

THE LITURGICAL YEAR

The liturgical calendar of the Catholic Church consists of a three-yearly Sunday cycle 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.

The liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent and runs through to the Solemnity of Christ the King. It is also when the church moves from one lectionary cycle (Year A, B or C) to the next. We are now in Year C; the previous liturgical year was Year B.

For instance, Year A fell in 2011, 2014, etc; Year B in 2012, 2015, etc; Year C in 2010, 2013, etc.

The lectionary follows a Sunday and Weekday Cycle.

Weekdays in Ordinary Time follow a two-year cycle numbered I and II. Year I is read in odd number years; Year II in even ones.

These cycles came out of the Second Vatican Council, which ordered a change in the Sunday readings at Mass so that Catholics would become more familiar with the Bible.

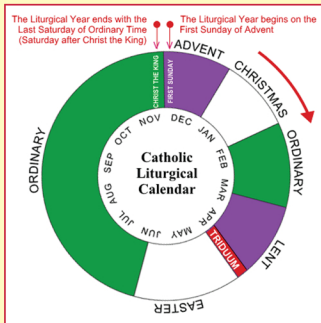
Broadly speaking, each liturgical year is marked by various seasons beginning with Advent, from the first Sunday of Advent until Dec 24. This is followed by Christmas, from Dec 25 to the Baptism of the Lord, which fell on Jan 10 this year (2016) (Sunday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany).

Then follows a period of Ordinary Time, from the Monday following the Baptism of the Lord to the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday (Feb 10).

Next comes Lent, from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper on the evening of Holy Thursday. Then follows the Easter Triduum.

Easter begins with celebration of the Easter Vigil on Easter Sunday and concludes 50 days later with Pentecost Sunday. Then there is another period of Ordinary Time, from the Monday following Pentecost Sunday until the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent. And a new liturgical cycle then begins again.

Graphic of a typical liturgical year, courtesy of Belleville Catholic Church, Cape Town, South Africa.



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To be a
**worshipping,
welcoming & caring** community

成为一个敬拜、欢融与关怀的团体

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JANUARY 2016

Message from Parish Priest

In this Year of Mercy, the faithful are called to greater lives of love and charity, of faith and hope, both internally and externally. In order to echo the word of God and perform both spiritual and corporal works of mercy, the faithful must be drawn into a compelling love of Christ. The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful should not be present as strangers or silent spectators but on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers, they should take part in the sacred actions consciously, with devotion and full collaboration.

Liturgy is the source of the Church's prayer and action and the summit by which our lives and all our ministers ascend to the Father. Our Catholic faith is rich with many sacred actions, signs, symbols, rites, rituals, and prayers. It is in this light that our SIC parish is coming out with a monthly newsletter to explain elements of our rich Catholic heritage, to assist parishioners to deepen their knowledge and understanding of all our liturgical celebrations and to increase reverence and appreciation for the sacred, especially the Mass, feasts and the sacraments.

The monthly newsletter, among others, would cover topics such as "Prayers and Praying in Community", "Various topics on Mass", "Sacred Actions", "Role of Song & Music", "Role and Participation of the Ministers and the Faithful", "The Sacraments", etc. This newsletter is another avenue, together with the church website (www.stignatius.org) and audio/non-audio presentation before or during Mass, to encourage the full, conscious and active participation of the congregation both in body and mind during Mass and to move the faithful to be one in holiness.

Many of you would have sadly noticed that in our churches these days, there is a concerning decline in the reverence for the sacred. Reverence is that virtue which inclines a person to show honour and respect primarily to God, in the person of Jesus Christ, in the august sacrifice and sacrament of the Holy Eucharist which is the source and summit of our Catholic faith and life. In order to offer reverence to the Holy Eucharist, every faithful needs proper initiation into the faith and continued growth in it. It is also important that we show reverence when celebrating Mass. It is sad to see people coming late, reading newspapers, playing with their phones, talking freely inside the church during Mass and making a quick exit as soon as the final blessing is given, as if they were leaving a sports stadium or theatre.

