

Purple

Purple, like black, is a penitential color (in contrast to a festive one). It is used during Lent and in many parishes during the season of Advent. The forty days of Lent, including the six Sundays that fall during this season, use this deep, rich, color which has come to represent somberness and solemnity, penitence, and prayer. Jesus wore a purple robe only once. As the soldiers mocked and tormented him, the Scriptures record they placed on him a “purple garment” in order to ridicule him and belittle the claim that he was a monarch. Therefore, purple is used during this penitential season of Lent as a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn Jesus endured, and the subsequent sacrifice He made for our eternal salvation.

White

White is the color of purity and completeness. The theme for the “great fifty days” of Easter is supported by the use of white. This color, used primarily during these Sundays, assists in bearing the message that “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.” Christ’s triumph from the grave on Resurrection day is the cause for our rejoicing. His purity before His Father becomes our purity.

Black

Black is seen very seldom during the year. The calendar calls for its use only twice; on Good Friday and Ash Wednesday. There’s no mistaking the message that this sober color gives. Black is the absence of light. Good Friday, or Black Friday in combination with Ash Wednesday, calls for sober reflection on the cost of our redemption. Without Christ’s sacrifice on the day the sky turned dark and hid the light of the sun, there would be no bright Light of Christ to live in, nor new life in Christ to enjoy.

For more on the colors of the liturgical season, go to ...

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