



A CATHOLIC DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

PRAYING THE LITURGICAL YEAR

How the liturgical seasons guide us through the
winters and springs, summers and falls of life

BY SARAH DAMM

What Does it Mean to Pray the Liturgical Year?

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."
// Ecclesiastes 3:1

Welcome! Thank you for downloading this guide.

The rhythm of life can feel chaotic, hurried, and fragmented. The world urges us to move faster, achieve more, and seek instant satisfaction. But the Catholic Church offers us a different path by giving us a sacred rhythm to live by called the liturgical year, or liturgical calendar.

This sacred rhythm does not demand that we hurry up or push through. Rather, the liturgical year offers wisdom and insight as we walk through the winters and springs, summers and falls of life. With gentle wisdom, the seasons that comprise the liturgical year comfort us as we face our most difficult realities, such as spiritual dryness, waiting and longing, disappointment, sorrow, weariness, and illness. Likewise, they encourage proper celebration of our victories, consolations, joys, and answered prayers.

Thus, we follow the liturgical year differently than a regular calendar or schedule of dates, because its rhythm is divine. Rather than a way to mark off tasks and accomplishments, its wise, ancient way guides us in how to live and pray well throughout every moment of life.

While the liturgical seasons invite us to rediscover a treasure trove of beautiful feasts, devotions, and traditions in our Catholic heritage, these are not about doing more. Rather, they are meant to shape our prayer and feed our soul in order to enter more deeply into what's already happening: in Scripture, in the sacraments, and in our own life.

The liturgical year is deep, and we can never exhaust its treasures. So, this guide is simply a starting point, a gentle invitation to notice what time it is in the heart of the Church . . . and to pray from there.

May this guide inspire you to unite your heart to the Lord's, deepen your prayer, and follow the Church's sacred rhythm throughout the seasons of your life.

Sarah Damm

A Note on Liturgical Calendars

This guide primarily follows the Ordinary Form (OF) calendar, which is the most common liturgical calendar used in the Catholic Church today. However, many Catholics, including myself, follow the Extraordinary Form (EF) or Traditional Latin Mass (TLM) calendar. While the core seasons and themes are the same, there are some differences in feast days, season lengths, and liturgical emphases.

When I began to attend the TLM, I discovered a new depth and richness of the Catholic faith that I didn't know existed. My prayer naturally synced with the prayer of the ancient liturgy, and it deepened in a way I didn't know was possible. Returning to tradition instantly affirmed within me a sense of Catholic heritage, inheritance, and a place of belonging in God's family.

Through this experience, I discovered that one of the most beautiful things about praying with the liturgical year is that there is always more to learn, understand, discover, and experience. God is constantly taking us deeper, higher, or to a new, exciting place we have never been before. It makes our experience with Him "ever ancient, ever new" (Saint Augustine).

Throughout this guide, I will make note of any distinctions between the two calendars. But regardless of what calendar you use, this PDF is for every Catholic. And whether you're brand new to liturgical living or returning to "begin again" (Saint Benedict), this guide invites you to embrace the heart of each season's wisdom, while growing closer to the Lord in prayer.



The Rhythm of the Liturgical Year

Below is a very simple list of the seasons that comprise the liturgical year. It notes the liturgical color, an overall theme or invitation, and a traditional custom. Seasons specific to the EF/TLM calendar are noted, but all Catholics are welcome to incorporate them into your life, as they have so much to teach us!

Season	Color	Invitation	Traditional Custom
Advent	Violet	Watchful waiting, hope, preparation	Light Advent wreath candles
Christmastide	White	Joy, incarnation, God-with-us, celebration	Display a Nativity scene (until Feb. 2, the Presentation of the Lord)
Time After Epiphany (EF)	White	Christ's revealed, divine light to the nations	Bless your home (chalk blessing)
Ordinary Time / Septuagesima (EF)	Green / Violet	Hidden life; preparation for Lent	Consider a small penance
Lent	Violet	Repentance, return, conversion, humility, simplicity	Stations of the Cross
Easter (through Pentecost)	White	Resurrection, joy, victory, new life	Display flowers in your home to represent new life in Christ; pray the Holy Spirit Novena between the Ascension and Pentecost
Time after Pentecost (EF) / Ordinary Time	Green	Daily faith, spiritual growth, discipleship, sanctification	Read a spiritual book; practice Ember Days
Christ the King (the close of the liturgical year)	White	Kingship and reign of Christ, fulfillment, trust	Celebrate All Saints, pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory

How to Pray the Liturgical Year

Praying the Liturgical Year consists of being aware of the present moment and intentional about how we live it. We choose to abide in Jesus rather than in a world that is ever more chaotic. We do this through two ways:

- liturgical prayer, particularly with the daily Mass readings and how they speak personally to us within a specific liturgical season
- liturgical living, particularly how we spend our time living out what the liturgical seasons have to show us

Below are a few tips about how to pray the liturgical year.

1. **Start Small: One Season at a Time**

- Take a moment today to notice where we are in the liturgical year. What season are we in? Note it on the chart on the previous page.
- Let your heart be open to what this season has to offer you.

2. **Let the Gospels Guide You**

- Pray with the daily Gospel, letting it anchor your day to Jesus and the current season we are in.
- Follow the ancient way to pray with Scripture, called *lectio divina*, or divine reading. (See the following section for guided prompts.)

3. **Mark the Seasons in Your Home**

- Add a visual cue in your home as a reminder of the season: Use liturgical colors, candles, and a holy image.
- Examples could be displaying the Advent wreath during Advent or veiling a crucifix during Passiontide (EF: begins the Sunday before Holy Week).

4. **Follow the Feasts**

- Notice the various feast days that honor Jesus, Mary, or the saints.
- Select one or two to celebrate in a simple way: read a short biography, display a holy card, ask for the saint's intercession for a special intention.

5. **Pray in Rhythm, Not Perfection**

- Let the pace of the Church slow down your soul.
- Pray at the same time and in the same place everyday.
- The goal isn't to perform every custom. Keep it simple. Let the liturgical calendar shape your prayer and attention.

LECTIO DIVINA:

A Simple Way to Pray With Scripture Throughout the Liturgical Year

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."
// Ecclesiastes 3:1



Lectio Divina simply means divine reading in Latin. It is a traditional Christian prayer practice that invites us to slowly and prayerfully read Sacred Scripture, meditating on how it applies to life. It encourages talking with God about the passage and listening to how He wants to use His Word to speak to the heart.

Lectio divina involves four steps:

- Lectio (reading)
- Meditatio (meditation)
- Oratio (prayer)
- Contemplatio (contemplation)

Praying with the daily Mass readings allows us to enter into the life of Christ and the life lessons given to us through the liturgical seasons on a very regular basis.

To get started, open your Bible to today's, or this Sunday's, Gospel. Use the worksheet on the following pages as a step-by-step guide of the process.

LECTIO DIVINA:

Step-by-Step Guide for Praying With Scripture

01 **Lectio** // Read the Scripture passage slowly, at least twice, aloud if possible. Write on the lines below a word or phrase that stood out.

02 **Meditatio** // Reflect on the words or phrases that spoke to your heart. What is God saying to me through this passage?

03 **Oratio** // Respond to God. Be honest, open, and vulnerable. Speak from the heart. What do I want to say to God in response?

04 **Contemplatio** // Rest in God's presence. No words needed. Just be still and receive.

JOURNAL PAGE:

