

Ask Fr James

Explain the Catholic Church's Liturgical calendar

In the Catholic Church, the Liturgical calendar runs from First Sunday of Advent to the 34th Sunday in Ordinary time which is also the Solemnity of Christ the King. The whole year is divided into seasons which are marked by appropriate readings and colours. The calendar is a three year cycle of year A, B and C. If one were to attend all the Masses throughout the three years, they would have heard all of the Holy Bible read in church.

The seasons of the liturgical year are as follows:

ADVENT - consisting of the four Sundays preceding Christmas - (Purple colour - Royalty of Christ)

CHRISTMASTIDE - begins on Christmas Day and lasts until January 5 - (White colour)

EPIPHANY - January 6 or a few days after New Year's Day - White colour

LENT - Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts forty days, not counting Sundays (Purple/Violet - Penance)

HOLY WEEK: PALM SUNDAY - TRIDUUM - HOLY THURSDAY, GOOD FRIDAY, HOLY SATURDAY - the week preceding Easter Sunday - (Red colour - Palm Sunday and Passion of Christ)

EASTER - (White colour) till **ASCENSION - PENTECOST - HOLY TRINITY SUNDAY**. The Eastertide season lasts until Pentecost, fifty days after Easter.

CHRIST THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE or the 34th Sunday of the Year.

As we could see above, Advent is a preparation for Christmas and Lent is a preparation for Easter. In between all these major celebrations is the Ordinary Time when the liturgical colour is green. The readings and the liturgical celebrations all through the year are arranged from Advent which tell the story of God's plan to save the world, through the Christmas season which tells the story of how God sent His Son Jesus Christ to be born into the world and all that Jesus did throughout his earthly life in the Ordinary time and how he tried to lead us back to God, culminating in his passion, death and resurrection at Easter. After his resurrection and Ascension, his Apostles, through their missionary enterprise help spread the Gospel all over the world. On the Feast of Christ the King we celebrate how Christ established a kingdom of a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people to be his very own and to proclaim the wonderful deeds and of the people who called out of darkness into God's marvellous light (1 Peter 2:9).