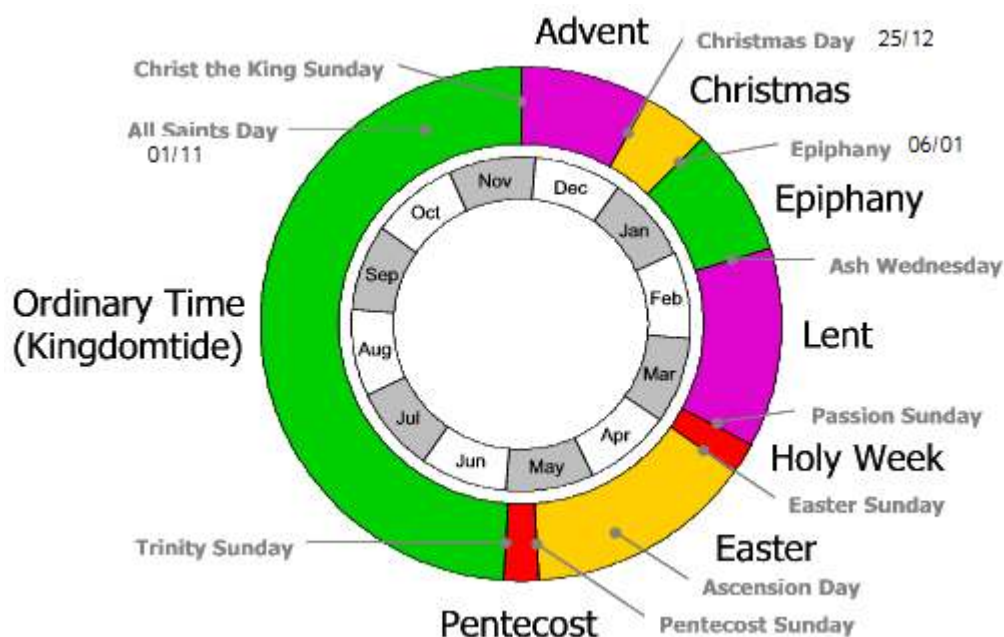


# The Liturgical Cycle of the Catholic Church

*We celebrate the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.*

- There are six seasons in the Liturgical Calendar:  
Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter  
and Ordinary Time - After Epiphany/ Pentecost Season.
- The Liturgical Year begins with Advent and ends with Ordinary Time, with the Feast of Christ the King / Doom Sunday.
- The Liturgical Year's Cycle of Seasons repeats itself at the end of each cycle.
- Seasons begin or end on a moveable feast, and so some seasons vary in length from year to year, and vary as to calendar dates.
- Each Season:
  - \* has a particular **theme**
  - \* has a particular liturgical **colour**
  - \* concentrates on **different parts of the Bible**.
  - \* has different religious **practices** and **symbols**



## What are the liturgical colours and what do they mean?

- Purple is the colour of Penance and Preparation and is used during Advent and Lent.
- White/Gold are the colours of Joy & Purity and are used during Easter and Christmas Seasons and feasts of the Blessed Mother, angels and saints who weren't martyred. (Sometimes blue is also used for the Blessed Mother.)
- Rose/Pink are the colours of anticipation (faith and joy) and is used on the third Sunday in Advent and the fourth Sunday during Lent.
- Red is the colour of Sacrifice and is used during Passion Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, and the feasts of the Apostles and the Martyrs.
- Green is the colour of Hope, Life and Growth and is used throughout Ordinary Time.

## Practices Associated with the Calendar

### Abstinence & Fasting

A fish is often used to show the days of abstinence from meat during Lent. The Church requires all Catholics 14-years-old and older to avoid meat as a part of special sacrifice on certain days of penance. Some abstain from meat every Friday.

On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday adults must also fast- that is, they may eat only one full meal- or two smaller ones if necessary for health reasons. There is also CAFOD Family Fast Day during the year to help those less fortunate.

### Special Devotions

Jesus promised St. Margaret Mary Alacoque that all those who receive Communion on nine consecutive First Fridays with devotion to His Sacred Heart would receive special graces at the time of their death.

The Virgin Mary made a similar offer at Fatima to all who receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, receive Communion, pray five decades of the Rosary, and "Keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on 15 mysteries of the Rosary" on five consecutive First Saturdays.

### Holy Days

Holy Days of Obligation are major feasts on days other than Sunday that are so important that all Catholics are required to celebrate them together at Mass.

### Feast Days

Say "feast" and many people think of a party or a banquet. However, the Church uses this term to refer to a day of remembrance of some part of Our Lord's life or of one of the Saints and Angels.

At Mass on a feast day, the readings and prayers will often relate to the event or Saint being honoured.