

Splendor In the Ordinary

Action Questions to Consider

THE HOUSEHOLD

- Do you find it difficult to think of your home, and the rooms in it, as hallowed/sacred?
- If you consider your home as a hallowed place, does that begin to change the way you think of your ordinary duties?
- Are there one or more ordinary duties that you find especially challenging to view in this light?
- Consider your home:
 - Is it cluttered? What areas are particular clutter pain points:

 - Are the objects within a room serving the purpose of that room?
 - Is the natural light in a room obstructed?
 - Quick tidy drill: can you tidy living spaces (family room, kitchen, dining area) in 15-20 minutes?
 - Do the children have a role in tidying and decluttering?
 - Is there order in the home so that everyone knows where to put an object away?
 - Have you considered the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent as particularly good times to declutter in order to give items away to bless another home?
- Do you find organization of material blessings a challenge? If so, why?
 - Are there any organizational pain points in your home?

- Does your current level of activity drown out your “bells” - the call within your vocation to do the next thing?
- Consider your days - now consider two different adjectives: busy | full. FULL implies that days have been prayerfully considered even though they may contain a significant level of activity. BUSY means that you react and go, react and go, with no consideration of the consequences of your schedule. Is your life busy or full? Considered or chaotic?
- List all of the outside the home activities you are committed to in a given week:

- Does your day have enough margin (free time) that you’re able to engage your children?
- Have you considered your ordinary duties as the kindling necessary to offer sacrifices to God?

Splendor In the Ordinary

Action Questions to Consider

THE DOOR

- Is your front door welcoming?
 - Are there practical items you could provide to communicate a sense of welcome?
 - Are there practical chores to attend to just outside your front door that would go further to extend an avenue of welcome up to your front door?
- Is the inside of your home distinct from the outside culture?
- Use three words to describe the atmosphere of your home?

- Do you have some concrete (visual & audible) reminders throughout your home to help reveal and remind of the splendor within the ordinary?
- Is there a particular room or chore that needs a beautiful reminder of the task's hallowed purpose?
- Do you mark and celebrate days within your home?
 - A morning offering?
 - What kind of things do you do to consecrate a day and acknowledge it as holy?
 - What is the role of praise in your home? Gratitude?
 - If you have children, do you model this for the children to see?
- Do you follow the rhythm of the liturgical year and mark those Feast days?
 - Do you find this practice overwhelming? If so, why?
 - Are you seeking out ways of marking the day that are most intuitive to you, and allow you to bring your specific gifts to the celebration?
 - Do you identify - perhaps at the beginning of each month - a list of Feast days you will mark and celebrate? Are you realistic about your list in light of your season of life and your chosen obligations?
 - Do you make a list and assemble needed materials for these celebrations?
 - Do you have a way of displaying some small tokens/reminders for a special Feast day? A basket? A shelf? A small table?
- What are the tools that are most intuitive to you in marking Feast days?
 - Mass for a Feast day? OTHERS:
 - Cooking? -----
 - Crafting? -----
 - Reading? -----
 - Playing games? -----
 - Singing? -----

Splendor In the Ordinary

Action Questions to Consider

- Identify every single digital door in your home. Include phones, tablets, or computers that have internet access.

-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----

- Do you see these as doors that open and close?
- Have you and your husband discussed the dangers and potential good in these doors?
- Have you formulated a family policy for the use of these doors? (Plan to revisit your policy with each new season as children grow and technology expands.)
- Do you have a digital doorkeeper to assist you in monitoring these doors?
- Have you studied the virtue of prudence?
- Do you regularly seek the virtue of prudence as a couple in making good prudential decisions for your family in a given season?