Reflecting on Liturgical Prayer + Liturgical Living

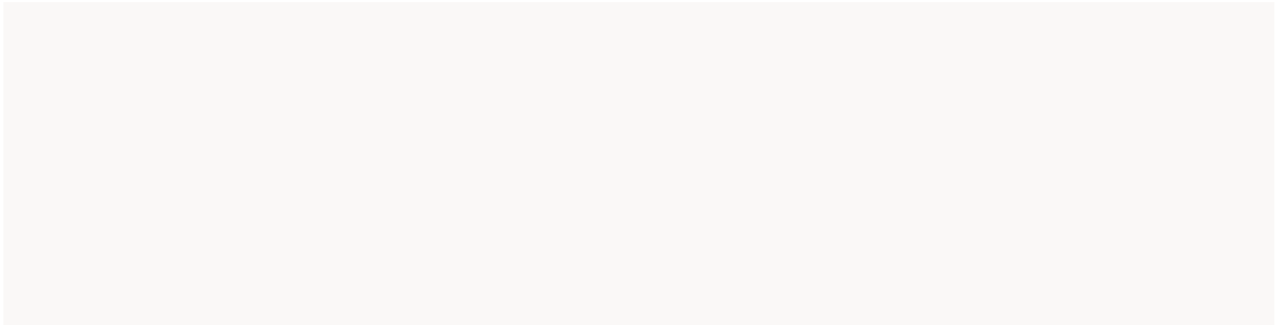
Journal Prompt //

Based on my time in lectio divina, what is God inviting me to do, change, or carry into my life?



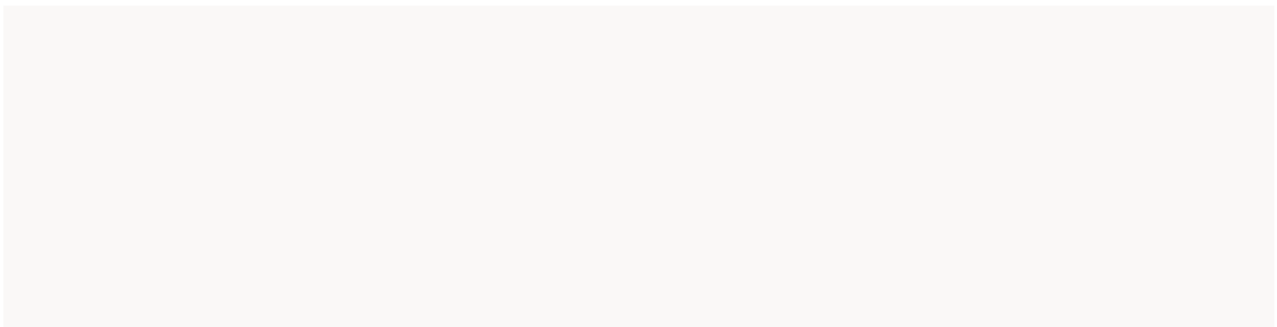
Weekly Practice //

Based on the liturgical year, what seasonal practice will I take on this week, this month?



Let Us Pray //

Pray your favorite prayer (Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.), or write your own below.



Where to Go From Here: The Next Step

Now that you have begun to pray and live with the liturgical year, I encourage you to respond generously to the invitation to remain in this sacred rhythm. Move from one season to the other—one small step at a time—receiving all the grace and wisdom the liturgical year offers in each season of life. Let the rhythm of the Church become the rhythm of your own prayer and life.

- What season of the Church year are you most drawn to? Why?
- How do you see God's rhythm already in your life?
- What is one small thing you want to do to enter into the current season of the liturgical year?

If this guide has encouraged, inspired, got you excited about living by the sacred rhythms of the Church, please share your enthusiasm with a friend. Simply forward them the PDF and invite them into this journey with you.

I also invite you to stay on this path with me a bit longer. My weekly Advent series—*Waiting with Hope: A Prayerful Journey Through Advent*—begins Nov. 30 and will consist of four weekly emails that will include seasonal reflections and prayer prompts, as we embark on a new liturgical year, and walk through the season of Advent, together.

My prayer is that this guide and my upcoming Advent series will be the launch of a larger work I am creating, so stay tuned! Let's live by God's calendar together.

With you in the seasons,

Sarah Damm



Sign up for a 4-week devotional series—
straight to your inbox!

WAITING WITH HOPE
A Prayerful Journey Through Advent

sarahdamm.com

The banner features four diamond-shaped images: lit candles, a cup of coffee, a religious statue, and a sign that reads 'O COME LET US ADORE HIM'.

ABOUT ME

Sarah Damm is a Catholic wife and mother of six children, living in Minnesota. She was a stay-at-home mom for 21 years, until she returned to the workforce in 2023. Sarah is the blog manager and a writer for Blessed Is She, and she also is a contributor to other faith-based platforms, as well as two devotional books for women published by Ave Maria Press. She loves her faith, coffee, walks with her husband, and good books. Find out more about Sarah and her writing at sarahdamm.com.