I would now like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the Liturgical Committee for its efforts and commitment in accepting the task of addressing this very important elements of liturgy and our role in it. It is my hope that this newsletter will be a vehicle to enhance parishioners' awareness in our mission in building our parish with the consistent teachings of the universal church.

Let us pray to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Eucharistic Lord, to obtain for us strong faith in the sacrifice and sacrament of the Holy Eucharist which will unfailingly produce the flowers of reverence, adoration and love and will influence our entire Christian life.

God bless you all.

Fr. Lucas Ng
Parish Priest — St. Ignatius Church

Holy Year of Mercy

8 December 2015, Solemnity of Immaculate Conception - 20 November 2016, Solemnity of Christ the King



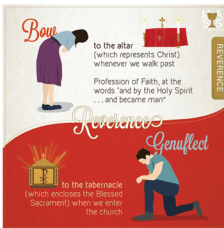
"We entrust the year to the Mother of Mercy, so that She may turn towards us Her gaze and watch over our path."

- Pope Francis -

Mass Preparation, Reverence and Etiquette

Sometimes attending Mass and carrying out certain rituals has become just a rushed routine that we have no awareness of their purpose. In reality, our Catholic Mass is so full of tradition, grace, richness, beauty and splendor that we should pause and appreciate this privilege we have, this gift of the Mass that our Creator have bestowed on us. Our every action will no longer be meaningless and instead, become outward signs of our inner grace.

1. Fast before Mass. It is Church law that we fast for at least an hour before receiving Holy Communion. Water and medicine may be consumed.
2. Dress well but modestly and appropriately. We believe that God the King of All Creation comes down to meet us at every Mass.
3. Come punctually. Getting to Mass early allows you to pray and prepare yourself better for Mass. It cuts out all the anxiety of getting a parking lot and seats. Those who come in time only for the Liturgy of the Eucharist should not receive Holy Communion.
4. Cross yourself with Holy Water on entering the church. This is a reminder of our Baptism, which made us members of Christ's Church.
5. When we enter and leave Church, genuflect towards the Tabernacle. Christ is present for our sake. By allowing our right knee to hit the floor, we acknowledge He is our Lord and God. If someone is physically unable to genuflect, then a bow is sufficient. During Mass, if you pass in front of the altar or tabernacle, bow reverently.
6. No food and drink should be consumed in Church. The exception is water for those who are ill and for young children. Bringing a snack into church even for children is not encouraged, because we want to set the church apart as a place of prayer and reflection as well as focus on the real meal, which is the Eucharist.
7. Cell phones should not be used in Mass for calls or texting. If there are real emergencies, please head out of church to do so. However, the use of phones or tablets for readings or prayers is acceptable.
8. Please be quiet while in church. Once you enter the sanctuary — it is not the time or place to chat with those around you. Remember that you are at Mass to meet Christ and your conversation might be disturbing others who are praying.
9. Take noisy, fidgety or crying children to the comfort room. It is considerate to keep them from disturbing others. On the other hand, we also remember that "... the faint sounds of a baby crying or a toddler talking are a hymn to the future" so be tolerant.
10. Don't read the bulletin/Herald during Mass. Imagine if you invited a guest to your house and before dinner (or during) they decided to read a magazine instead of talking to you. That is what is happening in God's house when you read the bulletin.
11. Respect boundaries others may have. You might want to hold hands to pray, they may not. Do not make any unnecessary judgment just because they worship differently.
12. Bow before receiving Holy Communion. Show your respect to God with a bow of the head. This is an ancient practice that has continued until this day. Then you recite audibly with 'Amen' when receiving the Body of Christ. This single word means more than simply "I believe"; it is an act of the will expressing God's trustworthiness and my desire to believe, trust and love Him; a powerful declaration of our faith in the true Presence of Christ, the priesthood and the communion of the Church.
13. Do not leave early, stay for the final blessing and hymn. Rushing out when Mass is ended shows a total lack of respect for the priest who is acting the person of Jesus (in persona Christi Capitis — CCC 1548).
14. Leave quietly. You may talk to your friends outside of the main sanctuary of the church so you won't disturb others who want to stay and pray.



