**The Future of Ordinary Time**

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By Lucia A. Silecchia

My team did not make it to the World Series.

They got close – very close. Alas, the playoffs did not end well for them. I am not the most devoted fan since I usually do not follow the team’s progress until the excitement of the later part of the season when the stakes are higher, and the disappointment greater.

Yet, I noticed something after the post-season loss. Almost everyone said, “*Wait until next year,”* or *“Better luck next year.”* or “*Spring training will be here before you know it.”* Some may be revisiting the past, reflecting on missed opportunities, strategic errors, and misplayed games. Nevertheless, most people who shared my disappointment were already looking ahead to a new season, a fresh start, and another chance for the victory that slipped away in 2024.

I wonder if there is a lesson to be learned here. So often, when there is a disappointment, loss, or missed opportunity, it is easy to spend time and energy only looking backwards. It is tempting to rewind past events and contemplate all that could have and should have been done differently or better. There is certainly a place for this in life. After all, it is by looking back and recognizing mistakes and failings that we know how best to change our ways and avoid the missteps of yesterday.

But there is also great wisdom in the attitude of my fellow fans who are choosing, with hope, to look toward tomorrow. They see what was, and understand the disappointment of what went wrong. They also see the hope in a new beginning. They see the challenge that lies ahead in the opportunity to start a new season when winter passes and, with a clean slate, aim for what eluded them this year.

Life gives us so many new chances, and new seasons to start again, with a clean slate, to live differently. Every time we tell others that we forgive them, every time we walk away from an old temptation, and every time we turn back to God after some time away from Him, a new season begins. What came before is, of course, important. But it is not nearly as important as what lies ahead.

When we look to our tomorrows, we may not be planning a lineup, curating a team, or studying the strategy behind America’s national pastime. We are doing the frighteningly joyful work of hope.

It is the hope that, with the help of God, all that has come before will prepare us to live a new and better life.

It is the hope that, with the love of family and friends, we can put our weaknesses behind us and be stronger in those things that matter.

It is the hope that with greater faith and love we will live our tomorrows better than our yesterdays.

It is the hope that nothing that has come before has the last word on what lies ahead.

It is the hope that, like all who root for my team, an underdog can reach for the good and beautiful because, yes, the last *shall* be first.

For a time, it will be winter. But spring training -- herald of a new season and the hope it brings – starts in February, the heart of winter. It will be the new start for today’s disappointed fans who say, *“wait until next year.”*

This, hope, though, is not limited to baseball fans who have been waiting nearly four decades to see their team win the World Series. It is the hope that belongs to all who yearn for a better future in their ordinary time.

*Lucia A. Silecchia is Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Faculty Research at the Catholic University of America’s Columbus School of Law. “On Ordinary Times” is a biweekly column reflecting on the ways to find the sacred in the simple. Email her at* [*silecchia@cua.edu*](mailto:silecchia@cua.edu)*.*