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Time Keeping with Christ

The “liturgical calendar” is the Church’s way of keeping sacred time—a deliberate, rhythmic journey through the life of Jesus Christ and salvation history that forms Christian identity in the midst of a secular age. Where the secular calendar orders appointments, business, and national holidays, the liturgical calendar orders the heart, mind, and soul. By living within the seasons of the Church’s liturgical year, Christians anchor themselves in religious practices and sacred Scripture that run far deeper than the frantic tempo of modern life.

At its core, the liturgical calendar is a year-long retelling of salvation history, with an emphasis on Jesus’ redemptive work. Its seasons invite believers not simply to remember events in Christ’s life, but to inhabit them—to wait with the prophets, to rejoice with the angels, to follow Jesus Christ through his ministry, death, and resurrection, and to anticipate his coming again. Each season has its own tone, Scriptures, prayers, and practices that shape the soul over time.

The year begins not with celebration but with “**Advent**”, a four-week attitude of expectation. Advent teaches holy waiting—something our secular age resists. In this season the messianic promises of Isaiah and the other Hebrew prophets echo through the Church’s worship. We revisit the stories that prepare the way for Jesus’ birth: Gabriel’s message to Zechariah, Mary’s visitation with Elizabeth, the Annunciation, Mary’s Magnificat, and the birth of John the Baptist. Advent slows us down so that when Christmas finally arrives, it arrives with weight and meaning. “**Christmas**” itself is not a single day but a season in which the Church contemplates the mystery of the Incarnation—the Word made flesh. This season invites wonder rather than haste, celebration rather than consumer frenzy. It takes us to the solemnity of the “**Epiphany**”, when the Magi’s visit reveals Christ as light to the nations, and concludes with the feast of the **Baptism of the Lord**.

And this is only the beginning. Through Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and the long stretch of Ordinary Time, the liturgical calendar continues to narrate Christ’s life and the life of his people, guiding believers into a slower, deeper, more sacred way of being in time.

In short, the liturgical calendar is the Church’s ancient clock. It keeps the story of God interacting with humanity and his presence at the center of our lives. It trains us in patience, joy, repentance, and hope. It offers structure in an age of drift, depth in a culture of distraction, and a way of living that resists the banality of a purely secular year. It forms us—not by vague spirituality, but by the concrete rhythms of the great Tradition of the Catholic Church.