

# Faith Loops

Faith Loops are PowerPoint presentations with images and information that will help us grow in the understanding of our Catholic faith. They will be projected on the screens during the twenty minutes prior to each weekend mass.

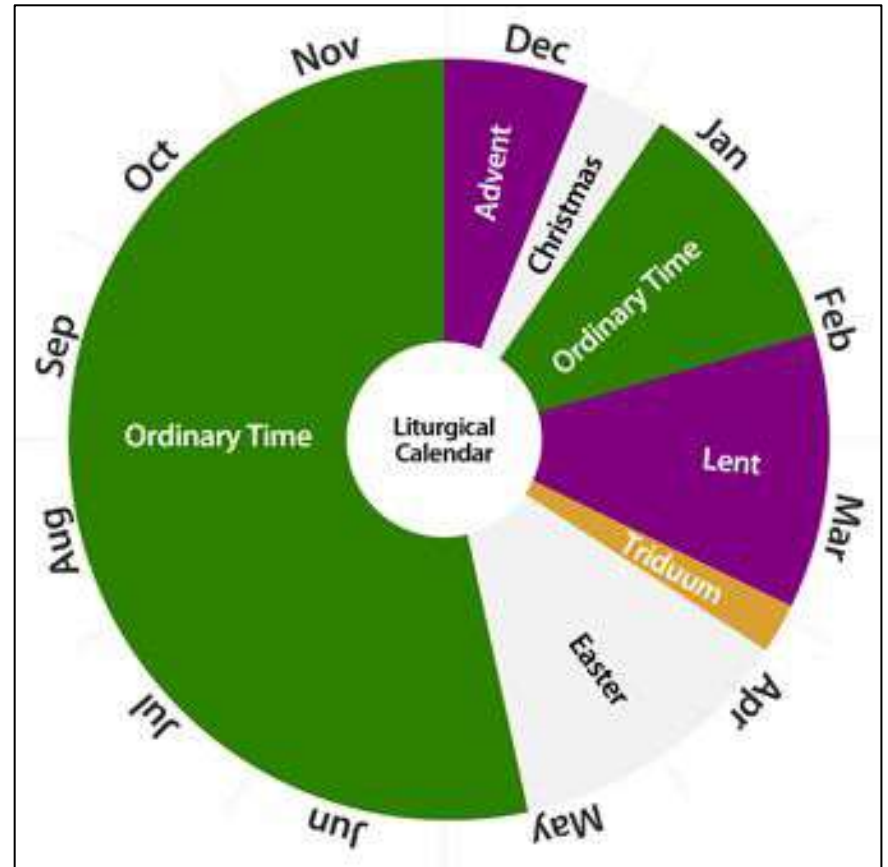
During that time, the slides will loop, or repeat, themselves. Thus, the name: Faith Loops.



# What is Ordinary Time?

There are five seasons in the Church year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Triduum, and Easter. The time in between seasons is called Ordinary Time.

There are two blocks of Ordinary Time: a short time between Christmas and Lent, and a long period between Easter and Advent.



# What is Ordinary Time?

Ordinary Time is not regular, uneventful, or ordinary. The word *ordinal* means 'counted'; we count the 34 or so weeks of Ordinary time (e.g. the 1<sup>st</sup> week of Ordinary Time, the 2<sup>nd</sup> week, the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, etc.)



The beauty of Ordinary Time is we can find God in the ordinary stuff of life: in comfortable routines, in family, in the little things we do for others and receive from others, in the quiet.

# What is Ordinary Time?

The challenge of Ordinary Time is that we spend it with ordinary people ... flawed, sometimes boring or insecure, sometimes petty or selfish people ... like ourselves. Remember, though, that for thirty years Jesus lived an ordinary life. So did the apostles and the saints, but God used them in extraordinary ways. St. Teresa of Calcutta is an example.

And He wants to do the same with us.



# What is Ordinary Time?

There is still much to celebrate in Ordinary Time.

Keep in mind that it is no *ordinary* kingdom we are building; it is God's kingdom and one of justice and peace. And it is no *ordinary* destination to which we are headed: It is heaven.



The color for Ordinary Time is **green**; the priest and deacon wear green vestments. The altar cloth is green.

Green will remain the liturgical color until Lent begins on March 5, 2025 (Ash Wednesday).

# You Asked Us ...

**We are baptized for the forgiveness of our sins. So why did Jesus need to be baptized?**

Good question! After all, Jesus was the Son of God and was, therefore, sinless. There was no need for Jesus to be cleansed by the waters of baptism. Rather, he sanctified the waters, just as the priest blesses the holy water at the Easter Vigil.

With His Baptism, Jesus began His public ministry.



# You Asked ... about Jesus' Baptism

By being baptized, Jesus allowed himself to be numbered among sinners. He submitted himself entirely to his Father's will out of love for God's people. Jesus humbled Himself and set an example for us to follow. We are to humbly recognize our own sinfulness and our need for God's mercy.



# You Asked ... about Jesus' Baptism



In saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” the Father audibly proclaimed his delight in his Son for all to hear.

The **voice** of the Father, the Baptism of the **Son**, and the descent of the **Spirit** mark this event as a revelation of the Blessed Trinity.



# You Asked ... about Jesus's Baptism

On the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, we are reminded of our own baptism, the day on which we were washed clean of original sin and welcomed into a new life in Christ.

Every time we enter a Catholic church and bless ourselves at the holy water font, we recall our own baptism and remember that we are God's children.

Christian baptism not only forgives sins, but infuses the life of God into the soul, making us God's children. The origin of this sacrament is Jesus' own baptism.



# Ordinary Time ...

When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the wise women and men are home,  
When the shepherds are back with their flock,

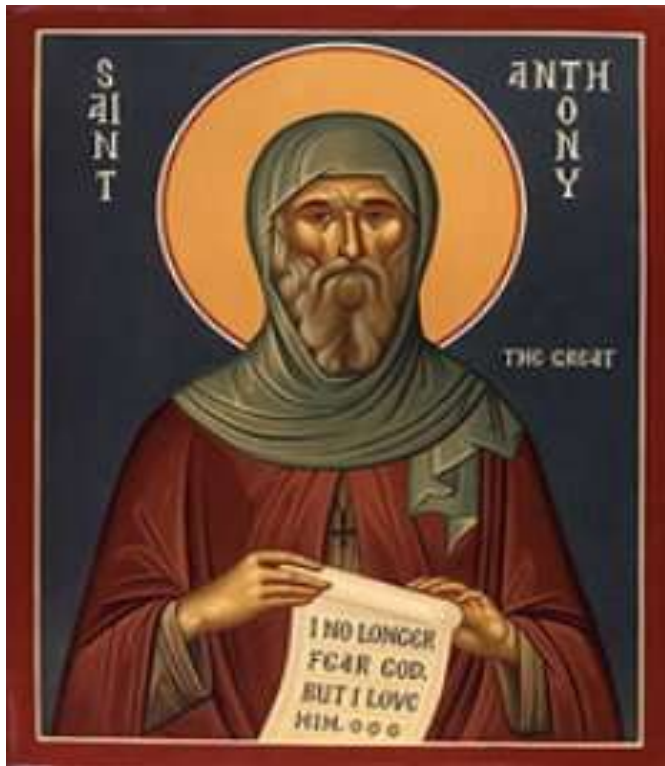
The work of Christmas begins:  
To find the lost, to heal the broken,  
To feed the hungry, to release the prisoner,  
To rebuild the nations,  
To bring peace among people,  
To make music in the heart.

~ Howard Thurman ~

# Saint of the Month

## St. Anthony the Abbot

On January 17, we celebrate the feast of St. Anthony, not the St. Anthony to whom we pray when we have lost our keys or when we are looking for a parking spot.



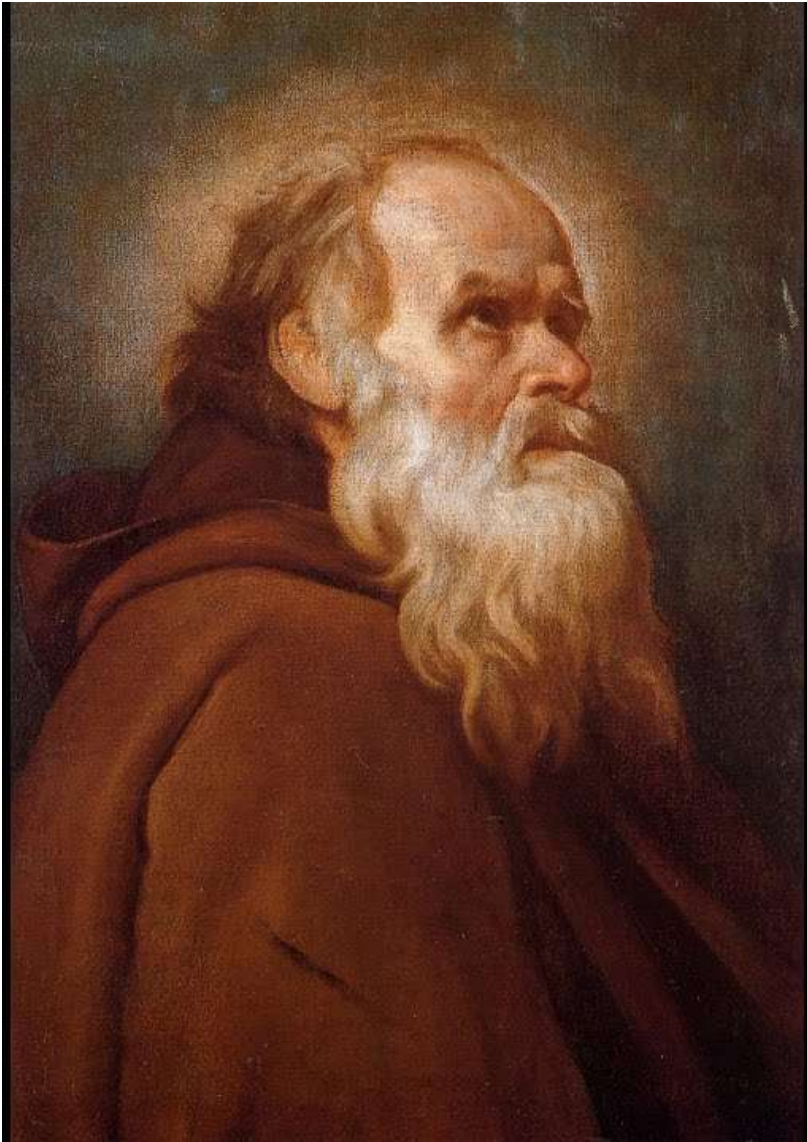
St. Anthony the Abbot was born into a wealthy Egyptian family in the middle of the third century. After the untimely death of his parents, though only eighteen years old, Anthony cared for a younger sister.

# St. Anthony the Abbot

Shortly thereafter, while praying in a church, he was moved by the words in Matthew's gospel: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give it to the poor" (Matt. 19:21). Anthony promptly sold his property and gave the proceeds to the poor. With his sister in the care of the nuns, he retreated to an abandoned Roman fort in the desert, where he lived a solitary, simple life, fasting and praying.



# St. Anthony the Abbot



Twenty years later, with the help of some villagers, he emerged from isolation, looking surprisingly healthy and serene.

Soon a monastic community grew around him, drawing others who wished to follow his example of living an ascetic life and in solitude.

# St. Anthony the Abbot

Recognizing his holiness, wisdom, and commitment to God, many people sought out Anthony, the abbot, for his words of knowledge, enlightenment and comfort. Many miraculous healings were attributed to his intercession in prayer. He died at the age of 105.

St. Athanasius, who knew Anthony, wrote: “Anthony was not known for his writings ... but simply for his reverence toward God.”



# Word of the Week: Ecumenism

The word *ecumenism* derives from a Latin word that means ‘the whole world’, or ‘inhabited.’ It refers to the unity and cooperation that should exist among all Christians. Ecumenism involves the efforts of many Christian Churches to strengthen their

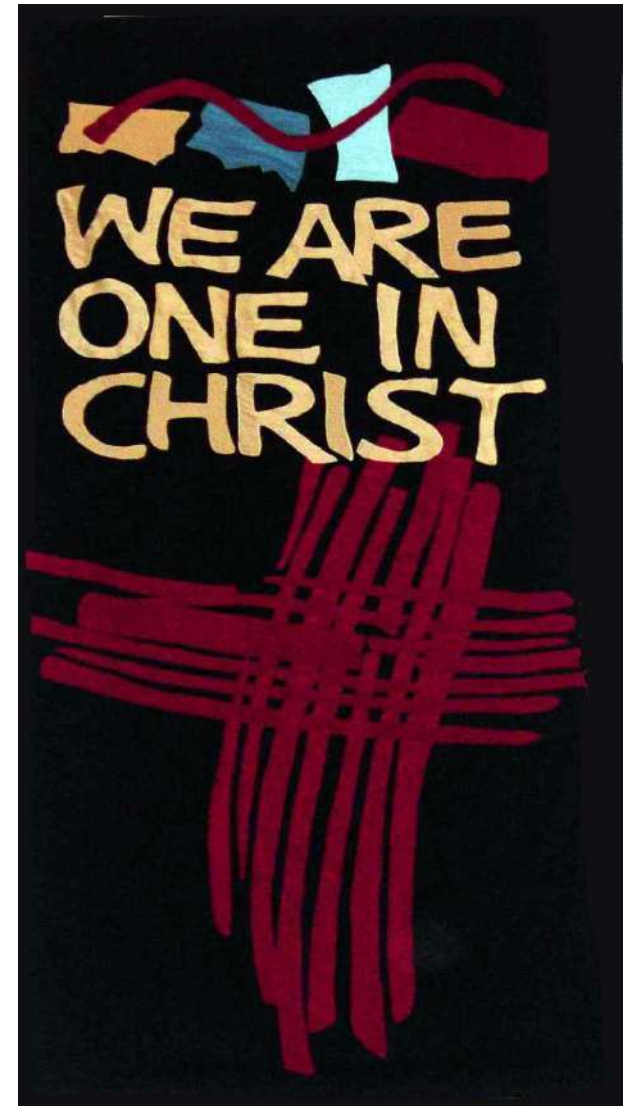


communion with one another. Our relationship should resemble that of a family, with Christ as the head. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

# Word of the Week: Ecumenism

Each year, from January 18 – 25, we celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. It is an opportunity to celebrate and to pray for our unity in Christ.

Jesus prayed for his disciples, “... that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17: 21).





# Word of the Week: Ecumenism

The issues that separate us include:

- whether God reveals Himself in both the Scriptures and Tradition
- the number, necessity, and importance of the sacraments
- the Eucharist as being central to our faith, and the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist
- the role of the pope as head of the Church.

Let us remember that there is much more that unites us than divides us: our faith in Jesus Christ.

# From the Suggestion Box ...

## *Who writes the Prayer of the Faithful for Sunday Mass?*

The general intercessions are written by our parish secretary, Jeanette Gariepy, drawing from a number of different resources. They follow a particular order:

- For the needs of the Church
- For the world
- For those in need
- For the local community
- For the deceased
- For our own personal intentions, offered in silence



# You Were Wondering ...

*What is the significance of incense in our faith tradition?*



The word 'incense' derives from a Latin word meaning 'to burn'. Incense is made from aromatic plant materials like resins and spices. Burning incense as a perfume was an established practice in ancient Palestine, where it was a valuable commodity. It was used in both pagan and religious rituals, sometimes to ward off demons. Christianity borrowed this practice from the Jewish people, who burned incense with their sacrificial offerings of animals.

# You Were Wondering ... about Incense

Frankincense is the main ingredient in the incense used in our liturgies today. It is the dried sap from a tree grown in the Middle East. As it was one of the gifts presented to Jesus by the Magi, it is associated with Christ.

There is evidence that incense has been used in church rituals since the fourth century. It is used to purify, to bless, and to sanctify (to make holy).



# You Were Wondering .. about Incense

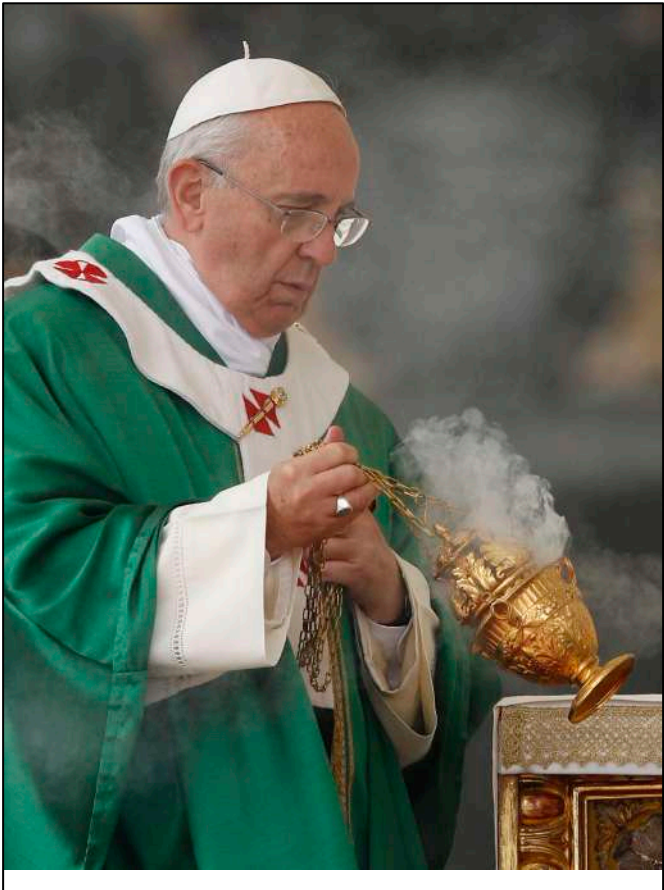
It also symbolizes the upward motion of our prayers. Just as the sweet-smelling smoke from incense drifts upward, so our prayers rise to our Father in heaven.

David, the author of many psalms, wrote, “Let my prayer be incense before you; my uplifted hands an evening sacrifice” (Psalm 141:2).



# You Were Wondering ... about Incense

The use of incense creates a sense of solemnity, of mystery, and of 'heaven' in our liturgies. In our Catholic tradition, incense may be used to bless the



altar, the book of the Gospels, and those assembled.

The Offertory gifts, as well as the crucifix and Paschal candle, can also be incensed. Incense is routinely used at funerals to bless the coffin or urn. People, places and things are incensed.

# You Were Wondering ... about Incense

Incense is burned in a *thurible*, a metal censer suspended from chains. The incense itself is contained in an *incense boat*, named so because of its shape. The one who ritually swings the thurible

and incenses the object or person is known as a *thurifer*. The incense is typically blessed before its use in prayer and liturgy.



# Prayer Before Mass

Dear God, help me to be open to all that you want to give me at Mass today. My heart is open.

I come empty and unsure and troubled.

I come in hope. I come in need to be loved by you, united with this faith community, strengthened by your word, and nourished by the Bread of Life.



Cleanse me. Refresh me.

Strengthen me for the journey ahead.

Lead me to heaven.

Thank you, God, for this time together.

Thank you, God, for everything.

Amen.



# Questions???

Do you have a question about the Catholic faith or about the celebration of the Mass? If so, write it on a piece of paper and drop it into the marked shoebox on the table at the back of the church. We will try to answer it in a Faith Loop at a later date.

Thank you.

