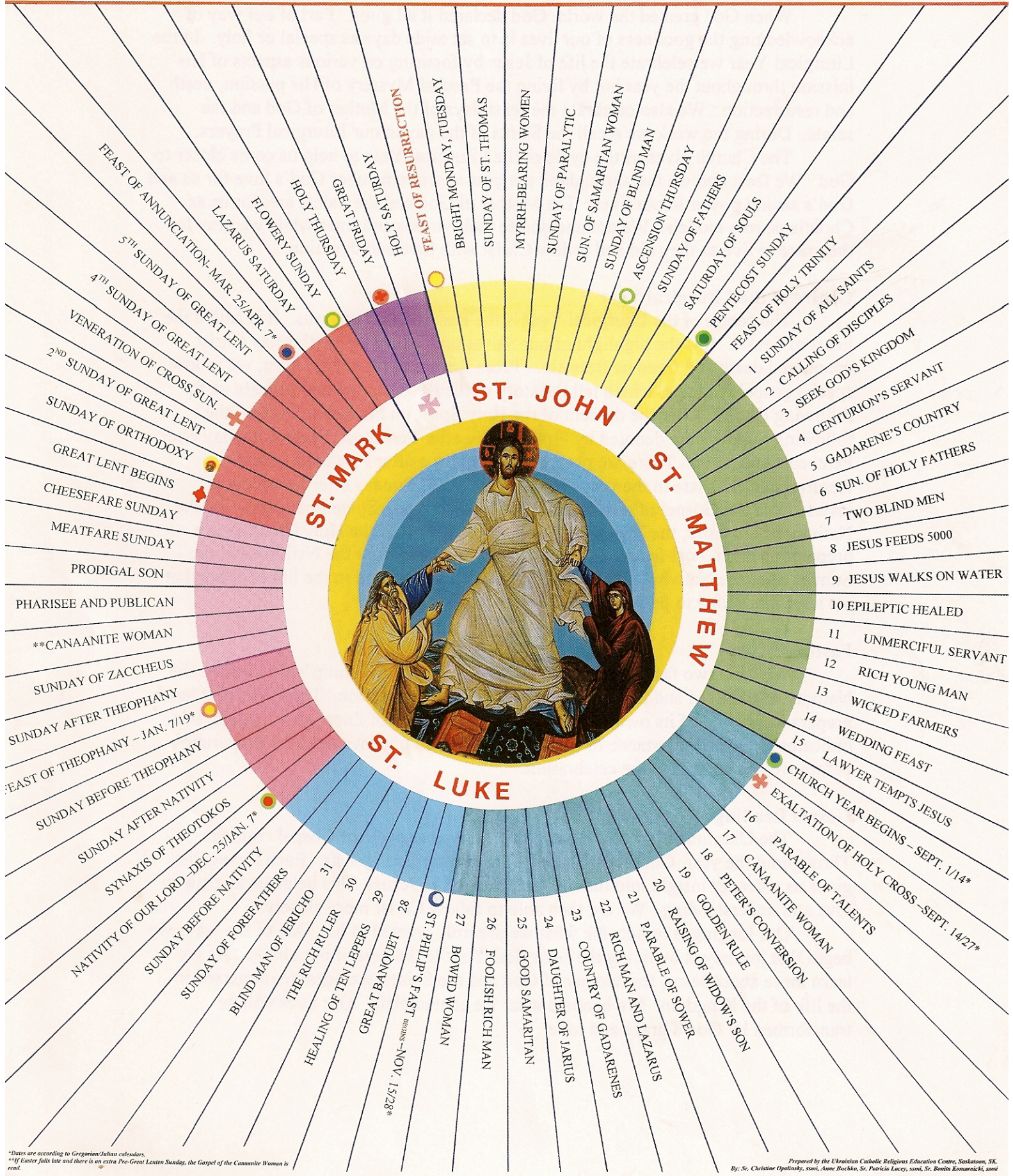


LITURGICAL YEAR



*Dates are according to Gregorian/Julian calendars.
 **If Easter falls late and there is an extra Pre-Great Lenten Sunday, the Gospel of the Canaanite Woman is read.

LITURGICAL YEAR

What is the Liturgical Year?

When God created the world, God declared it all good. Part of our way of acknowledging the goodness of our lives is to set aside days as special or holy. In the Liturgical Year we celebrate the life of Jesus by focusing on various aspects of His mission throughout the year but by living the Paschal Mystery of His passion, death and resurrection. We also celebrate the feast days of the Mother of God and the saints. During the week we recall the Saints of the day in our Liturgical Prayers.

The Church gives us the cycle of the Liturgical Year to help us come closer to God. We feast and we fast throughout the year as we remember God's love for us and God's saving power in our lives. The Mother of God and the Saints are, for us as Christians, role models. We commemorate their virtues and lives while we pray for the grace to live as they did and follow Christ with love and devotion.

Centre of the Liturgical Year

The centre of the Liturgical Year is the Resurrection of Jesus. It is called the Feast of Feasts. It is the highlight of our Salvation History for on this day Christ conquered death and freed us from sin. From Resurrection to Pentecost, we follow special gospel readings, which tell the story of the Resurrection and prepare us for following Christ. After the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday, the following Sundays are denoted by First Sunday after Pentecost, Second Sunday after Pentecost and so on. There are generally 32 Sundays after Pentecost unless Resurrection falls late in the year. In this case, a 33rd Sunday after Pentecost is inserted and the Gospel of the Canaanite Woman is read. Some Feast days like the Nativity of our Lord, the Theophany and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross have a preparation and a post-festive Sunday, i.e. the Sunday before the Nativity and the Sunday after the Nativity. These Feast days are so important in the life of Jesus that we need more time to prepare and celebrate the events.

Fasting

We have two fast periods in the Liturgical Year. St. Philip's Fast before the Nativity of the Lord and the Great Fast before the Resurrection. The Great Fast has a preparation period of its own beginning with the Sunday of Zacchaeus. Again, this indicates to us the importance of these Feast days and our own need for preparation before we can partake in the celebration.

Gospel Readings

The Ukrainian Catholic Church has a one-year cycle of Gospel readings. Throughout the year, Gospels are taken from all four Evangelists. Each Evangelist gives us a deeper insight into the life and teaching of Jesus. This helps us to grow in love and understanding. We are then able to follow Christ more closely.

Our longing is to become what we are truly created to be. One of the ways we begin that journey is by living the Liturgical Year to the best of our ability. As we learn more about Jesus, the Mother of God and the Saints, we become immersed in the life of the Kingdom. We become what we contemplate. Our lives will be transformed by God's grace and love.