



## Office of Liturgy

# LITURGY ADVISORY FOR THE SEASONS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2024/2025

## The Season of Advent

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Advent has a twofold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas, in which the First Coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. For these two reasons, Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight. (Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year, 39)

Advent begins with First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of the Sunday that falls on or closest to December 1 and it ends before First Vespers (Evening Prayer I) of the Nativity of the Lord. (Norms, 40)

The weekdays from December 17 up to and including December 24 are ordered in a more direct way to preparing for the Nativity of the Lord. (Norms, 42)

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## **The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**

- During Advent the faithful should be encouraged to participate in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in preparation for Christmas. The *Rite of Penance* provides examples for the use of Form 2 of this sacrament in communal celebrations.

## **Order of Celebrating Matrimony**

- When a marriage is celebrated during Advent or Lent or other days of penance, the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these times, including mention of seasonal environment. (cf. Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 32)
- Whenever Marriage is celebrated within Mass, the Ritual Mass “The Celebration of Marriage” is used with sacred vestments of the color white or of a festive color. On those days listed in nos. 1-4 of the Table of Liturgical Days, however, the Mass of the day is used with its own readings, with the inclusion of the Nuptial blessing and, if appropriate, the proper formula for the final blessing. When the Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage” is not said, one of the readings may be taken from the texts provided for the celebration of Marriage. (OCM, 34)

*Table of Liturgical Days (nos. 1-4, according to their order of precedence)*

1. *The Paschal Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord.*
2. *The Nativity of the Lord, the Epiphany, the Ascension, and Pentecost. Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter. Ash Wednesday. Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday up to and including Thursday. Days within the Octave of Easter.*
3. *Solemnities inscribed in the General Calendar, whether of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of Saints. The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed.*
4. *Proper Solemnities namely:*
  - a. *Solemnity of the principal Patron of the place.*
  - b. *Solemnity of the dedication and of the anniversary of the dedication of one’s own church.*
  - c. *Solemnity of the Title of one’s own church.*
  - d. *Solemnity either of the Title, Founder, or principal Patron of a religious order.*

## **Funerals**

- Good liturgical practice would suggest reflecting the liturgical season in the choice of music and scripture. The Season of Advent may also reflect a change in the color of vesture and employ the option to use violet (see *Order of Christian Funerals*, 39).
- Funeral Masses are not permitted on solemnities that are holy days of obligation, Holy Thursday, the Easter Triduum, and on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, with due regard also for all the other requirements of the norm of the law (GIRM, 380).
- When the Funeral Mass is not permitted the Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass may be used (cf. OCF, 178).

## Other Liturgical Considerations

- The color of the Season of Advent is violet. In order to distinguish between this season and the season of Lent, the bluer hues of violet may be used. Blue vestments are not authorized for use in the United States. Rose colored vesture may be worn on the Third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete Sunday*).
- During Advent, the playing of the organ and other musical instruments as well as the floral decoration of the altar should be marked with a moderation that reflects the character of this season, but does not anticipate the full joy of Christmas itself (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 236).
- During Advent, the secular world focuses on decorating, shopping and rushing towards the celebration of Christmas, the Church gives us the Season of Advent as a way to practice discipline and patience in preparation for celebrating the great mystery of the Birth of Christ. Projecting the celebration of Christmas onto a season that is to be marked by waiting and spiritual preparation seems to miss the point of Advent. Therefore, church environments should not reflect this kind of thinking and the integrity of Advent is to be kept without the addition of environmental elements indicative of the Christmas Season, i.e. Christmas trees, manger.
- The Advent Wreath (see Chapter 47 of the *Book of Blessings*)
  - The use of the Advent Wreath is a traditional practice which has found its place in the Church as well as in the home. The blessing of an Advent wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent or on the evening before the First Sunday of Advent. The blessing may be celebrated during Mass, a celebration of the word of God, or Evening Prayer (*Book of Blessings*, 1509).
  - If the Advent Wreath is to be used in church, it should be sufficient size to be visible to the congregation. It may be suspended from the ceiling or placed in a stand. If it is placed in the presbyterium (sanctuary), it should not interfere with the celebration of the liturgy, nor should it obscure the altar, lectern, or chair (*Book of Blessings*, 1512).
  - When the Advent Wreath is used in church, on the Second and succeeding Sundays of Advent the candles are lighted either before Mass begins or immediately before the opening prayer; no additional rites or prayers are used (*Book of Blessings*, 1513).

