

The Story of the Three-Year Sunday Lectionary Cycle

Here is one of the most amazing stories of the last century never told.

We arrived at the 21st Century with most Christian Churches reading the same gospel cycle at Sunday worship over a three-year cycle. It had been more than five hundred years since Christianity had agreement on a gospel reading cycle, and thirteen centuries since we last read the gospels in the ancient three--year cycle.

This restoration happened in stages over the 20th Century. The Second Vatican Council of the Roman Church asked for wider use of gospel passages in Sunday worship. That document was in December 1963. Pope Paul VI finally released the restoration of the ancient three--year cycle in May 1969, and promulgated its mandatory use in all Roman Catholic Churches by December 1971.

Almost immediately, other denominations—including Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, UCC, and Disciple of Christ—informally began implementation of the reading cycle for Sunday worship.

In 1992, a commission representing these denominations released the Revised Common Lectionary, known more commonly as the RCL. Today, all these churches either must or may follow the RCL cycle.

With just about 5% difference in cycles between the Roman and the RCL, most of Christendom now hears, studies and prays the four gospels in an agreed pattern. And that pattern is at heart The Journey of Quadratos.

To see the Three--Year Sunday reading cycle week by week, and year by year, here are two resources:

Roman Catholic Lectionary: <http://www.usccb.org/nab/index.shtml>

Revised Common Lectionary: <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

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www.quadratos.com*

