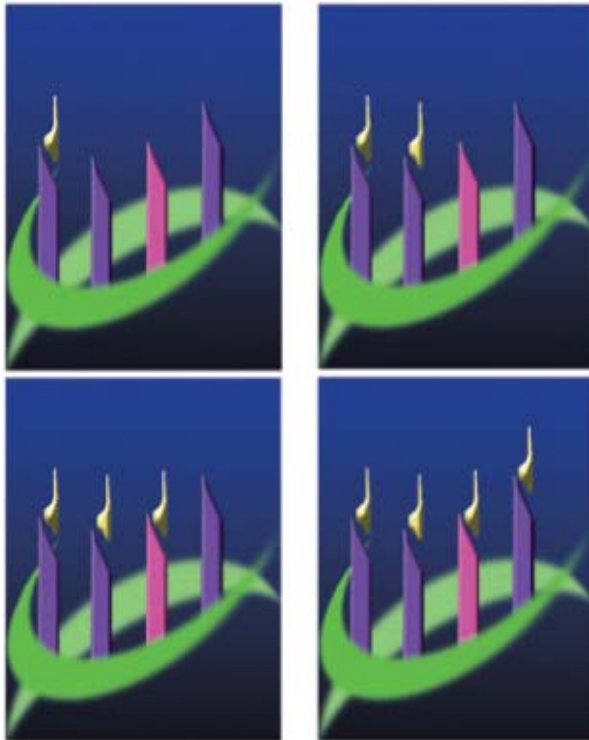


Colors of our Liturgical Seasons

Colors of Advent

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During Advent, we light a candle on the advent wreath to count down the Sundays until Christmas. One candle is lit for each week of the season. (CNS illustrations by Emily Thompson)(Oct. 28, 2004)

The church year begins with the First Sunday of Advent. The stole and chasuble of the priest is **VIOLET** or a shade of purple, preferably on the side of blue hues (but not blue itself). Advent is seen as a time preparation, anticipation and hope.

“Prepare ye, the way of the Lord.”

Surprisingly, on the third Sunday of Advent, the church celebrates the half way mark and so suggests pink or rose as the color of the day. Like children, we get excited when we are half way there and pink symbolizes that joy with a color that holds onto the purple but promises the white of Christmas!

Colors of Christmas

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Stories and homes display colors of **RED** and **GREEN** can be seen all throughout the stores and homes during the Christmas Season, however, the church chooses **WHITE** for the Fest of Christmas. White is the color of purity and new life. White seems appropriate for a new born infant, announced by the angels and wrapped in pure white swaddling cloths of a newborn baby. **GOLD** is recognized for the solemn feast of the Epiphany when we see the royalty of the nations honoring this child not just as savior of Israel, but of the entire world!



A fifteen-month-old kisses a statue of baby Jesus after Christmas Mass in St. Catherine's Church in the West Bank city of Bethlehem. (CNS photo from Reuters)

Colors of Lent

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ASH WEDNESDAY

The mark of ashes, a symbol of repentance, is given to Christians to indicate the start of the penitential season of Lent. Ashes are etched in the sign of the cross on the foreheads of Catholics around the world on Ash Wednesday, symbolizing the beginning of the 40 days of fasting and penance in preparation for our Lord to rise again at Easter. (CNS illustration by Anthony DeFeo)(Jan. 31, 2001)

Right after the Christmas season, the church begins Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, a 40 day fast and penance period in the Catholic Church. The church is draped in **VIOLET** but incorporates hues of **RED**, making the color a more penitential color than that of advent. This time is a time of penance and self-denial; a time of preparation for and renewal of baptism. The **DARK PURPLE** helps us realize our dependence on a loving and merciful God who has become bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh that saves us. **PINK** is presented half way through the Lenten season to encourage us to "Do not give up, keep working toward conversion and transformation, you are half way there!"

Colors of Holy Week

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Holy Week starts with the color **RED** for the blessing and procession of palms and the Passion of the Lord.

Then Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday return the church to the traditional **DARK PURPLE**. Holy Thursday is **WHITE** representing the Feast of the Lord's Last Supper.

RED is the color for the reading of the Good Friday Passion and Adoration of the Cross.

The Easter Vigil returns to **WHITE** but this is not evident until the lights are turned on after the blessing of the fire and we sign the Gloria and the Alleluia.



