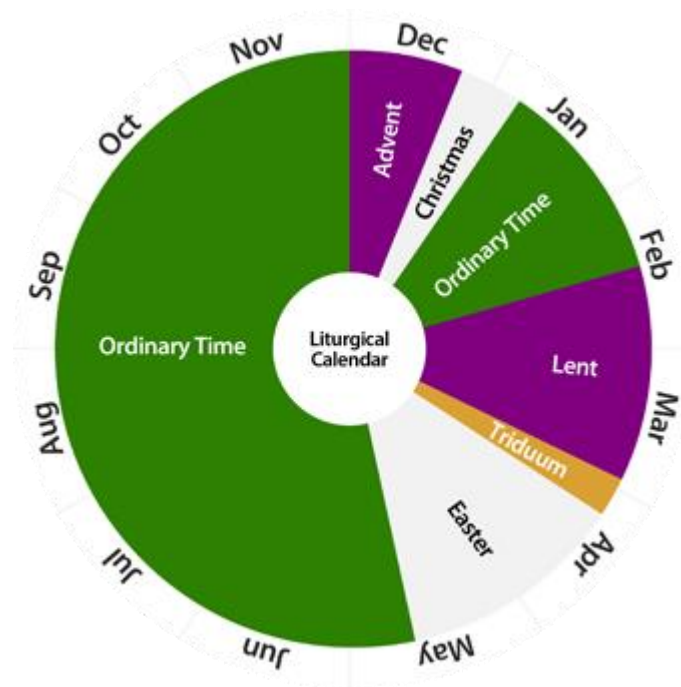


RCIA: INQUIRY SESSION SEVEN

ADVENT & THE LITURGICAL YEAR

Week: 14/11/22 - 20/11/22

THE LITURGICAL YEAR



The liturgical calendar is the cycle of seasons in the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church. The Church year begins each year with Advent, the season of awaiting Christ's coming, and ends with the final Saturday of Ordinary time. Within the standard calendar year, the Church year starts in early December (or sometimes the end of November) and goes through the following November.

The Church year consists of six liturgical seasons:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Ordinary Time after Epiphany
- Lent
- Easter
- Ordinary Time after Pentecost

Seasons begin or end based on a movable feast and so some seasons vary in length from year to year, and vary as to the calendar dates.

ADVENT: First Sunday of Advent through December 24th

The liturgical colours of Advent are **Purple** and **Rose**, with Rose being used only on the third Sunday of Advent.

Advent always falls sometime between November 28th and December 3rd, and lasts until the Nativity of the Lord. The season always has somewhere between 21 and 28 days.

The Advent season is the time of waiting and preparing for the coming of Jesus. This refers both to the celebration of the Incarnation, as well as the second and final coming for which we are waiting and preparing.

CHRISTMAS: December 25th through The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

The liturgical colour of Christmas is **white**.

The Christmas season begins with the celebration of the birth of Jesus on Christmas day, or as a vigil on Christmas Eve. The Feast of Christmas lasts 12 days, until the Feast of the Epiphany. However, the time from Epiphany until the Baptism of the Lord is also included in the Christmas season. Traditionally, Epiphany had been fixed to January 6th, and the Baptism is celebrated on the following Sunday. The Christmas season is a time of rejoicing in the Incarnation.

ORDINARY TIME after the Feast of the Baptism through to Shrove Tuesday.

The liturgical colour of Ordinary Time is **green**; however, as in all seasons, other appropriate colours are worn on particular feast days. (For example, white is typically worn for Marian feast days or feast days which celebrate saints not martyred, red for saints who were martyred.)

After the celebration of the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Ordinary Time begins. The name comes from "ordinalis" meaning "showing order", denoting the order of the counted weeks. That is to say, it is a season of counted weeks.

Ordinary Time after the Baptism focuses on the early life and childhood of Christ, and then on His public ministry.

LENT: Ash Wednesday through Holy Saturday

The liturgical colours of Lent are **violet** or **purple**. **Rose** may also be used, where it is the custom, on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday during Lent). On Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) and on Good Friday (which has no Mass but a service remembering Christ's passion) the colour is red. White is worn on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday.

The season of Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and lasts until the final Saturday before Easter, Holy Saturday. Lent is a penitential season. It recalls the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert, and the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert. Lent focuses on the events leading up to Christ's passion, and finally on the Passion itself.

Lent is 40 days long. This does not include Sundays, as Sunday is always a day for rejoicing in the Resurrection. Altogether, it covers 46 calendar days, the 40 days plus the six Sundays.

