



The Liturgical Year

As the earth cycles annually through its seasons, just so the Church celebrates with quiet, deliberate rhythm the seasons of the liturgical year – always the same, yet ever new and renewing.

At the heart of this yearly cycle is the Sacred Liturgy, especially the celebration of the Mass, which is the source and summit of the Church's life.

Cycles of Christian Renewal

Annually, through the Proper of Seasons or *Temporal Cycle*, the Church immerses herself in the whole “mystery of Christ, from the incarnation and birth until the ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of blessed hope and of the coming of the Lord.” Further, in the Proper of Saints or *Sanctoral Cycle*, she honors with special love Mary, the Mother of God, and celebrates the feasts of martyrs and saints who are already in possession of eternal salvation.

Through her official public worship the Church recalls and celebrates these mysteries, dispensing to her members the treasure of Christ’s merits for their sanctification. This “universal call to holiness”, our sanctification, is the will of God for each of us who have by Baptism been grafted onto the Vine that is Christ and his Mystical Body. It is God who accomplishes the work of our sanctification through the liturgy, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice.

Personal Holiness and the Liturgy

The Mass admits of limitless levels and layers of understanding. A richness of outward signs points to inward realities of grace; sensible symbols become gateways to the mystical realm. The Church wisely uses externals – words, gestures, and material things we can see, hear and smell – to surround the sacred mysteries that will sanctify her children.

With urgency, therefore, the Magisterium encourages us to participate fully and actively in the liturgical sacrifice: by coming to it with proper dispositions; by offering our lives with the sacrifice of Christ our High priest; by growing in our knowledge and

appreciation of the Mass; and by leading our children, through instruction and example, to a deeper understanding and love of the faith and the liturgy.

Your Domestic Church

But how are we to draw life from the Eucharistic sacrifice as water from a limitless spring? How can we make participation in the sacred liturgy bear fruit in our homes and daily lives?

Within the Catholic home – the domestic church – we may make use of pious practices, objects and various traditions to join with the Church in living the liturgical year. By making use of customs, traditions, and devotional practices, parents, as first teachers of their children, will be building up the “little kingdom of heaven” that is their home. Ideally, this will culminate in the celebration of the liturgy, for every practice and custom that is not oriented towards the liturgy will be hollow and fail to produce worthy fruit.



Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever.— Hebrews 13:8

What is Ordinary Time?

The rhythm of the liturgical seasons reflects the rhythm of life — with its celebrations of anniversaries and its seasons of quiet growth and maturing.

Ordinary Time, meaning ordered or numbered time, is celebrated in two segments: from the Monday following the Baptism of Our Lord up to Ash Wednesday; and from Pentecost Monday to the First Sunday of Advent. This makes it the largest season of the Liturgical Year.

In vestments usually green, the color of hope and growth, the Church counts the thirty-three or thirty-four Sundays of Ordinary Time, inviting her children to meditate upon the whole mystery of Christ – his life, miracles and teachings – in the light of his Resurrection.

If the faithful are to mature in the spiritual life and increase in faith, they must descend the great mountain peaks of Easter and Christmas in order to "pasture" in the vast verdant meadows of *tempus per annum*, or Ordinary Time.

Sunday by Sunday, the Pilgrim Church marks her journey through the *tempus per annum* as she processes through time toward eternity.



*"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."
— John 6:68*

Scripture and the Liturgy

In her revision of the Liturgy, the Church has sought to reestablish the preeminence of Sunday, that feast day *par excellence*, over every other feast day.

Recognizing, too, that Our Lord is really present when Sacred Scripture is read during the Liturgy, she has opened up the "treasures of the bible so that richer fare may be provided for the faithful at the table of God's Word."

To encourage her children to have a "warm and living love for Scripture," the Church has enlarged the Sunday Lectionary so that the various books of the New Testaments are read roughly from beginning to end over a period of weeks, and the synoptic Gospels are read in a 3 year cycle Year A – Matthew; Year B – Mark; Year C – Luke.

Old Testament readings and Psalms are chosen to correspond to the Gospel passages and to bring out the fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New. The revised weekday lectionary for Ordinary Time complements the Sunday lectionary with its 2-year cycle of readings presenting all the major portions of the Bible, and a 1-year cycle for the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

"...there was an enormous crowd... They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language...." — Rev. 7:9



Feast Days

While insisting that the feasts that commemorate the mysteries of salvation take precedence, the Church nonetheless includes the celebration of the feast days of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the saints in the liturgical calendar.

"By inserting into the annual cycle the commemoration of the martyrs and other saints on the occasion of their anniversaries, 'the Church proclaims the Easter mystery of the saints who suffered with Christ and with him are now glorified. (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 102) When celebrated in the true spirit of the liturgy, the commemoration of the saints does not obscure the centrality of Christ, but on the contrary extols it..."

"The intrinsic relationship between the glory of the saints and that of Christ is built into the very arrangement of the liturgical year, and is expressed

most eloquently in the fundamental and sovereign character of Sunday as the Lord's Day."

"Lord of time; he is its beginning and its end; every year, every day and every moment are embraced by his Incarnation and resurrection, and thus become part of the 'fullness of time'." — Tertio Millennio Adveniente

