**Perspectives on Ordinary Time**

**(Column 132: January 20, 2025)**

By Lucia A. Silecchia

In these past few weeks, I – like so many others – saw the winter’s first snowfalls. Since weather is a perennially popular topic for small talk, it did not take long to see that snowfall receives very different receptions from all those on whom it falls.

Some welcomed the snowfall as the harbinger of a day off from school or work. Others relished the beauty that the snow brought to their urban and rural landscapes. Some saw it as an inconvenience, while for others it was a frustrating addition to their workloads, or it made life more difficult or dangerous. It seemed that others were entirely oblivious to it as they went about their lives. Those selling shovels, salt and snow removal services saw opportunity, while others worried about the increases to heating bills that the snow exacerbated.

We all saw the same snow. Yet, it meant something so different to each of us.

So many things in life are this way. Often, the same event can be seen by some as a blessed opportunity and by others as a burdensome challenge. Sometimes, the same experience can lead some to hope and others to despair.

There have been times that I thought something was a cause for joy and discovered that others, whose circumstances or outlooks differed from mine, did not see it that way. Conversely, there have been occasions when I did not fully understand why others rejoiced in things that I did not or could not appreciate.

So many things – snow, works of art, political outcomes, setbacks, illness, material poverty, successes, jobs – are perceived so differently by those with differing experiences, personalities, circumstances and memories.

The same may also even be true of the ways in which we perceive God.

For many, it is their faith in God that is their strength and comfort in times of trouble. For some, He may seem distant when crushing difficulties come. For some, He is a frightening powerful force and for others a gentle loving Father. To some, He is known intimately, while to others He seems destined to remain forever a stranger. To some, thoughts of Him are filled with gratitude for all good things, while others lament the way He seems to have withheld the wishes deep within their fervent petitions.

Maybe, most likely, in the course of our lives our perspectives have been all of these at various times and in different seasons that span the bright days of deep consoling faith and the dark nights of the soul.

Perhaps it takes something as simple as a snowfall to remind us of the importance of perspective and how precariously fragile it can be. Perhaps it takes patient wisdom to see that our sisters and brothers can sometimes see sorrow when we see joy. Perhaps it takes love to pray that they, and we, can have a grace-filled perspective on all that comes our way in ordinary time.

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