

The Great Feasts

There are **12 great feasts** plus Pascha. **September 1st** is the beginning of the liturgical year.

In addition to other **occasional feasts and fasts**, there are typically weekly fast days: **Wednesdays** in remembrance of the betrayal of Christ, and **Fridays** in remembrance of His crucifixion.

There are also four larger fasting periods: the **Nativity Fast** (40 days, November 15 to December 24), **Great Lent** (40 days, followed by fasting during Holy Week), the **Apostles' Fast** (Variable length, beginning All Saints' Sunday (the Sunday after Pentecost) and ending on June 28), and the **Dormition Fast** (14 days, August 1 to August 14).

FEAST	DATE	DESCRIPTION
Nativity of the Theotokos (Fixed Date)	September 8	Birth of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, 9 months after the Annunciation.
Elevation of the Holy Cross (Fixed Date)	September 14	Finding of the True Cross by St. Helena; dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
Presentation of the Theotokos (Fixed Date)	November 21	Entrance of the Virgin Mary into the Temple as a child.
Nativity of Christ (Fixed Date)	December 25	Christmas. Celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. This takes place nine months after the Annunciation.
Theophany (Fixed Date)	January 6	Jesus' Baptism, manifestation of the Holy Trinity.
Presentation of Christ (Fixed Date)	February 2	Entrance of Jesus into the Temple as a child and His recognition as Messiah by Simeon and Anna.
Annunciation (Fixed Date)	March 25	Archangel Gabriel announces to Virgin Mary she will conceive Jesus.
Palm Sunday (Movable Date)	Sunday before Easter	Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.
Pascha (Easter) (Movable Date)	1st Sunday after the 1st full moon following the vernal equinox	Pascha ('Πάσχα', which means 'Passover'), the "Feast of Feasts"; The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
Ascension (Movable Date)	40 days after Easter	Jesus' ascension into heaven, 40 days after His resurrection.
Pentecost (Movable Date)	50 days after Easter	Descent of the Holy Spirit 50 days after the resurrection.
Transfiguration (Fixed Date)	August 6	Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor.
Dormition of the Theotokos (Fixed Date)	August 15	The "falling asleep" (death, or rather dormition) of Virgin Mary and her assumption into heaven.