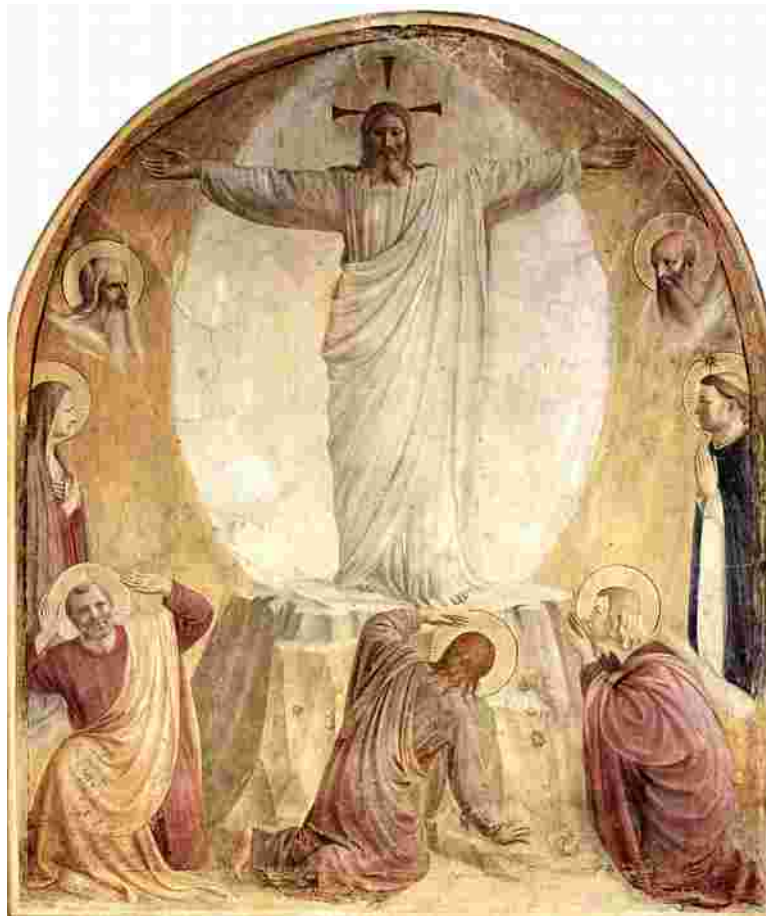


The Easter Mystery Celebrated in Ordinary Time

Parents are challenged to keep the Easter mystery alive in their families throughout the season of Ordinary Time; to focus on the mysteries of Christ which the Church sets before them in the weekly Mass readings and to apply those readings to their daily lives. In this way, faith will bear fruit within their homes, intensifying through the fertile weeks of Ordinary time until its conclusion, the crowning feast of Christ the King.

Joyful Expectation at Year's End

At the close of every Liturgical Year may we look forward with renewed hope to Christ's coming again in glory to reign as Lord forever. For it is Jesus Christ we seek when we strive to live the Liturgical Year with the Church. He is the "Lord of time; he is its beginning and its end; every year, every day and every moment are embraced by his Incarnation and resurrection, and thus become part of the 'fullness of time'."





What Is Advent?

Christmas is here! Or is it? Before the end of October one sees the signs of Christmas everywhere. But by the time December 25 arrives, most people are "Christmased" out — too many parties, rich foods and stretched budgets. We Catholics don't need to draw our drapes and twiddle our thumbs while the rest of society is celebrating Christmas in advance. Instead, we can celebrate two seasons: Advent and Christmas.

The Church begins a new Liturgical Year on the First Sunday of Advent (December 3rd). During the subsequent four weeks, she prepares with mounting expectation for the coming of Christ in a spirit of waiting, conversion and hope.

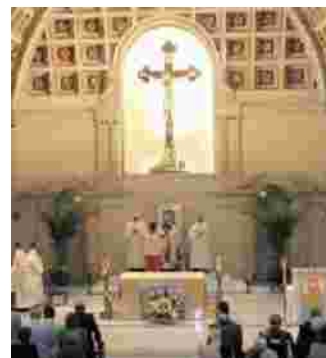


I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness; make straight the way of the Lord.

Focus on the Liturgy

There are always four Sundays in Advent, though not necessarily four full weeks. The liturgical color of the season is violet or purple, except on the Third Sunday of Advent, called Gaudete or Rejoice Sunday, when optional rose vestments may be worn. The Gloria is not recited during Advent liturgies, but the Alleluia is retained.

The prophecies of Isaiah are read often during the Advent season, but all of the readings of Advent focus on the key figures of the Old and New Testaments who were prepared and chosen by God to make the Incarnation possible: the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, Sts. Elizabeth and Zechariah. The expectancy heightens from December 17 to December 24 when the Liturgy resounds with the seven magnificent Messianic titles of the O Antiphons.





*Come, Lord, give to us your peace.
Then with hearts perfected we may joy in your presence.*

History of Advent

In 490, Bishop Perpetuus of Tours officially declared Advent a penitential season in the Frankish Church of Western Europe, ordering a fast on three days of every week from November 11 till Christmas. This forty days' fast, similar to Lent, was originally called *Quadragesima Sancti Martini* (Forty Days' Fast of Saint Martin's).



By contrast, the Advent season of the Roman liturgy, developing a century after that of the Frankish Church, was a non-penitential, festive and joyful time of preparation for Christmas. By the thirteenth century a compromise was reached, which combined the fasting and penitential character of the Gallic observance with the Mass texts and shorter four-week cycle of the Roman Advent liturgy.

The liturgy of Advent remained substantially unaltered until Vatican II mandated a few minor changes to more clearly delineate the spirit of the Lenten and Advent seasons.



For waters are broken out in the desert, and streams in the wilderness.

Customs of Advent

The first Sunday of Advent is a good time for each family member to choose a secret



"Christkindl" or Christ Child for whom he or she will perform little acts of love — such as a prayer, a small gift, a sacrifice, a note or a piece of candy — throughout Advent.

Another such Advent practice is that of having an empty crib or manger, which each family member will soften with straw earned by a sacrifice, a prayer or a work of mercy.

After Christmas, the family will gather before the Infant Savior, in his now-padded crib, for their evening prayers or for Scripture reading. When employing new Advent customs within your domestic church it is important to remember that they are only aids, not goals in themselves. With joyful hope and

anticipation, then, let us prepare for the coming of the Son of God, praying with the Church: Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay!



About Christmas

Joy to the World the Savior reigns, let men and women their songs employ.

This section to help you experience the joy of Christmas by keeping a spiritual focus on the season.

Throughout this wonderful time there will always be much hustle and bustle, shopping and baking and gift giving. But it's hoped you will refer here often for ideas and spiritual nuggets to increase your Christmas joy.

Let us try to celebrate Christmas with the innocence and humility of children always keeping in mind the wonderful birth of the Christ Child.

Joy to the world the Lord has come, let earth receive her King.

For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace.

— Isaiah 9:5



Christmas at Home and in the Liturgy

Customs and Practices Christmas in the domestic church is best observed by attendance at Midnight Mass, “an event of major liturgical significance.” (*Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, #111) If that is not possible, the family may prepare for the feast by praying the Office of Readings before the crib on Christmas Eve. The crib and its Infant-occupant will provide daily food for meditation on the simplicity and poverty, the humility and obedience of our Savior.

The Church encourages families to attend daily Mass and pray some hours of the Liturgy of the Hours every day during the Christmas Octave. Especially on the Feast of the Holy Family, the members of the family should try to attend Mass together and there renew both their marriage vows and the family’s entrustment to the patronage of the Holy Family.

