

Michael J. Lukowski

Fr. Willis and Erin McGeever

MFP Class of 2022-Liturgy and the Sacraments

6Mar2021

The Liturgical Year of the Roman Catholic Church

The liturgical year of the modern roman rite, established by the Second Vatican Council is based on the life of Christ and the institution of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth. It begins on the first Sunday of Advent which is the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The Christmas season begins with the Christmas vigil and ends with the Baptism of the Lord which is the first Sunday after Jan 6, the Feast of the Epiphany (manifestation of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the World). Following the Christmas season are 4-8 weeks of ordinary time. The variation in this first span of Ordinary Time is due to when Easter is celebrated (the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox). Lent follows this first Ordinary Time and begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday a span of 6 weeks. Lent is followed by the Sacred Paschal Triduum which are the three holiest days of the Church's year. Beginning with Easter Sunday (the most important day in Christianity) and ending 50 days later with Pentecost Sunday is the Easter Season. The second span of Ordinary Time then fills the remainder of the liturgical calendar until the first Sunday of Advent. This defines the chronos of the liturgical calendar.

The Kairos (time for conversion) is the most important aspect of the calendar. In order to expand the exposure of the community to the Holy Bible, Vatican II established three lectionary cycles of one year each. Cycle A focuses on the Gospels of Matthew, cycle B on those of Mark and cycle C on Luke's gospels. Advent is a time of penitent preparation for the birth of Christ. It is a joyful time of expectation. Christmas celebrates the coming of God

into the world in the person of the Word, the incarnate Lord. Lent is a time of penance and deep reflection when the community is directed to deepen their communal and individual relationship with God through Jesus. The Sacred Paschal Triduum celebrates the sacrifice of Jesus and the beginning of the New Covenant which will last until the end of time. The Easter Season is a joyful time which celebrates the time the resurrected Lord spent on earth and ending with the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world to sustain the Church until the end of time. The two spans of Ordinary Time are an instruction period where the faithful consider the teachings and works of Christ in earth.