

Ordinary Time

In the liturgy of the post-Vatican II Roman Rite, **Ordinary Time** is that part of the Christian liturgical year outside of Advent, Christmastide, Lent, the Easter Triduum, and Eastertide,^[1] and is divided into two periods: that between Christmastide and Lent, and that between Eastertide and Advent. In this season the Church celebrates the public ministry of Jesus from his Baptism of Jesus to the time of his final suffering and death.

The word "ordinary" as used here comes from the ordinal numerals by which the weeks are identified or counted, from the 1st week of Ordinary Time in January to the 34th week that begins toward the end of November; Ordinary Time is interrupted by Lent and Eastertide.^[2]

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Roman Rite

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which ordinarily occurs on the Sunday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (6 January),^[3] is the First Sunday in Ordinary Time. It closes the Season of Christmas and opens the Season of Ordinary Time. The weekdays that follow the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord are reckoned as belonging to the first week of Ordinary Time and the following Sunday as the Second Sunday of Ordinary Time.

Ordinary Time continues until the Tuesday (varying between the 4th and 9th week of Ordinary Time) that immediately precedes Ash Wednesday. The date of the latter, which is on the 40th day (excluding Sundays) before Easter Sunday falls between 4 February and 10 March (inclusive). The date for Easter Sunday is determined by the Paschal full moon.

Ordinary Time is then interrupted by Lent and Eastertide and resumes on the Monday after the Solemnity of Pentecost, the 50th day of Eastertide (10 May to 13 June). It concludes on the Saturday afternoon before the first Sunday of Advent (27 November to 3 December). The second period of Ordinary Time can thus sometimes last as much as seven months.

The decision to treat the whole of Ordinary Time as a unit, calling it in Latin *Tempus per annum* (which literally means "the through-the-year season"), led to abandonment of the previous terminology, whereby the Sundays of the first period were called Sundays after Epiphany and those of the second period Sundays after Pentecost. The weeks, rather than the Sundays alone, are spoken of, in view of the assigning of specific Scripture readings at Mass not only to the Sundays of Ordinary Time but also to the weekdays.

Taken thus as a unit, Ordinary Time is the longest season of the liturgical year,^[4] and is composed of 33 or 34 complete or partial weeks. In about 2 years out of 3, Ordinary Time comprises only 33 weeks,^{[5][6]} so in those years one week is skipped when resuming Ordinary Time after Pentecost Sunday: for example, in 2011, the Sunday before Ash Wednesday was the 9th Sunday in Ordinary Time, but the day after Pentecost Sunday was Monday of the 11th Week of Ordinary Time.

The liturgical color assigned to Ordinary Time Sundays and weekdays, is green.

Solemnities and feasts on Ordinary Time Sundays

The celebration of an Ordinary Time weekday gives way to that of any solemnity, feast, or obligatory memorial that falls on the same day, and may optionally be replaced by that of a non-obligatory memorial or of any saint mentioned in the Roman Martyrology for that day.

The liturgy of a solemnity or a feast of the Lord that falls on an Ordinary Time Sunday during Ordinary Time replaces that of the Sunday.

The solemnities and feasts of the Lord inscribed in the General Roman Calendar of the Catholic Church are:^[7]

- Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on 2 February (liturgical color: white)
- Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity on the Sunday immediately after Pentecost (liturgical color: white)
- Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ on Thursday or (if not a holyday of obligation) Sunday after Trinity Sunday (liturgical color: white)
- Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on Friday following the second Sunday after Pentecost (liturgical color: white)
- Solemnity of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist on 24 June (liturgical color: white)
- Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul on 29 June (liturgical color: red)
- Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord on 6 August (liturgical color: white)
- Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on 15 August (liturgical color: white)
- Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on 14 September (liturgical color: red)
- Solemnity of All Saints on 1 November (liturgical color: white)
- Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran in Rome on 9 November (liturgical color: white).
- Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King of the Universe falls on what would otherwise be the last Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar also lists as solemnities (with precedence over Sundays in Ordinary Time) a number of celebrations whose dates vary from place to place and from one church to another even within the same parish:

- The Solemnity of the principal patron of the place, city or state
- The Solemnity of the dedication and the anniversary of the dedication of one's own church
- The Solemnity of the Title of one's own church
- The Solemnity either of the Title or of the Founder or of the principal Patron of an Order or Congregation.

Christmas, Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, and Feast of the Baptism of the Lord fall in Christmastide, not Ordinary Time. Likewise, the Solemnity of Pentecost is the last day of Easter tide.