The tree in the domestic church will remain decorated and lighted throughout Christmastide, or at least through the feast of Epiphany. Under the tree, the gifts – reminders of Christ the Gift of God’s infinite love – will include some gifts for the poor, because the “poor belong to every family” (*Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, #109), and because the Son of God “who was rich...became poor for your sake.” (2 Cor 8:9)



Many pious exercises are associated with the eve of the New Year, in Europe called simply St. Sylvester. Coming at the end of the civil year it affords the faithful an opportunity to reflect on how swiftly time passes, to do penance for sins committed during the year, and to give thanks to God for the myriad graces and blessing of the past year. The family might participate in a parish prayer vigil that concludes with Mass, or if that is not possible, a vigil could be held in the home before the crib.

In many cultures, Epiphany is the day on which gifts are exchanged, and homes are blessed and sprinkled with “Epiphany water”. On this feast, the Infant-King in his crib will wear a crown and a scarlet robe while Caspar, Melchoir and Balthasar inscribe their initials above the doorways of the domestic church. May it become “a shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, charity, mildness, obedience to the Commandments, and thanksgiving to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen” (*Christmas to Candlemas in a Catholic Home*, Epiphany blessing)



Jesse Tree Overview



The Jesse Tree dates back to the middle ages and came from Europe. Even some ancient cathedrals have Jesse Tree designs in their stained glass windows. The "tree" is usually a branch or sapling and is decorated with various symbols that remind us of the purpose and promises of God from Creation to the Birth of Jesus Christ.

Jesse was the father of King David and God promised David that his Kingdom would last forever. Two centuries after the death of King David, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and said:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Each Jesse Tree ornament usually consists of a handmade symbol or drawing that represents one of the major stories of the Old Testament along with a brief verse of Scripture from that story.

Focus on the Liturgy

Christmastide extends from First Vespers on Christmas Eve to the Baptism of Our Lord, which usually falls on the Sunday after Epiphany. The mystery of the Incarnate God is one so marvelous that Holy Mother Church celebrates it for eight days, each day of the Octave being considered a “little Christmas”.

For the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Church is exultant in her finest vestments of white or gold vestments, making use of incense, as well as extra flowers and candles to underscore the festal observance of the Lord’s Nativity. The *Gloria* – that Christmas hymn of the angels – is sung once again. With uncontainable joy the faithful raise their voices in numerous carols; and with humble gratitude, they bend their knees during the Creed at the mention of the Incarnation.

There are four different Masses on Christmas – the Vigil Mass, Masses at Midnight, dawn and during the day – each with its own distinct Propers and Readings. The message of all the Readings is the same: ‘Today is born for us a Savior, *God-with-us*, the Light that the darkness cannot overcome.’ Only at the Midnight Mass, however, will the faithful hear chanted the Proclamation of the Birth of Our Savior according to the Roman Martyrology.

It is fitting that the Christmas Octave closes and the civil year begins with the celebration of the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary under her most exalted title - the Mother of God. Other feasts celebrated within the Octave include: the feast of the Holy Family on Sunday (Dec. 26), the feasts of St. John the Apostle (Dec. 27), the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28) and St. Sylvester (Dec. 31), and, in vestments of red, the feasts of the martyrs St. Stephen (Dec. 26) and St. Thomas Becket (Dec. 29).

The magnificent feast of Epiphany (January 2) is celebrated with the same degree of solemnity as Christmas. However, the Feast is not a repetition of the Christmas mystery, but rather the manifestation of Christ, the light to the nations. On this feast the Church proclaims the date of Easter thereby connecting and orientating all feasts to the greatest Christian Solemnity.

With the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (*Theophany*) (January 9) the season of Christmastide comes to a close.

There is a short period of Ordinary time after Christmas, and then the Season of Lent begins.





What Is Lent?

Lent is the penitential season of approximately 40 days set aside by the Church in order for the faithful to prepare for the celebration of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection. During this holy season, inextricably connected to the Paschal Mystery, the Catechumens prepare for Christian initiation, and current Church members prepare for Easter by a recalling of Baptism and by works of penance, that is, prayer, fasting and almsgiving.



Even in the early Church, Lent was the season for prayerful and penitential preparation for the feast of Easter. Though the obligation of penance was originally only imposed on those who had committed public sins and crimes, by medieval times all the faithful voluntarily performed acts of penance to repair for their sins.

Ash Wednesday is the clarion call to “Repent and believe the gospel” (Mk 1:15). For the next forty days, the faithful willingly submit to fasting and self-denial in imitation of Our Lord’s forty-day fast in the desert. It is in these dark and still nights, these desert-times, that the soul experiences its greatest growth. There, in the inner arena, the soul battles the world, the flesh and the devil just as Our Lord battled Satan’s triple temptation in the desert. His battle was external, for Jesus could not sin; our battle is interior, but with a hope sustained by the knowledge of Christ’s Easter victory over sin and death.

His victory is our renewal, our “spring” — which is the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word, “*lengten*” or Lent. In this penitential season we have the opportunity to make an annual spiritual “tune-up”, a 40-day retreat with Our Lord. Have we allowed worldly cares and the “daily drama” to obscure our call to holiness? Have self-love and materialism eroded our relationship with God? Then let us renew our efforts, and through

our Lenten observance, discipline the body and master it as we “follow in the footsteps of the poor and crucified Christ” (*St. Francis of Assisi*).



Take up your cross and follow Jesus, and you will enter eternal life. If you die with Him, you will also live with Him, and if you share His suffering, you will also share His glory.

The Precepts of the Church

The precepts of the Church are positive, obligatory laws decreed by pastoral authorities for the faithful who are bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The laws command an indispensable minimum of prayer and moral effort necessary to guarantee that the faithful will grow in their love of God and neighbor.

1) You shall attend Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation.

“The first precept requires the faithful to participate in the Eucharistic celebration when the Christian community gathers together on the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord.”

2) You shall confess your sins at least once a year.

“The second precept ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which continues Baptism’s work of conversion and forgiveness.”

3) You shall humbly receive your Creator in Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.

“The third precept guarantees as a minimum the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in connection with the Paschal feasts, the origin and center of the Christian liturgy.”

4) You shall keep holy the holy days of obligation.

“The fourth precept completes the Sunday observance by participation in the principal liturgical feasts which honor the mysteries of the Lord, the Virgin Mary, and the saints.”

5) You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.