NUN SHARES ART OF PALM WEAVING

Sister of St. Joseph Joan Romaniak created this woven palm frond during a demonstration at St. John Bosco Church in Hammond, Ind. The nun learned the art at home and in her early days in the convent. (Photo by Karen Callaway) (March 21, 2005)

Colors of Easter

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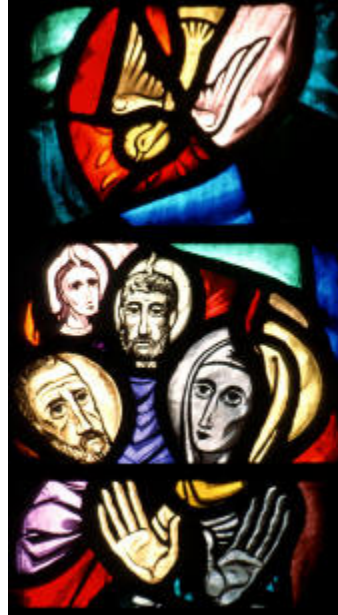
The risen Christ is depicted in this stained-glass window. Easter Sunday celebrates the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus. (Photo by Karen Callaway) (March 2, 2005)

The festive colors used during the Easter season are **WHITE** and **GOLD**. The wonders are miraculous of how God raised up his only son Jesus from the dead! "O death, where is thy sting." It is in this same joy of resurrection that **WHITE** is usually used for funeral masses, although **PURPLE** and even **BLACK** are allowed.

Colors of Pentecost

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Pentecost's color is **RED**. It also becomes the color for all feasts of Apostles, except John, and for martyrs who shed their blood, united to the Lamb that was slain.



A church window depicts a scene from Pentecost. The feast marks the occasion of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles 50 days after Christ's resurrection. Pentecost is Greek for the 50th day. It is also referred to as the birthday of the church because, from that point on, the apostles carried forth the message of Christ to the world. (CNS photo from Crosiers) (April 30, 2002)

Colors of **Mary**

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A first communicants place a crown of flowers on a large statue of the Virgin Mary. (Photo by Karen Callaway)(May 23, 2000)

While many people think of **BLUE** for the Virgin Mary, the church's color for the feasts of Mary is **WHITE** . Whether we are celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Guadalupe, The Motherhood of Mary, the Annunciation or the Assumption, the color of **WHITE** signifying Our Blessed Mother's purity and integrity.

Colors of Ordinary Time

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The Sundays and weeks of Ordinary Time are days of growth and harvest -- days of hope and time to mature in one's faith.

GREEN is the color of on-going life in nature: the renewal of spring grass, flowers and trees. Green signifies hope and growth. The green weeks, 1 to 34, provide time to be refreshed with the Sunday Scriptures, sequentially following the life and works of Jesus in his public ministry.



CACTUS PRODUCES VIBRANT BLOOMS IN ARIZONA DESERT

A hedgehog cactus produces vibrant blooms in the desert south of Phoenix, Arizona. (CNS photo by Nancy Wiechec) (March 29, 2005)

Colors of Vestments

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A collection of clergy vestments inside the Christ Pavilion at Expo 2000 in Hanover, Germany. (CNS photo by Tom Tracy, Florida Catholic)(Sept. 11, 2000)

What about **BLUE** vestments? When you look in some of the church supply catalogues you will see blue vestments. These catalogues are also used by the Episcopal, Lutheran, and other churches who accept **BLUE** as one of their liturgical colors, especially in Advent. however, blue is not an approved color for the liturgical celebrations in the Roman Catholic Church.

Colors of Festival Vestments

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"On more solemn days, sacred vestments may be used that are festive, that is, more precious, even if not the color of the day."

This directive allows for the use of vestments and decorations in the church that use fine materials native to a country or nationality even though they are not the color of the day.

In our Mother Church in other countries, one might see vestments made of cloths of bold designs very different from the traditional liturgical colors, such as in Africa, Asia, Center or South America and Mexico.



Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, wearing a chasuble imprinted with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, celebrates Mass in honor of the venerated Mexican icon that appeared on the tilma of Juan Diego. The Indian peasant had received visions of the Virgin Mary in the form of the icon. (CNS photo by Victor Aleman) (Dec.12, 2000)