Splendor In the Ordinary

Action Questions to Consider

THE FOUR WALLS

- Do you consider your vocation as one that expresses *my life for yours*?
- Is it difficult for you to resist the me-centered media driven noise that permeates our culture?
 - Does that threaten your peace?
 - Does it intrude in your thoughts?
 - How can you eschew it and guard your thoughts?
 - Where is this noise coming from? What is the source? Can you eliminate or mitigate it?
- In what ways do you model *my life for yours* in your home with the persons inside your four walls?
- Do you find yourself resentful and bitter when called upon to serve or express love?
 - Often? Only at certain times?
 - What triggers this resentment and irritation?
 - Can you brainstorm ways to catch yourself before you make a response of irritation?
 - Can you identify a trigger you can reduce or eliminate or offer up?
- Do you identify with the martyr complex?
 - Do you allow your husband to express his naturally protective nature and assist you?
 - Do you invite him to offer help when you are in need? (sometimes we are so good at cloaking our needs that a husband needs gentle help to see an opportunity to serve but if this request is couched in bitterness he will likely recoil in defensiveness)
 - Can you graciously receive his help when offered?
 - Having modeled *my life for yours*, do you allow your children to express that also?
 - Do you welcome their gift and show appreciate when it is offered?
 - Do you start your day with prayer?
 - Do you take time each day to nurture yourself through reading?
 - Do you take the time to make self-care a priority?
 - Perhaps there are aspects of self-care you'd like to improve on - set goals over a year to slowly grow and improve habits of self care. What are they?

Splendor In the Ordinary

Action Questions to Consider

The following questions are NOT INTENDED TO PROMPT PUBLIC DISCUSSION. They are shared to be a potential springboard within the confines of a private discussion between husband and wife or with a confessor.

- Do you feel love has receded in your marriage?
- Do you struggle to love a particular child?
- Can you identify a potential source(s)?
- Do you harbor resentment toward your spouse?
- Do you regularly confide in your spouse?
- Do you overshare about your spouse's shortcomings to friends or family?
- Do you publicly share about a child's weaknesses, struggles, or shortcomings (in a public way - different from asking in confidence or within a trusted friend group) that could expose the child to embarrassment and suffering?
- Have you considered the idea of commitment and what it means to you and all the many hats you wear and responsibilities you shoulder?
 - When faced with a challenge, do you commit to it and lean into God's grace, or do you immediately ask someone else to solve the problem for you?
 - Do you instantly (reflexively) look for a material thing to solve a problem?
 - Do you spend the time committing to a challenge and looking for root causes, even if the result of that prayerful brainstorming has consequences for you (such as extra care in self-discipline, relaxing expectations, accepting crosses)?
- Considering all of the joys, sufferings, and crosses in your life, do you place them at the feet of the Lord, offering them back to Him?

Action items: list areas that you find especially difficult to express MY LIFE FOR YOURS - JOYFULLY:

Can you choose 1 - 2 to target during Advent, or for the next several weeks? Ask yourself why you're having trouble expressing joy? What is it about the opportunity that makes laying down your life so hard? Is this a self-discipline issue? A spiritual issue? A personality conflict? Seek to get to the root of the problem and drag it out into the light, then bring it before the Blessed Sacrament and ask him to transfigure this challenge with His grace.

Splendor In the Ordinary

Action Questions to Consider

THE ENTRYWAY

- How many entryway points do you have in your home?
- Do you have a front door or main entryway to consider for the purpose of this exercise?
- Stand outside your front door/main entryway and walk inside. Try to look at that entry space (and only the entry space!) with fresh eyes, as if you've never seen it before. If you're stepping into that space do you feel:
 - refreshed?
 - welcomed?
 - comfortable pausing and looking about?
 - in a quick glance are there objects that give you a clue to the family living within?
 - is there a practical place for hat, coat, gloves, bags?
- Do you have an accumulation of things in the entryway that don't belong? Do they live there permanently, or are they just stopping over awaiting transport to their final home somewhere else? If permanent, can you relocate these items out of the entryway? Where do they belong?
 - Exercise: remove anything from the entryway that doesn't belong and invite welcome and pause for your guest. Shop your walls, your home, and see if you can find something to add a touch of beauty that communicates the atmosphere of your home at-a-glance to your guest. You can bin up everything else and set it aside and deal with it a little at a time if needed.
- Are you lacking in a front door entryway that is its own space?
 - Can you arrange your furniture in a way that sets off a small entry space?
 - Could you acquire a small bench or coatrack to serve a practical purpose for the housing of a guest's things, but also to signify a place of entry?
 - Can you place something beautiful in this entry space? Perhaps a piece of art?
- Is there something beautiful in your entryway?
 - Can you shop your home - the walls, other rooms, attic, a relative's attic - for something beautiful for your entryway? (Often, a grandparent is overjoyed to share something to pass along! And beautiful family objects can be the most meaningful!)
- Is courtesy regularly exercised in your home?
 - Can you brainstorm ways to encourage courtesy?
 - Do you model it to your children when you greet strangers at your door?