“The fifth precept ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts; they help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart.”
[The word “**asceticism**” comes from the Greek *askesis* and means exercise, effort, exploit. In short *rigorous self-denial and active self-restraint*]

6) The faithful also have the duty of providing for the material needs of the Church, each according to his abilities.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2041-2043



The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy illustrate the ways to show charity toward others.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the dead

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

- Admonish the sinner
- Instruct the ignorant (This and the next work are extremely pertinent categories today, when so many people are confused by what the Church teaches on contraception, abortion, homosexuality, etc.)
- Counsel the doubtful
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive all injuries
- Pray for the living and the dead

A Two-Fold Theme: Baptism and Penance

An explanation of the Lenten themes of Baptism and Penance and how it relates to us.



In the ancient church, the sacrament of Baptism was usually performed once a year at Easter. Only adults who were educated in the Catholic Faith were baptized. No one could be baptized until they had learned the catechism. When a person had a sufficient grasp of the Faith, he/she was put forth as a candidate, or "catechumen." Final examinations or "scrutinies" were given to these catechumens 40 days before Easter to decide who was ready to be baptized at Easter.

Lent was originally a time of final preparation for the reception of the sacrament of Baptism at the Easter Vigil.

Infant Baptism was rare until the beginning of the fifth century. But it was always regarded as valid and as an apostolic institution, as we know from Irenaeus, Origen and St. Cyprian. Sponsors at the Baptism of children are mentioned as early as A.D. 200 by Tertullian.

The focus on our baptismal vows and the participation in voluntary acts of penance during Lent, as practiced by the early Church, needs to be recaptured. Vatican II, as stated through *Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)*, urges this return to this original spirit of Lent:

The two elements, which are especially characteristic of Lent—(1) the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and (2) penance—should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepared the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer.



During Lent, penance should be not only be internal and individual, but also external and social. The practice of penance should be encouraged in ways suited to the present day, to different regions, and to individual circumstances. (109, 110)

The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar and Ceremonial of Bishops from 1969 echoes this exhortation:

Through the two-fold theme of repentance and baptism, the season of Lent disposes both the catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. Catechumens are led to the sacraments of initiation by means of the rite of election, the Scrutinies, and catechesis. The faithful, listening more intently to the word of God and devoting themselves to

prayer, are prepared through a spirit of repentance to renew their baptismal promises. Catechesis should impress upon the minds of the faithful not only the social consequences of sin but also the essence of the virtue of penance, namely, detestation of sin as an offense against God. The role of the Church in penitential practices is not to be neglected, and the people are to be exhorted to pray for sinners.

During Lent penance should not be only inward and individual but also outward and social, and should be directed toward works of mercy on behalf of our brothers and sisters.

The faithful should be urged to take a greater and more fruitful share in the Lenten liturgy and penitential services. They should be advised particularly to approach the sacrament of penance during Lent, in accordance with the law and traditions of the Church, so that they may share in the joys of Easter Sunday with purity of heart." (as taken from Daily Roman Missal copyright 1993, Fr. James Socias)



The Springtime of Lent: Action and New Life The liturgical season of Lent coincides with spring, calling to mind the new life and growth, the hope and change that should characterize this time of prayer, penance and conversion. This is the season of initiation into the grace-life of the Church. For 40 days, the Church invites us to start afresh.

...Just as Nature renews herself every spring, so during the Church's spring we are encouraged to begin anew with the catechumens. We prepare for the renewal of our baptism, we suffer with Christ for our sins, we are buried with Him so that we may also arise with Him to a new life of grace and glory. (Therese Mueller, *Our Children's Year of Grace*)

The word *Lent* is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word *lengthen* or *lencten* meaning "spring." We are "to spring" into action, to do the tasks of the season, to prepare for the new growth and graces that overflow from Easter. Spring is the most important season for a farmer, for it determines what crops he will plant. Once decided, he prepares the soil thoroughly and plants the seed carefully, hoping that the seed buried deep in the soil will produce an abundant crop.

On Palm Sunday, the very threshold of his death and Resurrection, Our Lord assured his followers that "unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. The man who loves his life loses it, while the man who hates his life in this world preserves it to life eternal. If anyone would serve me, let him follow me; where I am, there will my servant be." (Jn 12: 24-26) Let us

renew our Baptism during this Lenten spring, joyfully dying to self in order to become that fruitful grain of wheat.

The Liturgy of Lent

Explanation of the liturgy of Lent from Ash Wednesday to Passion Sunday.

Austere is the watchword for the liturgical celebrations of the Season of Lent. The Church has proclaimed a time of fasting and self-denial and she teaches by example. The priest and deacon are vested in violet, “the gloomy color of affliction and mortification”, except on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare* Sunday) when the clergy might choose the festive option of rose vestments. The sanctuary is bereft of flowers, and less ornate linens and candlesticks adorn the altar. The Gloria will not be prayed on Sunday, while the *Alleluia* will be entirely absent throughout Lent.

The use of musical instruments is limited to the accompaniment of singing. Weddings are discouraged during Lent and in fact, all celebrations should be characterized by restraint. Even the feast days of Saints are observed in a reduced manner, with the priest wearing the violet of the season rather than the red or white of the saint. By this penitential ‘fast of the senses’, Holy Mother Church prepares our hearts for a jubilant Easter renewal.



There are two exceptions to the Lenten austerity. On the Solemnities of St. Joseph (March 19) and the Annunciation (March 25) the Church sets aside her purple for white vestments, sings the Gloria and prays the Creed. (We genuflect at the “*et Incarnatus est*” on the Annunciation.) The Solemnity of St. Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church and foster father of Jesus, is a feast of highest rank - a holy day in some countries and, in some, even a civil holiday! On the Solemnity of the Annunciation, we celebrate a feast that propels us into the Christmas mystery. Jesus, the Savior who will shortly give his life for our sins, is this day conceived in the Virgin Mary’s womb. Her “*fiat*” to an angel, will undo the subjection to sin caused by Eve’s “yes” to a fallen-angel. This is indeed the most sublime moment in the history of time.

Ash Wednesday inaugurates the Lenten Season, and its readings set the guidelines for our 40-day journey. The Gospel gives us our Lenten “marching orders”: pray, fast, and give alms, not for outward show but with hearts that are converted. We receive the sacramental ashes as testimony to our desire to do penance and bear our cross after Jesus. Subsequent Scripture readings of the Lenten Liturgies give us daily lessons based on three major themes:

- 1) The first three weeks call us to repentance and to the practice of virtue, though the Church will suspend her penitential readings on *Laetare* Sunday, the midway point of the Lenten journey, to rejoice that Easter is near.

2) The second theme that threads its way through the seasonal readings is the instruction of the catechumens who are preparing for Easter-birth. The Rites of Christian Initiation span the season of Lent and culminate in the Easter Vigil Rites of Baptism and Confirmation of the Elect. The various readings put before our eyes many Old Testament characters and events that prefigure Christ and the Paschal Mystery: Christ is the new Adam, and he is the Isaac of the New Covenant; the Church is the new Ark which saves mankind through the waters of Baptism, etc.