EASTER: Easter Vigil through Pentecost

The liturgical colours of Easter are **white**, for most days, and **red** for **Pentecost**.

The Easter season begins with the Easter Vigil, which is celebrated after night falls on the evening before Easter Sunday. It begins with celebrating Christ's resurrection and ends by celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus. Christ's ascension into Heaven is celebrated just prior to Pentecost. The Easter season lasts 50 days, from Easter Sunday through Pentecost.

ORDINARY TIME after Pentecost: The day after Pentecost through the final day before Advent.

The second period of Ordinary Time is the longest liturgical season. Ordinary Time resumes after Pentecost and runs until the final Saturday before Advent. This period of Ordinary Time focuses on Christ's reign as King of kings, and on the age of the Church. This is the age we live in now, which is the time between the age of the Apostles and the age of Christ's second and final coming for which we are ever preparing.

The final Sunday in Ordinary Time is the Feast of Christ the King; the Saturday after this feast is the final day of Ordinary time.

SUNDAY

The Church celebrates the paschal mystery on the first day of the week, known as the Lord's Day or Sunday. This follows a tradition handed down from the apostles and having its origin from the day of Christ's resurrection. Sunday, therefore must be ranked as the first holyday of all.

"On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass. The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day" (**CCC 2180**).

THE CYCLE OF READINGS

The Sunday lectionary (guide to liturgical readings) is a three-year cycle of three readings. The first reading usually comes from the Old Testament and parallels the theme of the Gospel reading of the day. The second reading is usually from the epistles (letters) or the book of Revelation.

The Gospel readings are arranged in such a way that they match the life of Christ to the season celebrated. There are three cycles used to gain the most comprehensive look at the life of Christ.

Cycle A: Matthew

Cycle B: Mark

Cycle C: Luke

The Gospel of John is used in all three cycles, especially during cycle A in Lent. The lectionary is so extensive that over a three year cycle nearly the entire New Testament and the most significant portions of the Old Testament are covered.

SOLEMNITIES, FEASTS AND MEMORIALS

As the Church celebrates the mystery of Christ in a yearly cycle, the Church also venerates with a particular love Mary, the Mother of God and the memory of the martyrs and other saints.

The saints of universal significance have celebrations that are obligatory throughout the entire Church. Saints are great role models as they have been successful in serving the king and continue to pray for our success (Hebrews 12:1).

DAYS OF OBLIGATION

Holy Days of Obligation are major feasts of the Church's year on which – in addition to Sundays – Catholics are obliged to go to Mass and refrain from unnecessary work.

Holy Days in Ireland

- Immaculate Conception (8th December)
- Christmas Day (25th December)
- Epiphany (6th January)
- St Patrick (17th March) (2008 – 15th March, because 17th falls in Holy Week)
- Assumption of Our Lady (15th August)
- All Saints (1st November)

Please note: In Ireland since October 1996, the Irish Bishops' Conference removed the obligation on the feasts of Ascension and the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), and the consequent transfer of these two feasts to the following Sundays in accordance with universal liturgical law.

ADVENT

The Advent season is a four week period before Christmas that celebrates the anticipation and coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The origin of "advent" is from the Latin word *adventus* which simply translates "coming" or "arrival". Not only is the Christian meaning for preparation and celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ, his birth at Christmas, but also to celebrate the new life when someone accepts Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and lastly, the anticipation of Jesus returning again.

The Four Weeks of Advent

The four Sundays of Advent each have a specific theme or focus. The purpose of each theme is to spend time reflecting on the true meaning of the season - the life of Jesus Christ. (See Advent Wreath – next weeks Instruction)

First Sunday of Advent: Hope (or promise)

Isaiah 9:2, 6-7:

“The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned...For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.”

Second Sunday of Advent: Faith (or waiting or prophecy)

Isaiah 40:3-5:

“A voice of one calling: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’”

Third Sunday of Advent: Joy

Matthew 2:10-11, “When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.”

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Peace

John 3:16-19, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil."

1. Gospel Reflection: Sunday 20/11/22 is the Feast of Christ the King in Ordinary Time (Year C) and the Gospel reading is Lk. Lk. 23:35-43. The text of the reading is below. The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion. The following questions may be helpful: What does this mean to me? How does it make me feel? Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing? What images of God emerge for me? What do I think that God is saying in this text? What impact does this have on my life?

GOSPEL READING

Reader: The Lord be with you.

Response: And with your spirit.

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord.

The rulers sneered at Jesus and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Christ of God."

Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself."

Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews."

Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us."

The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

Response: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.