

What is the Liturgical Calendar?

The **Liturgical Calendar** in the Catholic Church begins the First Sunday of Advent and runs to the Solemnity of Christ the King, making today the last Sunday of the Liturgical Calendar, and next Sunday, December 2, the beginning of a new Liturgical Calendar Year.

The Liturgical Calendar follows a 3-year cycle, each year represented by the letters, A, B and C. The Lectionary Mass readings follows a Sunday cycle and a weekday cycle.

During the **Year A** cycle, the Gospel of Matthew is the primary Gospel used for the readings.

In **Year B**, Mark is the primary Gospel.

In **Year C**, Luke is the primary Gospel.

The Gospel of John is proclaimed on particular Sundays every year.

There are six Seasons in each cycle of the Liturgical Calendar:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Lent
- Triduum
- Easter
- Ordinary Time

Throughout our Liturgical Year, the Church celebrates Sunday worship, as well as Solemnities, Memorials, and Feasts to commemorate special events or persons that are highly revered by the Catholic Church.

The **Season of Advent** marks the beginning of the Liturgical Calendar. Advent begins on November 30th or the Sunday closest to this date, includes the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, and ends on December 24th before the evening prayer of Christmas.

Immaculate Conception of Mary (Dec. 8th) celebrates her conception without sin, a uniquely Catholic celebration.

Christmas (Dec. 25) is the season we give thanks to God for the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. This Season lasts 12 days, beginning on Christmas Eve (Dec. 24th) through Epiphany (Jan. 6th).

Mary, Holy Mother of God (Jan. 1) celebrates the Blessed Virgin Mary and her motherhood of Jesus.

Epiphany (Jan. 6th) celebrates the revelation of God the Son as a human being in Jesus Christ, commemorating the visit of the Magi to the Christ child, and the physical manifestation of Jesus to the Gentiles.

The **Baptism of the Lord** is the end of the Liturgical Season of Christmas, commemorating the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. "Ordinary Time" begins following day

Lent is a 40-day Liturgical Season that initiates the most sacred part of the Christian year. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, covers six Sundays, and ends at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on the evening of Holy Thursday. During Lent, Catholics are called to meditate on the great Paschal mystery, the salvation God offers to us through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Ash Wednesday occurs 46 days (40 fasting days, if the 6 Sundays, which are not days of fast, are excluded) before Easter. According to the Gospels, Jesus spent 40 days fasting in the desert and Lent originated as a mirror of this: to fast 40 days as preparation for Easter.

Palm Sunday is on the Sunday before Easter, commemorating the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. We celebrate by processing with palms, representing the palm branches the crowd scattered in front of Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.

The **Easter Triduum** commemorates the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ; includes Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and ends on Easter evening.

Holy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter commemorating the Last Supper of Jesus with the Apostles.

Good Friday, the Friday before Easter commemorates the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Holy Saturday commemorates the day the body of Jesus lay in the tomb. It is celebrated the day before Easter.

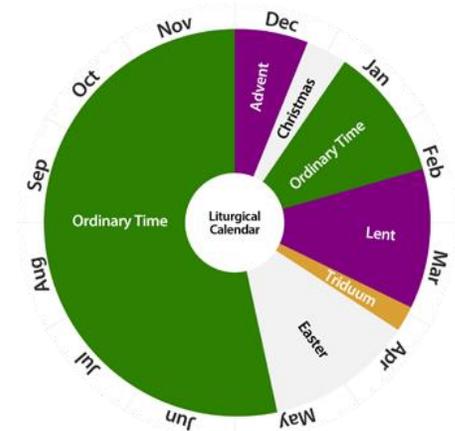
Easter is the climax of the Catholic Liturgical Calendar, celebrating the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Easter Season ends 50 days later with Pentecost Sunday.

The **Ascension of Our Lord** occurs 40 days after Jesus rose from the dead, and celebrates Jesus being taken up to Heaven in his resurrected body.

Pentecost is the seventh Sunday after Easter, celebrating the Holy Spirit descending on the disciples. Pentecost is sometimes described as the "Birthday of the Church".

Ordinary Time is the Liturgical time outside the other seasons. The Sundays

are consecutively numbered and run 33 or 34 weeks. During this period the Liturgy of the Word is devoted to the mysteries surrounding the life of Christ.



Winter Ordinary Time begins the Monday after the Baptism of the Lord and ends the Tuesday before Ash Wed.

The **Presentation of the Lord** (Feb. 2nd) celebrates the presentation of Christ in the temple of Jerusalem, 40 days after His birth.

Summer/Fall Ordinary Time begins the Monday after the Pentecost and ends with Christ the King.

Trinity Sunday is the Sunday after Pentecost, celebrating the doctrine of the Trinity, the three Persons of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Sundays following Pentecost, until Advent, are numbered from this day.

The **Body and Blood of Christ** (Corpus Christi Sunday), one week after Trinity Sunday, celebrates the belief in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ as His Real Presence in the Eucharist.

The **Assumption of Mary** (Aug. 15th) commemorates the death of Mary and her bodily assumption into Heaven.

All Saints' Day (Nov. 1st) honors all the saints, known and unknown.

Feast of All Souls (Nov. 2nd) is a day of prayer for the dead, particularly one's own relatives.

The **Feast of Christ the King**, celebrating the all-compassing authority of Christ as King of the universe, is the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, the Sunday before Advent, when the Liturgical Year begins again.