3) The final scriptural theme unfolding in the last two weeks of Lent is the mounting opposition of the Jews toward Christ. The sixth and final Sunday of Lent (Passion or Palm Sunday) will usher in Holy Week, the greatest and holiest of all weeks. The liturgies of Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum are so rich and so important that they must be expounded in a section all its own.



Lenten Fasting Regulations

1) Abstinence on all the Fridays of Lent, and on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

No meat may be eaten on days of abstinence.

Catholics 14 years and older are bound to abstain from meat. Invalids, pregnant and nursing mothers are exempt.

2) Fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Fasting means having only one full meal to maintain one's strength. Two smaller, meatless and penitential meals are permitted according to one's needs, but they should not together equal the one full meal. Eating solid foods between meals is not permitted.

Catholics from age 18 through age 59 are bound to fast.

Again, invalids, pregnant and nursing mothers are exempt.

3) Friday Abstinence Outside of Lent.

It should be noted that Fridays throughout the year are *designated days of penance*. The *Code of Canon Law* states that Friday is a day of abstinence from meat throughout the year. The American Bishops have allowed us to choose a different form of penance rather than abstaining from meat, but there must be some form of penance, for this is the day we commemorate Christ's suffering and death. The bishops stress that "[a]mong the works of voluntary self-denial and personal penance...we give first place to abstinence from flesh meat" (*Pastoral Statement on Fasting and Abstinence*).

Why Ashes?

The significance of ashes that are imposed on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday opens up this season of penitence.

"Remember, you are dust, and unto dust you shall return."

So says the priest, deacon, or lay minister as he or she makes the sign of cross with ashes on our foreheads.

The ashes are made by burning the previous year's blessed palms. This is a vivid reminder of our mortal nature. We are bodies fashioned from dust. *"Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being"* (Gen 2:7). Our bodies were made from nothing, and will return to nothing when we die. Ashes are a symbol of this passing world, a reminder of our death.

The imposition of ashes is also a symbol of penance and sorrow for our sins. The practice of sprinkling ashes on one's head as a sign of penance was customary even in the Old Testament—in the Book of Esther, Mordecai put on sackcloth and ashes (Est 4:1); Job sat in sackcloth and ashes to repent (Job 42:6); all of Ninevah put on sackcloth and ashes to repent after Jonah's preaching (Jon 3:5-6). In early Christian centuries the imposition of ashes was only used for public sinners, but around the year 1000 A.D. popes and all faithful started to receive the ashes as a sincere and external token that we are all poor sinners.



Ashes remind us of the curse from Genesis. After Adam and Eve committed the Original Sin, God expelled them from the Garden of Eden with these words:

Cursed be the ground because of you; in toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the plants in the field. In the sweat of your brow you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, since out of it you were taken; for dust

you are and unto dust you shall return (Gen 3:17-19).

The Church repeats these words as the cross is traced on our foreheads *"Remember, you are dust and to dust you shall return."* Thus this opens a theme that is echoed throughout Lent and then decidedly pronounced during the Easter Vigil. In the *Exsultet*, the Church rejoices in this Original Sin, because it brought the Redemption: *"O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!"*

The liturgy of Ash Wednesday gives us guidelines for our 40-day journey. We pray for blessing upon our endeavors in the opening prayer at Mass:

"Lord, protect us in our struggle against evil. As we begin the discipline of Lent, make this season holy by our self-denial."

The Old Testament reading is from the Prophet Joel 2:18. Here the message is very clear: do penance, but avoid an outward show, "*Rend your hearts and not your garments.*" Our penance should not be mere hypocrisy. It is an interior change that is more important.



Why Fasting and Abstinence?

An explanation of fasting and abstinence, and the Church's attitude toward fasting and abstaining throughout the year.

The regulations of Lenten fasting and abstinence were once quite strict. Neither meat nor animal products (such as dairy and eggs) were to be eaten throughout the forty days, and only one meal per day was allowed. The restrictions were for every day of Lent, except Sundays, which were a day to relax from fasting.

We are required by Church law to observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence according to the fifth precept of the Church. Today, the regulations are not as prohibitive. In 1966, Pope Paul VI issued his Apostolic Constitution on Penance, *Pœnitementi*, which states:

The time of Lent preserves its penitential character. The days of penitence to be observed under obligation throughout the Church are all Fridays and Ash Wednesday, that is to say the first days of "Grande Quaresima" (Great Lent), according to the diversity of the rite. Their substantial observance binds gravely.

Abstinence and fasting are to be observed on Ash Wednesday or, according to local practice, on the first day of 'Great Lent' and on Good Friday.

1. The law of abstinence forbids the use of meat, but not of eggs, the products of milk or condiments made of animal fat.
2. The law of fasting allows only one full meal a day, but does not prohibit taking some food in the morning and evening, observing—as far as quantity and quality are concerned—approved local custom.

To the law of abstinence those are bound who have completed their 14th year of age. To the law of fast those of the faithful are bound who have completed their 18th year and up until the beginning of a person's 60th year. As regards those of a lesser age, pastors of souls and parents should see to it with particular care that they are educated to a true sense of penitence.

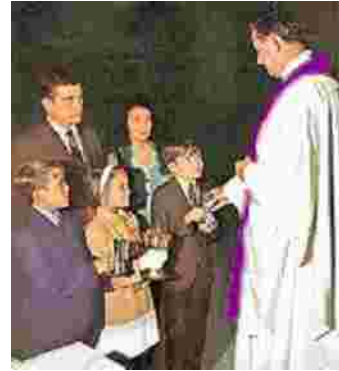
The United States Bishops issued their document *On Penance and Abstinence* the same year to give the US Catholics spiritual guidelines in implementing the directives in *Pœnitementi*:

Wherefore, we ask, urgently and prayerfully, that we, as people of God, make of the entire Lenten season a period of special penitential observance. Following the instructions of the Holy See, we declare that the obligation both to fast and to abstain from meat, an obligation observed under a more strict formality by our fathers in the faith, still binds on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. No Catholic Christian will lightly excuse himself from so hallowed an obligation on the Wednesday which solemnly opens the Lenten season and on Friday called "Good" because on that day Christ suffered in the flesh and died for our sins.