The Importance of Sunday Mass Participation

Jesus' Eager Desire – Do This in Remembrance of Me

The Thanksgiving meal of our Catholic family occurs every Sunday. The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word *εὐχαριστία* (eucharistia), which literally means "thanksgiving." Jesus Himself instituted this family tradition on the night before He died. When He gathered the disciples in the Upper Room for the Last Supper, He told them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover meal with you." He taught them the importance of humble service through washing their feet. Then He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and through His divine power transformed it into His own body, blood, soul and divinity. He told them, "Whoever eats this bread and drinks this blood will have eternal life." He then instructed them to, "Do this in memory of me." Since that day almost 2,000 years ago, the Church has carried out Jesus' command.

Jesus' eager desire is to celebrate this thanksgiving meal with every one of us each Sunday. We pray in many good and helpful ways but none equals the prayer that is the Sunday Mass. It is the one that Jesus inspired us to do in His memory.

1. We desire to respond to God's love

The Mass is the best place to thank God for the gifts besides Himself that He gives us — especially life, family, friends, faith and love.

2. We desire to encounter Christ in the most profound way possible

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy explains that Christ is present to us in four ways during the celebration of Mass: (1) in the community celebrating; (2) in the Word proclaimed; (3) in the priest presiding; and (4) in the Eucharist.

3. We desire to gather and pray with our parish family

The celebration of Mass, like life, has vertical and horizontal dimensions. This parallels the great commandment, which instructs us to love God and then to love our neighbors as ourselves.

4. We desire to strengthen our particular family

Attending and praying at the Sunday Mass together will strengthen your family to confront the various challenges today that often tear families apart.

5. We desire to witness to our faith and provide a living legacy to our children and grandchildren

Pope Benedict states, Sunday is not just a suspension of ordinary activities, but a time when "Christians discover the Eucharistic form that their lives are meant to have."

The way we celebrate Sunday will affect the way we live the remainder of the week and is a mark of Christian identity from generation to generation.

6. We desire to be transformed by Christ's sacramental grace

The Eucharist is not just something symbolic. The true Presence of Christ gives us strength to face life's challenges and to be mindful of God's love for us.

7. We desire to participate in Jesus' victory over death and the salvation of the world

Each Sunday Mass is a "little Easter" because it marks the Resurrection — Jesus' victory over death. This victory is the most significant one in world history because it opens up the possibility of everlasting life. Consider for a moment the fact that God loved each of us so much that He became incarnate — a human being — so that He could suffer death on a cross as a sacrifice for our sins.

8. We desire a foretaste of Heaven

Pope John Paul II said:

The Eucharist is a ... foretaste of the fullness of joy promised by Christ; it is in some way the anticipation of heaven, the 'pledge of future glory.' ... In the Eucharist we also receive the pledge of our bodily resurrection at the end of the world: He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."



9. We desire to follow God's loving guidance and to commit to deepening our relationship with God

The Church calls every one of us to make a commitment to attend Sunday Mass. In doing so, we promise to do our part to keep up our relationship with Christ and with our Church family — the Body of Christ. Christ's relationship to the Church is described in Sacred Scripture as that of a Bridegroom with His Bride. His self-sacrificing love is something the Church seeks to reciprocate. It is a model of the love imagine if a wife, celebrating an anniversary dinner with her husband, told him that she accepted the dinner invitation only to "fulfill an obligation." How would you feel to be on the receiving end of that message? Likewise we are at Mass in response to a commitment of love, not just to fulfill an obligation. Christ eagerly desires to meet us in the Mass and to be present with us at all times. He hopes that we reciprocate His eager desire and make it a personal commitment each week of love and gratitude.

1. Adapted from *The Importance of Sunday Mass Participation* by Cardinal Seán Patrick O'Malley, OFM Cap. Full article at <http://www.bostoncatholic.org/sundaymassletter.aspx>
2. Graphics from <https://www.facebook.com/massinfographics/>