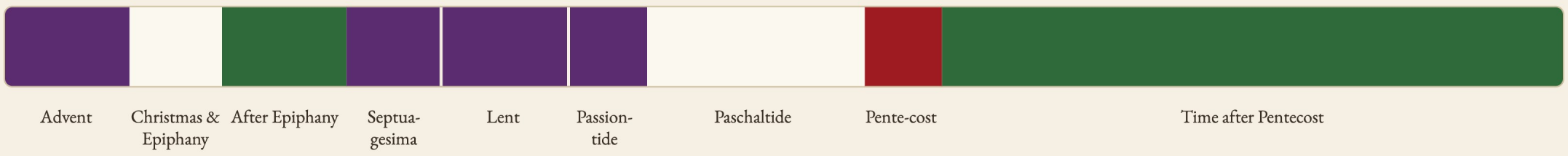
COLORES LITURGICI

The Liturgical Colors

The rubrics of the Roman Missal assign each day its color, so that the vestments themselves preach the mystery being celebrated. The traditional Roman Rite uses five colors — white, red, green, violet and black — with rose on two Sundays of the year.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE (APPROXIMATE)



White
albus

LIGHT · PURITY · GLORY

Christmastide and Epiphany; Paschaltide to the vigil of Pentecost; Holy Thursday; Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi; feasts of Our Lord (except those of the Passion), of Our Lady, the Angels, confessors, and virgins and holy women not martyrs; All Saints; the Nativity of St. John the Baptist; the Nuptial Mass.

Red
ruber

FIRE OF THE HOLY GHOST · BLOOD OF MARTYRS

Pentecost and its octave; feasts of the Passion, the Holy Cross and the Precious Blood; feasts of the Apostles, Evangelists and martyrs; the Holy Innocents; the blessing and procession of palms on Palm Sunday.

Green
viridis

HOPE · THE LIFE OF GRACE

Sundays and weekdays of the Time after Epiphany and the Time after Pentecost — the long "green" seasons in which the Church grows toward the harvest of eternal life.

Violet
violaceus

PENANCE · HUMILITY · EXPECTATION

Advent, Septuagesima, Lent and Passiontide; the Mass of Palm Sunday; Ember Days (outside Pentecost week), most vigils and the Rogation Days; penitential blessings, the sacrament of Penance and Extreme Unction.

Rose
rosaceus

JOY DAWNING AMID PENANCE

Only twice a year, at the midpoint of the penitential seasons: **Gaudete Sunday**, the 3rd Sunday of Advent, and **Laetare Sunday**, the 4th Sunday of Lent. For one day the violet of penance lightens as the feast draws near.

Black
niger

MOURNING · DEATH · PRAYER FOR THE DEAD

Good Friday; All Souls' Day (November 2); Requiem Masses and funerals — the Church mourning her dead while praying that perpetual light may shine upon them.

Gold
cloth of gold

SOLEMN FESTIVITY

Not a separate color but a permitted substitute: vestments of cloth of gold may replace white, red or green on great feasts. Cloth of silver may likewise replace white.

AND BLUE? Blue is not a color of the Roman Rite. By special privilege, Spain, Portugal and lands once under their crowns may use sky-blue for the Immaculate Conception.