In keeping with the letter and spirit of Pope Paul's constitution *Pœnitementi*, we preserve for our dioceses the tradition of abstinence from meat on each of the Fridays of Lent, confident that no Catholic Christian will lightly hold himself excused from this penitential practice.

The US Bishops not only reinforce the fasting and abstinence guidelines, they give recommendations on how to continue this spirit of Lent throughout the 40 days:

For all other weekdays of Lent, we strongly recommend participation in daily Mass and a self-imposed observance of fasting. In the light of grave human needs which weigh on the Christian conscience in all seasons, we urge particularly during Lent, generosity to local, national, and world programs of sharing of all things needed to translate our duty to penance into a means of implementing the right of the poor to their part in our abundance. We also recommend spiritual studies, beginning with the Scriptures as well as the traditional Lenten devotions (sermons, Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary) and all the self-denial summed up in the Christian concept of "mortification."



Let us witness to our love and imitation of Christ, by special solicitude for the sick, the poor, the underprivileged, the imprisoned, the bed-ridden, the discouraged, the stranger, the lonely, and persons of other color, nationalities of background other than our own. A catalogue of not merely suggested but required good works under these headings is provided by Our Blessed Lord himself in his description of the Last Judgment (cf. Mt 25:34-40). This salutary word of the Lord is necessary for all the year, but should be heeded with double care during Lent.

Why Forty Days?

The time period of the Lenten season is 40 days. We find Old and New Testament examples for this time frame of prayer and fasting.



Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which is actually forty-six days before Easter. We say that Lent is forty days in number because the six Sundays are excluded from the rigors of Lent in order to afford the faithful a time to pause and rejuvenate, gathering new strength. Since the restructuring of the Liturgical Year after Vatican II, the Easter Triduum, which begins on Holy Thursday, is not included in the Lenten season, so the actual days of rigorous Lenten observance are approximately

forty days.

The number forty is found frequently in scripture to signify either a time of penitential preparation, or a time of punishment and affliction sent from God. The Old Testament is replete with examples of the use of forty: God punished mankind by sending a flood over the earth that lasted forty days and forty nights (Gen 7:12); the people of Ninevah repented with forty days of fasting when Jonah preached the destruction of Ninevah (Jonah 3:4); Moses and the Hebrew people wandered in the desert for forty years (Num 14:34); the Prophet Ezekiel had to lie on his right side for forty days as a figure of the siege that was to bring Jerusalem to destruction (Ez 4:6); the Prophet Elijah fasted and prayed on Mount Horeb for forty days (1 Kings 19:8); and finally, Moses fasted forty days and forty nights while on Mt. Sinai (Ex 34:28).



In the New Testament we find Our Lord fasting and praying for forty days and forty nights in the desert in preparation for the public ministry that would end in his redeeming death (Luke 5:35). He is the new Adam who overcomes the temptations of the devil and remains faithful to God; the new Israel, who reveals himself as God's Servant by his total obedience to the divine will, in contrast to those who provoked God in the desert. The Church sets aside the forty days of Lent in order that we might imitate Our Lord by our fasting, prayer, self-denial and good works, and thereby prepare our hearts for an Easter renewal. "By the solemn forty days of Lent the Church unites herself each year to the mystery of Jesus in the desert." (*Catholic Catechism*, #540).

The Triduum (The greatest and most important three days outside of time in our liturgical calendar.)

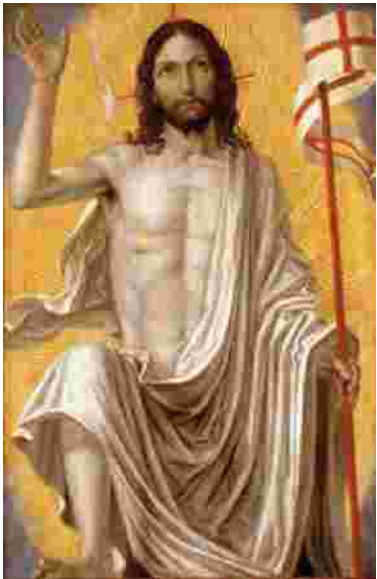
Separate Handouts that may be tacked onto the end of your packet:

The Stations of the Cross

Preparing for Holy Thursday

Preparing for Good Friday

Preparing for the Easter Vigil



This is the day the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it, Alleluia.

He is risen! Alleluia! We have reached our goal: Easter, the day we celebrate Christ's resurrection. This is the single most important feast day of the Church. In the words of the Eastern Church calendar this is "the sacred and great Sunday of the Pasch, on which we celebrate the life-giving Resurrection of our Lord and God, the Savior Jesus Christ." (Francis X. Weiser, S.J., *The Easter Book*). With Christ's death and resurrection, Christ has conquered sin and death; the gates of heaven are now open to man.

This is the Feast of Feasts, the Solemnity of Solemnities, the highest Feast of the Church, the holiest day of the year. Like the Churches, the household is decorated with numerous flowers, like lilies and hyacinths, and the table decorated with the finest linens and place settings.

Celebrating the Eight Days of Easter

Easter Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday

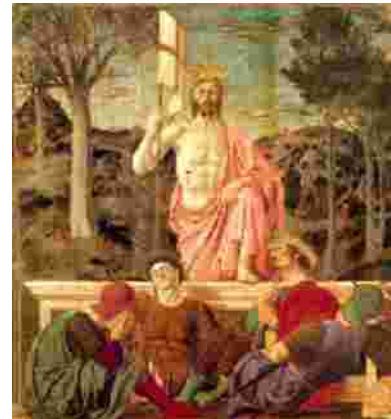
We celebrate Easter each day this week. We keep celebrating so that we might continue to enter into the meaning of the resurrection. In the early Church, the newly baptized would be at each liturgy this week, wearing their white garments. We go through our everyday lives this week conscious of the "white garments" we all wear. We are renewed as a priestly people, committed with Jesus to give our lives for others.

The resurrection stories, which we read this week, come from communities that are proclaiming the good news. The tomb is empty - Jesus' tomb and every tomb that tries to claim us in death. These are not believers who, in their deep desire, just made up the resurrection. These are people who can hardly believe what they are seeing and experiencing. They, like us now, had trouble recognizing his presence with them.

We let the prayers of this Easter week draw us into the joy. Jesus is with us. He is not dead, but alive. And, that makes all the difference in the world in how much hope and courage we have, before any struggle, any possible fear of death.

