

## The Liturgical Year –The Seasons and Colors of the Liturgy – Part I

Ever wonder why Father changes from purple to pink during Lent? Why do we wear so much green throughout the year? Should we wear Red on Good Friday and not Black? These are just a sampling of the multitude of questions that have and will arise when Catholics ask questions about the Mass and its general format. However, many are unsure of why the Church requires certain colors to be worn during certain times of the year or how the liturgical cycle actually unfolds throughout the year. Here's a guide that can hopefully help fill in some of the gaps on things you already know (References from book entitled "The Church at Prayer: Volume IV – The Liturgy and Time by A.G. Martimort).

### *Lent* *(Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday evening)*

The origins of Lent grew from a forty day fast that was independent of Easter which appeared in Egypt during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century and proceeded from there. The fast was to commemorate Christ's forty day fast in the desert following his Baptism. Lent was initially attached to Catechumens who were preparing for reception of the sacraments at the Easter Vigil but was later extended to all the faithful as a period of intense penance and reconciliation for the Church's participation in the Paschal Mystery (the Passion, Death, & Resurrection of Our Lord). The color primarily worn here is penitential purple with Rose once again making an entry into the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Sunday of Lent known as Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday as that particular Sunday marks the halfway point between the Season of Lent and the Solemnity of Easter.

### *Easter Triduum* *(Holy Thursday Evening – Easter Sunday Evening)*

These three days commemorate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord. These are considered the holiest days of the year and have strict rules as to what can and cannot be observed. For example, no funerals are allowed to take place on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday. On Good Friday Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament are strictly forbidden. The three days of intense prayer and solemn vigil prepare us for the holiest and greatest of feasts.

### *Easter Season* *(Easter Sunday to the Pentecost Sunday)*

The Season of Easter lasts fifty days and carries the Church from the glory of the Resurrection through the beginnings of the Church in the reading of the Acts of the Apostles. We see the beginning miracles and works of the apostles. We see the completion of the Mission of the Messiah in the Solemnity of the Ascension (40 days after Easter) and of course the beginning of the Church with the outpouring the Holy Spirit (the Solemnity of Pentecost – 50 Days after Easter).