In addition, if a solemnity or feast that is "agreeable to the devotion of the faithful" occurs during the week, the Mass of that celebration may, for the pastoral good of the people, be used on a Sunday of Ordinary Time at all celebrations of Mass at which they are present, provided that it outranks Ordinary Time Sundays.^[8]

Revised Common Lectionary usage

Following the lead of the liturgical reforms of the Roman Rite, many Protestant churches also adopted the concept of Ordinary Time alongside the Revised Common Lectionary, which applies the term "Ordinary Time" to the period between Pentecost and Advent. However, use of the term "Ordinary Time" is not common.

Those that have adopted the Revised Common Lectionary include churches of the Anglican Communion, Methodist Churches, Lutheran Churches, Old Catholic Churches and Reformed Churches.^[9]

Some Protestant denominations set off a time at the end of Ordinary Time known as Kingdomtide or Season of End Times. This period can range anywhere from only the three Sundays prior to Christ the King (as in the Wisconsin Synod Lutheran) to 13 or 14 weeks (most notably in the United Methodist Church). The Church of England observes this time between All Saints and Advent Sunday.

In some traditions, what in the Roman Rite is the first period of Ordinary Time is called Epiphanytide (beginning on Epiphany Day in the Anglican Communion and Methodist churches)^[10] and from Trinity Sunday to Advent is called Trinitytide.^[11] In the Church of England, Sundays during "Ordinary Time" in this narrower sense are called "Sundays after Trinity", except the final four, which are termed "Sundays before Advent". In the Episcopal Church (United States), it is normal to refer to Sundays after Epiphany and Sundays after Pentecost (not Trinity).

The total number of Sundays varies according to the date of Easter and can range anything from 18 to 23. When there are 23, the Collect and Post-Communion for the 22nd Sunday are taken from the provision for the Third Sunday before Lent.

See also

- General Roman Calendar
- Liturgical year

Notes

1. Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, 43 (<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Info/GNLY.pdf>)
2. *What Ordinary Time Means in the Catholic Church* (<https://www.learnreligions.com/ordinary-time-in-the-catholic-church-542442>), 2018, retrieved 4 January 2020, "Ordinary Time is called "ordinary" not because it is common but simply because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered."
3. The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord ordinarily occurs on the Sunday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (6 January) in places where the latter is a holy day of obligation; where it is not a holy day of obligation, it is celebrated on the Sunday after the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (1 January), and if this Sunday falls on 7 or 8 January, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is moved to the following day, the second Monday of the year.
4. "Ordinary Time" (http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/overviews/seasons/ordinary_time/ordinary1.cfm), Catholic Culture website.

5. "Lectionary Calendar and Movable Feasts" (<http://catholic-resources.org/Lectionary/Calendar.htm>). *catholic-resources.org*. Retrieved 5 May 2020.
6. There are 34 weeks of Ordinary Time in years with dominical letters **A** or **g** or some combination containing **A** or **g**, i.e., **Ag**, **bA**, or **gf**. All other years have 33 weeks of Ordinary Time, with the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th or 10th week dropped from the calendar that year.
7. Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar: Table of liturgical days according to their order of precedence, p. 13 (<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Info/GNLY.pdf>)
8. Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, 58 (<https://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Info/GNLY.pdf>)
9. Holmes, Stephen Mark (1 October 2012). *The Fathers on the Sunday Gospels*. Liturgical Press. p. 22. ISBN 9780814635100. "The *Revised Common Lectionary* has been subsequently adopted by many English-speaking Protestant denominations such as the Church of Scotland and various Lutheran and Reformed churches. It has also been adopted by some Old Catholic churches and is widely used throughout the Anglican Communion, for example by the Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales, the Episcopal Church (USA) and the Anglican churches of Canada, Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Polynesia, Melanesia, the West Indies, Central Africa, and Southern Africa. In the Church of England the two-year Sunday Lectionary of the *Alternative Service Book 1980* was replaced in 2000 by an adapted version of the *Revised Common Lectionary* in *Common Worship*."
10. "Epiphany" (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/holydays/epiphany.shtml>). BBC Online. 7 October 2011. Retrieved 5 June 2016. "For many Protestant church traditions, the season of Epiphany extends from 6 January until Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent leading to Easter."
11. "Trinitytide" (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Trinitytide>). Merriam-Webster. 5 June 2016. Retrieved 5 June 2016. "Definition of Trinitytide: the season of the church year between Trinity Sunday and Advent"

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