

## The Church New Year - Liturgical Year C – The Year of...Luke?!

Last weekend we put an image of the entire Church Year into this segment of the bulletin, and it not only showed the proper liturgical color for each Sunday of the entire year, but it also had cartoon images showing the different big feast days and celebrations that do not fall on a Sunday as well! That liturgical calendar image was specifically for this upcoming Church Year, and one fun fact that some people are not aware of is that there is a cycle of three different church years that coordinate to the specific readings from Scripture at each Mass. We have just begun Liturgical Year C in the Catholic Church, and overall, this means that we will have Gospel readings at Sunday Mass that correspond to the Gospel of Luke (Liturgical Year A = Matthew, and Liturgical Year B = Mark).

We will read almost the entire Gospel of Luke throughout this upcoming Church year, and the Gospel readings during Advent and Christmas seasons as well as during Lent and Easter seasons will correspond to those events within Luke's Gospel (there are some exceptions to this, for example, John's Gospel is always read during some of the Christmas Masses and Easter Masses and around that time as well). One good example of this would be during the Christmas Masses this year. During the midnight Mass, there is a reading from Luke's Gospel regarding Jesus' birth and the experience of the shepherds in the fields during that most holy night (Luke 2:1-14). Another good example would be when we look forward all the way to Palm Sunday and the long Passion Narrative of Jesus' suffering and death because this year it all comes from Luke's Gospel (Luke 22:14-23:56). If it is a special feast or a special liturgical season, often through Year C, it will be a reading from Luke's Gospel specifically.

In addition, even when it is not a special church season such as Advent, Christmas, Lent, or Easter, the Ordinary Time readings also follow Luke's Gospel and help us journey through almost the entire text throughout this year. For example, from July through the beginning of September of 2025, the Gospel readings each Sunday cover from the 10th chapter of Luke's Gospel all the way through the 14th chapter of his Gospel (so we read 5 straight chapters of Luke's Gospel over the span of 10 weekends!). One last note is that the first readings for Year C are often selected to correspond to prophecies or fulfillment type theme within Old Testament readings that relate directly to the Gospel reading on that particular Sunday. In other words, the first reading and the Gospel will almost always be connected and related to each other in a very profound way! The second reading from the New Testament sometimes also corresponds to the same theme, but the second reading throughout Year C also follows its own track and pattern separate from the Gospel readings as well (for example, Year C covers some of St. Paul's letters to the Galatians, Colossians, and two letters to Timothy among others).

My main point in explaining these things is to try to encourage you both right now as well as throughout this entire church year, to dive deeply into Luke's Gospel in your own prayer and study if you get the chance. Since we will be reading and praying with this Gospel and Jesus' life in this sense over the next year, let's do our best to immerse ourselves into this beautiful testimony of Jesus' life and teachings as we strive to grow in our faith. I didn't even mention much about how St. Luke was a physician, how St. Luke was seemingly also an artist, and how he was especially close to the Blessed Virgin Mary. St. Luke is a great evangelist and an inspirational Saint in so many ways, so may we ask him to pray for us and enter into the depth of our faith through his Gospel as we continue living out Year C in the Church! Happy New Year!