Season of Easter

The celebration of the Easter Vigil is the beginning of the season of Easter. The Vigil is the Christian feast; of new birth, new beginnings, salvation renewed, and humanity restored to the Lord. While it marks the end of the paschal fast, the end of the celebration of Holy Week, and the end of repentance and conversion for which Lent prepared the community, it is much more a beginning. It is the beginning of a new season of grace and a time of joy and thanksgiving, for Easter is not one day or one solemnity—it is a fifty-day celebration, and the fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday together comprise what the General Instruction terms "the great Sunday".



From apostolic times the feasts of Easter and Pentecost were primary, and the paschal mystery was the first celebration to have both a time before the feast of preparation and a time afterwards for the extension and completing the celebration. In the new Sacramentary and Lectionary the Sundays following Easter are no longer termed "after" for they are "of" Easter, since they do not follow a solemnity, but they are to be taken as a unity to form one season of solemnity and exaltation at the triumph of Jesus over sin and death.

In the former understanding of the season the feast of the Pentecost was set off because it had its own octave. In the reformed calendar this situation is remedied for the solemnity of the Ascension does not end the season of Easter; it is one special day within an entire special season. The Easter candle is no longer extinguished on the Ascension for it should remain in prominence in the sanctuary until Pentecost and then be placed in the baptistery. It can be used at funerals and at the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. The feast of Pentecost now concludes the Easter season and the week between Ascension and Pentecost should be a time of preparation and expectation for the coming of the Spirit.

The major principle of the calendar reform called for at the Vatican Council—that the paschal mystery be the center of the Christian year—is made obvious in the new Sacramentary because of the emphasis on Easter as the great feast of fifty days. The Easter candle, lighted for the first time from the new fire of the Easter Vigil, is placed in a prominent place in the sanctuary between Easter and Pentecost and should be lighted for all liturgical services in this season and should be incensed whenever incense is used in the fifty days.

The color of the vesture for the season is white, and the cloth or frontal for the altar should be white as well. Liturgical hangings or banners should be made of white and contrasting colors and should reflect the season of new life, fulfillment, rejoicing and joy at the season.

All penitential elements in the Eucharist should be eliminated in this season of sung Alleluias, water, candles and lights.

We end the Easter Season with Pentecost



"Through the Holy Spirit we are restored to paradise, led back to the Kingdom of heaven, and adopted as children, given confidence to call God "Father" and to share in Christ's grace, called children of light and given a share in eternal glory."

- St. Basil, De Spiritu Sancto

Pentecost is the great festival that marks the birth of the Christian church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost means "fiftieth day" and is celebrated fifty days after Easter.

What Happened on Pentecost?

Ten days after Jesus ascended into heaven, the twelve apostles, Jesus' mother and family, and many other of His disciples gathered together in Jerusalem for the Jewish harvest festival that was celebrated on the fiftieth day of Passover. While they were indoors praying, a sound like that of a rushing wind filled the house and tongues of fire descended and rested over each of their heads. This was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on human flesh promised by God through the prophet Joel (**Joel 2:28-29**). The disciples were suddenly empowered to proclaim the gospel of the risen Christ. They went out into the streets of Jerusalem and began preaching to the crowds gathered for the festival. Not only did the disciples preach with boldness and vigor, but by a miracle of the Holy Spirit they spoke in the native languages of the people present, many who had come from all corners of the Roman Empire. This created a sensation. The apostle Peter seized the moment and addressed the crowd, preaching to them about Jesus' death and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins. The result was that about three thousand converts were baptized that day. (You can read the Biblical account of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-41).



What is the liturgical color for Pentecost?

Red is the liturgical color for this day. Red recalls the tongues of flame in which the Holy Spirit descended on the first Pentecost. The color red also reminds us of the blood of the martyrs. These are the believers of every generation who by the power of the Holy Spirit hold firm to the true faith even at the cost of their lives.

Why is Pentecost sometimes called “Whitsunday”?

A tradition of some churches in ancient times was to baptize adult converts to the faith on Pentecost. The newly baptized catechumens would wear white robes on that day, so Pentecost was often called "Whitsunday" or "White Sunday" after these white baptismal garments. Many Christian calendars, liturgies, and hymnals (particularly those from the Episcopal/Anglican tradition) still use this term.

Why do we celebrate Pentecost?

There are three "mega-festivals" commemorated in the Christian calendar. The first two, Christmas and Easter, are well known to both believers and non-believers. But it's

possible that even liturgical Christians may not be as familiar with the third, the festival of Pentecost. God the Father's wonderful Christmas gift of His one and only Son, and Christ's Easter triumph over the power of sin, death, and the devil would be of no benefit to us if the Holy Spirit did not give us the gift of saving faith. Through the Word and Sacraments, the Holy Spirit gives us the power to believe and trust in Christ as our Savior. This precious gift of faith in the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ is the reason Pentecost is the third "mega-festival" of the church and why we celebrate it with such joy and thanksgiving.

What is the season after Pentecost?

Because Pentecost is the day that God poured out His Holy Spirit on Christ's disciples, the Season after Pentecost is centered on sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit in the day-to-day life of the Christian. This is reflected in the liturgical color for this season: green, the color of life and growth. Through the gift of faith that comes only from the Holy Spirit, Christians are enabled to trust in Christ and proclaim Him in their daily lives by service to their neighbors. The season after Pentecost is the longest season of the church year -- it lasts from Trinity Sunday until the first Sunday of Advent. This is the non-festival portion of the liturgical calendar during which the church stresses vocation, evangelism, missions, stewardship, almsgiving, and other works of mercy and charity as ways in which Christ empowers us by His grace to share the Gospel with others.

The Liturgical (Church) Year



Liturgical Years

For Sundays and other special days throughout the church year, there are three sets of readings assigned for the day. These readings are assigned to Liturgical Years A, B, and C. Years which are evenly divisible by 3 are assigned year C, such as 1995. Year A follows year C, Year B follows Year A, and Year C follows Year B.

Bear in mind that Liturgical Years start on the first Sunday of Advent of the previous year. Since we just celebrated the first Sunday of Advent on December 2, 2007, we began Liturgical Year A on that Sunday.

Liturgical Cycles

For weekdays in ordinary time and other special days throughout the church year, there are two sets of readings for the day. These readings are assigned to Liturgical Cycles I and II. Odd years are assigned cycle I, and even years are assigned cycle II.

Bear in mind that Liturgical Cycles start on the first Sunday of Advent of the previous year. Since we just celebrated the first Sunday of Advent on December 2, 2007, we began Liturgical Cycle II on that Sunday.

