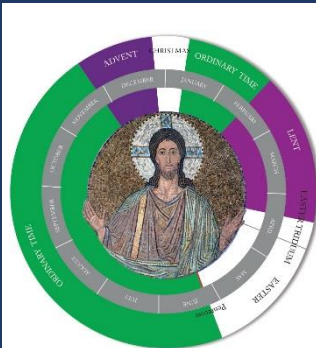


The Church's Year

The liturgical year is a cycle that keeps repeating itself year after year, but, from a spiritual standpoint, it is always new because it continues to draw us more deeply into our relationship with Christ. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that each liturgical year becomes for us a "year of the Lord's favour".

The liturgical year celebrates the sacred mysteries of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It includes the feast of the Ascension, when Jesus returned to heaven with the promise that he would come again, and Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles.



Advent

It is a time of waiting for the birth of the Messiah. There are four Sundays in Advent. You'll notice at Mass that the colours used for vestments and altar cloths during Advent are violet or dark violet, with pink on the Third Sunday of Advent to symbolise hope. The readings and the music during Advent reflect this spirit of anticipation and longing for the coming of the Lord.

Christmas

Christmas Eve marks the beginning of this season in the Church, which lasts until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord in January. White or gold are the colours used for vestments and altar cloths. The readings, the music and the decorations in the church project joy and a sense of celebration.

Ordinary Time

It begins on the Monday after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord and ends when Lent begins. A second period of Ordinary Time follows Pentecost and continues until the beginning of Advent. The colour green, a symbol of hope, is used for vestments and altar cloths during Ordinary Time. Throughout Ordinary Time, the story of Jesus' life and ministry continues to unfold.

Lent

It is a 40-day period of fasting, abstinence and repentance that begins on Ash Wednesday. No meat is eaten on Fridays during Lent. The season of Lent culminates with the liturgies of Holy Week, which recall the passion and death of Jesus. Purple is used for vestments and altar cloths during Lent. The Gloria is omitted during Lent and the word "alleluia" is not said or sung.

Easter

The Easter season begins with the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus and continues for the next 50 days, until the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The colour of the Easter season is white, representing Christ's victory over death. The music is filled with joyful alleluias.

Key Vocabulary

Spelling	Definition/Sentence
convent	the place where people who have dedicated their whole lives to God live together
Eucharist	another name for the Mass
pagan	someone who did not believe in the one true God
perpetual	something that is always there
a diocese	an area with lots of parishes and priests and a bishop to look after them
bishop	a priest who is chosen to be leader of a diocese
the Creed	it is an important list of the main Christian beliefs
sacrifice	to give something to God

Feast Days of Mary, Our Mother

Although there are many feast days for Our Lady, in the Catholic Church the most prominent feast days are listed below:

1st January – Mary, the Holy Mother of God

25th March – The Annunciation of the Lord

31st May – The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

15th August – The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8th September – The Birthday of the Blessed Virgin Mary

7th October – Our Lady of the Rosary

8th December – The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary