

# Holy Days and Saints Days

In the liturgical calendar, one set of feast days focuses on different elements of the Christ story. These days generate an annual opportunity to reflect with wonder and joy on the work of God through the incarnate Son. Some of these Christ events mark major turns in the liturgical seasons. Others revolve around his birth and infancy, and usually feature Mary as well, as in the Annunciation (of the angel to Mary), the Visitation (of Mary to Elizabeth), the Holy Innocents (of Bethlehem slaughtered by Herod) and the Presentation (of Jesus in the temple).

Another set of holy days commemorates prominent figures from the New Testament. These saints include all of the twelve apostles (with Matthias rather than Judas Iscariot), Mary the Virgin Mother, Joseph (her husband and father to Jesus), John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, the apostles Paul, Barnabas and James of Jerusalem, the evangelists Mark and Luke, and the martyr Stephen. We also commemorate Michael and All Angels. The feast days to honor these holy men and women (and angels) afford us an opportunity to ponder their lives and learn from their examples. See the select list below.

Last, we have the saints from history. Some of these, of course, have been canonized, or formally named as saints by the church. Others are familiar to many of us: St. Athanasius of Alexandria, associated with one of the three major creeds; St. Nicholas of Bari, the gift giver; St. Augustine of Hippo, the great theologian; St. Patrick of Ireland, the courageous missionary; St. Francis of Assisi, the friend of the poor; St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits; and St. Teresa of Ávila, the Spanish mystic.

## **Days Commemorating the Beginnings of the Life of Christ**

The Annunciation	March 25
The Visitation	May 31
The Birth	December 25
The Holy Name	January 1

The Epiphany	January 6
The Presentation	February 2

### **Days Commemorating Events in the Life of Christ**

The Baptism	Sunday after January 6
The Transfiguration	August 6 and end of Epiphany
The Last Supper	Maundy Thursday
The Death	Good Friday
The Resurrection	Easter Sunday
The Ascension	Fortieth day after Easter

### **Days Commemorating Important Truths**

Trinity Sunday	Sunday after Pentecost
St. Michael and All Angels	September 29
Christ the King	Last Sunday before Advent

### **Days Commemorating Saints from the New Testament**

John the Apostle	December 21
Paul the Apostle	January 25
Joseph the Father	March 19
Mark the Evangelist	April 25
John the Baptist	June 24
Peter the Apostle	June 29
Mary the Virgin Mother	August 15
Matthew the Apostle	September 21
Luke the Evangelist	October 18

### **Days Commemorating Saints from the History of the Church**

St. Valentine	February 14
St. Patrick	March 17
All Saints Day	November 1
St. Nicholas	December 6