Seasons of the Liturgical Year

The seasons of the liturgical year begin with **Advent**, a time of preparation for the **Christmas** season. The **Christmas** season celebrates the birth of Jesus (on December 25) and continues until the Baptism of Our Lord. This is followed by the first of two periods of **Ordinary Time**, which continues until Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season of **Lent**, a time of penitence leading to the **Paschal Triduum** after the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. The **Triduum** is the three days before **Easter**. Easter Sunday marks the start of the **Easter** season, which continues as a time of celebration until Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost Sunday marks the start of the second period of **Ordinary Time**, which continues until the **Advent** season begins again.

Commons

For many celebrations throughout the year, readings are assigned from various **Commons**. Commons are groups of readings appropriate for a type of celebration. These readings include First Readings, Responsorial Psalms, and Gospel Readings. One reading may be selected from each group for use during the Mass.

Often, more than one type of Common is appropriate for a celebration. In these cases, readings may come from any of the appropriate commons. Alternately, the readings from the regular liturgical year or cycle for the current day (the proper of the Season) can normally be used.

Easter is a special season for Commons. During Easter, a separate set of readings is assigned for the First Readings.

There are also subcategories within the Commons. These are readings, which are more appropriate for some celebrations than others. An example of this is the subcategory of Popes within the Common of Pastors.

There are seven Commons for the liturgy, as follows:

Common for the Dedication of a Church

Outside Easter

During Easter

Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Outside Easter

During Easter

Common of Martyrs

Outside Easter

During Easter

Common of Pastors

Outside Easter

During Easter

Common of Doctors of the Church

Outside Easter

During Easter

Common of Virgins

Outside Easter

During Easter

Common of Holy Men and Women (Common of Saints)

Outside Easter

During Easter

Proper

Many celebrations throughout the year have specific readings assigned. These readings are called the **Proper** of the celebration. These readings are usually chosen over the Commons, as they are more appropriate for the specific Celebration.

Additionally, each day of the year has a set of readings appropriate for the day and season. These readings are called the **Proper of the Season**.

The Rosary

The Rosary is a series of prayers specifically prepared to be used in personal devotion. That is, the Rosary can be prayed alone or in without the guidance of a spiritual leader. This differs from a mass, which is meant to be led by a celebrant.

The Rosary has several prayers that are constant, and the Mysteries, which can vary. Prior to October 16, 2002, there were three sets of Mysteries. On October 16, 2002, Pope John Paul II added a fourth set. Although there is no requirement to do so, most people follow the recommended schedule of the Mysteries, which lists a different set of Mysteries for each day.

The Mysteries of the Rosary are as follows:

The Joyful Mysteries

The Annunciation; The Visitation; The Birth of Jesus; The Presentation; The Finding in the Temple

These are the Mysteries of Jesus' birth and early life.

The Luminous Mysteries (*added October 16, 2002*)

The Baptism; The Wedding at Cana; The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God; The Transfiguration; The Institution of the Eucharist

These are the Mysteries of Christ's priesthood.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

The Agony in the Garden; The Scourging at the Pillar; The Crowning with Thorns; The Bearing of the Cross; The Crucifixion

These are the Mysteries of Christ's suffering and death.

The Glorious Mysteries

The Resurrection; The Ascension; The Descent of the Holy Spirit; The Assumption; The Coronation

These are the Mysteries of Christ's victory over death and Mary's special place as the Holy Mother.

Where did he get that?

What Is Ordinary Time?

Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #10
“Nevertheless, the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.”

Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #102
“ Recalling thus the mysteries of Redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present at all times, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold of them and become filled with saving grace.”

Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* #39
“Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification’ (1 Thes 4:3; Eph 1:4).”

Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #14, “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as “as chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people” (Pet. 2:9) , is their right and duty by reason of their Baptism.

Extract from the address of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Plenary Meeting of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, p. 13, *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*; “...the Liturgy is the center of the Church’s life and cannot be substituted by, or placed on a par with any other form of religious expression. Moreover, it is important to reaffirm that popular religiosity, even if not always evident, naturally culminates in the celebration of the Liturgy towards which it should ideally be oriented.”

Dies Domini, #76 "But there is another rhythm which soon established itself: the annual liturgical cycle. Human psychology in fact desires the celebration of anniversaries, associating the return of dates and seasons with the remembrance of past events."

Dies Domini, #37 "As the Church journeys through time, the reference to Christ's resurrection and the weekly recurrence of this solemn memorial help to remind us of the



pilgrim and eschatological character of the People of God. Sunday after Sunday the Church moves toward the final "Lord's Day," that Sunday which knows no end. The expectation of Christ's coming is inscribed in the very mystery of the Church and is evidenced in every Eucharistic celebration. But, with its specific remembrance of the glory of the Risen Christ, the Lord's Day recalls with greater intensity the future glory of this "return". This makes Sunday the day on which the Church, showing forth more clearly her identity as "Bride," anticipates in some sense the eschatological reality of the heavenly Jerusalem. Gathering her children into the Eucharistic assembly and teaching them to wait for the "divine Bridegroom," she engages in a kind of "exercise of desire," receiving a foretaste of the joy of the new heavens and new earth, when the holy city, the new Jerusalem, will come down from God, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband: (Rev 21:2)."

Scripture and the Liturgy

Sacrosanctum Concillium #108, "The minds of the faithful must be directed primarily toward the feasts of the Lord whereby the mysteries of salvation are celebrated in the course of the year. Therefore, the proper of the time shall be given the preference which is its due over the feasts of the saints, so that the entire cycle of the mysteries of salvation may be suitably recalled.

Sacrosanctum Concillium #51 and #24

Feast Days

Dies Domini, #78

The Easter Mystery Celebrated in Ordinary Time

Sacrosanctum Concillium, #106, "By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the Paschal Mystery every eighth day; with good reason this, then bears the name of the Lord's day or Sunday. For on this day Christ's faithful are bound to come together into one place so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope."

Easter Vigil Liturgy, Blessing of the Paschal Candle.

Web sites with material I referenced or copied material from:

Sacrosanctum Concilium

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

Constitution on Penance, *Pœnitentini*

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_p-vi_apc_19660217_pœnitentini_en.html

Lumen Gentium

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

Dies Domini

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini_en.html

Catholic Culture

<http://www.catholicculture.org/liturgicalyear/>

Very extensive use made of this resource (much of the material is copied from here)

Celebrating Easter

<http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/easterweek.html>

Pentecost

<http://www.stpaulskingsville.org/pentecost.htm>

Liturgical Years, Cycles, in short all of pages 30 – 32.

<http://www.easterbrooks.com/personal/calendar/rules.html>