

Liturgy

Christ's saving work is celebrated in sacred memory by the Church on fixed days throughout the course of the year. Each week on the day called the Lord's Day the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection. Once a year at Easter the Church honours the resurrection of the Lord and his blessed passion with the utmost solemnity. In fact through the yearly cycle the Church unfolds the entire mystery of Christ and keeps the anniversaries of the saints.

The [General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar](#)(GNLY) is the Church document which introduces the Church's celebration of the liturgical year and how it is celebrated.

Liturgical Year

The Liturgical Year begins on the First Sunday of Advent and runs through to Solemnity of Christ the King.

Liturgical Cycles

The Lectionary follows a Sunday and Weekday Cycle. The Sunday Cycle is 3-yearly and denoted by the letters A, B and C. Each year follows through one of the Gospels: A-Matthew, B-Mark, C-Luke. The Gospel of John is proclaimed on particular Sundays in each of the years. Weekdays in Ordinary Time follow a 2 year cycle numbered I and II. Year I is read in odd number years: year II in even ones.

Liturgical Seasons

Advent

From evening prayer 1 of the Sunday falling on or closest to the 30 November (The First Sunday of Advent) and ends before evening prayer 1 of Christmas, on 24 December, There are 4 Sundays of Advent.

Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation.

Christmas

From evening prayer 1 of Christmas, (celebrated on the evening of 24 December, the beginning of the liturgical day of 25 December – Birth of the Lord) to Baptism of the Lord (Sunday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany). Next to the yearly celebration of the paschal mystery, the Church holds most sacred the memorial of Christ's birth and early manifestations. This is the purpose of the Christmas season.

Ordinary Time I

From the Monday following the Baptism of the Lord to the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. The Sundays in Ordinary Time are numbered consecutively from the Baptism of the Lord. The Sundays of this season do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Instead they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects continues after the season of Easter.

Lent

From Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper on the evening of Holy Thursday. There are 6 Sundays of Lent.

Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. For the Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery: catechumens, through the several stages of Christian initiation; the faithful, through reminders of their own baptism and through penitential practices.

Holy Week, which begins on the 6th Sunday of Lent, Passion [Palm] Sunday, has as its purpose the remembrance of Christ's passion, beginning with his Messianic entrance into Jerusalem.

Easter Triduum

Begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil and concludes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. Christ redeemed us all and gave perfect glory to God principally through his paschal mystery: dying he destroyed our death and rising he restored our life. Therefore the Easter Triduum of the passion and resurrection of Christ is the culmination of the entire liturgical year. The solemnity of Easter has the kind of pre-eminence in the year that Sunday has in the week.

Easter Season

Begins with celebration of the Easter Vigil on Easter Sunday and concludes 50 days later with Pentecost Sunday. The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one 'great Sunday' These are above all others the days for the singing of the Alleluia.

Ordinary Time

From the Monday following Pentecost Sunday until the Saturday before the 1st Sunday of Advent. The last Sunday is the Solemnity of Christ the King which is Sunday 34 in Ordinary Time. The preceding Sundays are calculated to end with Sunday 34. The Sundays of this season do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Instead they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects.

Liturgical Colours

There are 4 principal liturgical colours:

White is used in the the seasons of Easter and of Christmas; also on celebrations of the Lord (other than of his Passion), of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels, and of Saints who were not Martyrs; on the solemnities of Trinity Sunday, All Saints (1 November) and of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (24 June); and on the feasts of Saint John the Evangelist (27 December), of the Chair of Saint Peter (22 February), and of the Conversion of Saint Paul (25 January). It may in England & Wales be used for Funerals.

Red is used on Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion and Good Friday, on Pentecost Sunday, on celebrations of the Lord's Passion, on "birthday" feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists, and on celebrations of martyred Saints.

Green is used in Ordinary Time.

Violet is used in the seasons of Advent and of Lent. It may also be worn for Funerals. Black may be used, where it is the practice, for Funerals.

Rose may be used, where it is the practice, on Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent).
On more solemn days, festive, that is, more precious, sacred vestments may be used, even if not of the colour of the day.

The Cycle of Prayer

Advent/Christmas

Openness to the Word of God
Migrants and Refugees
Expectant Mothers

Ordinary Time: Winter

Peace On Earth
Christian Unity
The Sick and Those Who Care for Them
Students and Teachers
The Unemployed

Lent

Candidates for the Sacraments
Women's World Day of Prayer
The Needy and Hungry of the World
Penitents and Wanderers

Easter

New Members of the Church
Vocations
Human Work
The Right Use of the Media
The Church

Ordinary Time: Summer

A Deeper Understanding between Christians and Jews
Those Who Suffer Persecution, Oppression and Denial of Human Rights
Europe
Human Life
Seafarers

Ordinary Time: Autumn

The Spread of the Gospel
The Harvest, the Fruits of Human Work, and the Reverent Use of Creation
Justice and Peace in the World
All Victims of War
Young People
Prisoners and their Families
For more information and a copy of the complete Liturgical Calendar go to: www.liturgyoffice.org.uk