



A new liturgical year, a new beginning to give God glory, honor and praise!

Each year, the Church brings to our attention the principal events in the life of Our Lord and his Mother, the achievements of the saints, and the theological doctrines of the Faith. This annual cycle of feasts, fasts and commemorations starts on September 1st and is called the **liturgical year**.

Just as the divinely instituted feasts of the Old Testament reminded the people of Israel of the principal events of their history, and allowed them to renew their covenant with God, the Church's liturgical year recounts:

- the creation of the world, the fall of Man, and coming judgment - giving us cause for repentance;
- the Incarnation, life, sufferings, death, Resurrection and Ascension of the only-begotten Word of God, for our sakes - giving us cause for thanksgiving;
- the lives of the Mother of God and of the saints - giving us cause for thanksgiving and hope, and encouragement in our own lives.

The calendar events continually place before our eyes the mysteries of life, passion, death, and resurrection of our Divine Savior; the grandeur of the Divine Motherhood and powerful intercession of the most Holy Theotokos; the lives of holy men and women, who by their heroic imitation of Christ glorified God and the whole human race. The seasons of fast from boisterous entertainment are to help us exercise more self control and better prepare us for the sacramental encounter with Christ in the Holy Eucharist and that face-to-face encounter with Christ on the day of his Second Coming at the end of the world.

The liturgical year is also a **source of God's grace**. Through each feast and commemoration, the meaning of the feast is made present in the Church, and the grace of the feast is recalled; this meaning and grace enters into and enlightens the minds and hearts of the faithful as they take part in the liturgical year.

Finally, the liturgical year is a **means of union with Christ**. As we remember the events which led to our redemption, and the deeds of those who have lived under grace, the Holy Spirit (through the Church's liturgy) directs our minds and hearts toward the goal of salvation for ourselves and those around us, to so live in this life as to be made fit for eternal life in heaven.

The feast days are divided into two categories - those that are stationary and are always celebrated on the same day of the calendar year and those that move because they belong to the paschal cycle and as such move according to when Easter is celebrated. Easter, or Pascha, is historically and theologically central to the liturgical year.

The cycle of the liturgical year resembles a great spiritual book that teaches us in a practical manner how to praise, love and serve God and thus save our souls. The events commemorated are an ever present preacher and teacher of God's love and the love of His most holy Mother.

The best way to understand and benefit from the liturgical year is to keep the feasts, attentively and prayerfully! The feasts of the liturgical year have a freshness which makes it possible to learn from them, and thus draw nearer to God, in a new way every time we come back to them. Make a resolution to take the opportunity to relive these events and actively participate in them as though they were just now taking place because **Christ is alive and active now!** Let us strive to be vocal witnesses in the sacred events of our Liturgical Year and exemplify these events in the actions of our daily lives.

