first three years was simple: she worked in the laundry room. For three years, while others were engaged in different ministries and responsibilities at the community, she spent her days folding laundry for them. I remember asking her, "How did you do that every day?"

Her answer caught me off guard at first. I was not expecting something so simple, so direct. She said, "I was seeing the presence of Christ in the ordinary, in the daily, mundane work." Because most of us do not think of folding laundry as a spiritual vocation. We think of it as something to get through. Something to finish so we can move on to something more meaningful. But she saw the presence of Christ in folding laundry for her whole community. She saw it differently.

Today we remember Saint Zita. Zita of Tuscany became, in many ways, a witness to that same truth: that God is not found only in the extraordinary, but in the ordinary, in the daily, in the work most people overlook. Zita was not ordained. She did not enter a religious order. She was a laywoman. And yet she lived her life with deep devotion to Christ by learning to recognize the presence of Christ in everyday life.

She followed the way of Christ not through status or recognition, but through service—because Christ himself came not to be served, but to serve.

Zita began working at a very young age, in a wealthy household in Lucca. She had little power, little protection, and very little control over her life. She served there for more than fifty years. For many years, she faced criticism and harsh treatment, especially from other servants who did not understand her habits of daily prayer or her generosity toward the poor.

Over time and with her persistence of seeing Christ in ordinary, changed the hearts of others, and they started seeing her differently. Zita became the most trusted person in the household—responsible for its keys, its food, its daily rhythm. And yet, even with that trust, she remained the same person. Still attentive to the poor. Still grounded in prayer. Still focused on the work in front of her. Above all, she remained committed to seeing Christ in the ordinary details of life.

I remember a few years ago reading *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence. He was a monk who also found his calling in a kitchen. Not solving the matter of liturgy. Not in leading worship. Not in writing theology. He spent his days washing dishes, preparing meals, dealing with noise, interruptions, and the ordinary frustrations of daily life. And he said something that still catches people off guard. He said he felt as close to God in the kitchen as he did in prayer. Every day. Imagine that. Cutting vegetables. Preparing meals. Washing dishes. Probably listening to complaints about the food as well. And yet, in all of that, he found his vocation. Not somewhere else. Right there. In serving others. In the ordinary work of the kitchen.

And friends, when you place his life next to Zita's, you begin to see the same pattern. Different places. Different centuries. Same truth. God meets us in the ordinary.

These ordinary, everyday tasks can become part of our spiritual life. Set times for prayer and public worship

matter, and even our daily chores can become a way of meeting God in the repetition of ordinary work.

And if we are honest, we can see this right here in our own community. There are so many people right here at Cathedral of St. Philip, who serve faithfully and like Zita, they prepare the way in doing mundane.

Those who prepare the altar before anyone arrives. Those who hand you leaflets as you enter this beautiful space. Those who help guide and welcome you into worship. Those who arrange the flowers, adding beauty that draws our hearts toward God.

Those who lead processions, carrying crosses, torches, banners, moving with care and reverence. Those who prepare this place, clean it, reset it, and make it ready again. And those who lead us in worship through music every week.

All of them, in their own way, are doing what Zita did. They are finding the presence of Christ in what they do. They are offering their work with grace, with excellence, with hospitality.

So, friends, here is the invitation.

The Son of God did not come in spectacle. He came into ordinary life. So, we are called to look for God there. In washing dishes. In cleaning floors. In folding laundry. In counting books. In practicing music so others can worship.

Like Saint Zita. Like Brother Lawrence. Like my friend in that laundry room. We are invited to see the presence of Christ in the ordinary. And when we begin to really see that something changes. We begin to recognize that many of the saints are not far away. They are right here. Among us. Doing ordinary things, day after day, with faith, with love, and with attention. And that is where holiness begins. Seeing the presence of God in ordinary. Amen!