**Season of Advent**  
**(December 1, 2024 – December 24, 2024)**

December 2024			
1	Sunday	First Sunday of Advent (Sunday Year C – Weekday Year I)	violet
3	Tuesday	Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, Priest	white
7	Saturday	Memorial of Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church	white
8	Sunday	Second Sunday of Advent <i>Since December 8, 2024, is the Second Sunday of Advent, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is transferred to Monday, December 9, 2024.</i>	violet
9	Monday	Solemnity of The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary <i>(include the Gloria and Creed)</i> <i>Holy day of Obligation</i> Patronal Feast Day of the United States of America	white
12	Thursday	Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe – Patroness of the Americas	white
13	Friday	Memorial of Saint Lucy, Virgin and Martyr	red
14	Saturday	Memorial of St. John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church	white
15	Sunday	Third Sunday of Advent ( <i>Gaudete</i> Sunday)	violet/rose
16	Monday	Anniversary of the Installation of Bishop John Noonan as the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Orlando.	
17	Tuesday	Advent Weekday  <i>December 17<sup>th</sup> is the beginning of the “O Antiphons”</i> <i>17<sup>th</sup> – O Wisdom</i> <i>18<sup>th</sup> – O Leader of Ancient Israel</i> <i>19<sup>th</sup> – O Flower of Jesse’s Stem</i> <i>20<sup>th</sup> – O Key of David</i> <i>21<sup>st</sup> – O Radiant Dawn</i> <i>22<sup>nd</sup> – O King of All Nations</i> <i>23<sup>rd</sup> – O Emmanuel</i>	violet
22	Sunday	Fourth Sunday of Advent	violet

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## The Season of Christmas

After the annual celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the Church has no more ancient custom than celebrating the memorial of the Nativity of the Lord and of his first manifestations, and this takes place in Christmas Time (Universal Norms, 32).

The Christmas season extends from Evening Prayer I of Christmas through the Baptism of the Lord, Sunday, January 12, 2025.

### Other Liturgical Considerations

- The color of the Season of Christmas is white. Gold vesture also may be used in place of white.
- Four Masses are assigned for the Solemnity of Christmas:
  1. Vigil Mass;
  2. Mass during the Night; historically referred to as the “Mass of the Angels”;
  3. Mass at Dawn; historically referred to as the “Mass of the Shepherds”;
  4. Mass during the Day; historically referred to as the “Mass of the Incarnate Word”.

The titles of the last three were given because of the proper Gospels assigned to each of the Masses. The *ORDO (Order of Prayer for Liturgy of the Hours and the Celebration of the Eucharist)* contains a pastoral note stating that the sets of readings of any of the Christmas Masses may be used according to the pastoral needs of each celebration. Consideration should be given to the richness of the mystery of the Incarnation as it unfolds in the proper sequence of readings for the four Masses of Christmas.

- Although many traditions observe The Mass during the Night at midnight, it is not a requirement. It may be celebrated at a late evening hour before midnight.
- The Gospel reading at any Mass is to be proclaimed by either a deacon or a priest. It is not permitted to have the Gospel proclaimed with multiple readers or voices with the exception of the Passion of the Lord which is proclaimed during Holy Week (cf. *GIRM*, 109). It is not permitted to replace the appropriate Gospel reading with a pageant or portrayal of the Gospel. Such events are to occur outside of the context of Mass.
- In the Nicene Creed, at the words “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate,” all kneel at all Masses celebrating the Nativity of the Lord (*Roman Missal*). (Those who cannot kneel may bow in the usual fashion).

- The “Christmas Proclamation” (*Roman Missal*, Appendix I, Various Chants for the Order of Mass)
  - The announcement of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord from the Roman Martyrology draws upon Sacred Scripture to declare in a formal way the birth of Christ. It begins with creation and relates the birth of the Lord to the major events and personages of sacred and secular history. The particular events contained in the announcement help pastorally to situate the birth of Jesus in the context of salvation history.
  - *The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, may be chanted or recited, most appropriately on December 24, during the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. It may also be chanted or recited before the beginning of Christmas Mass during the Night. It may not replace any part of the Mass (*Roman Missal*).
  - The minister who chants the proclamation (a Deacon or cantor) should be chosen based upon their ability to render the sung text well to the edification of the assembly (cf. *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 23).
  
- Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene (see Chapter 48 of the *Book of Blessings*)
  - The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene, according to pastoral circumstances, may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another more suitable time (*Book of Blessings*, 1542).
  - The blessing may be given during a celebration of the word of God, during Mass, or even during another service, e.g., a carol service (*Book of Blessings*, 1543).
  - If the manger is set up in church, it must not be placed in the presbyterium (sanctuary). A place should be chosen that is suitable for prayer and devotion and is easily accessible to the faithful (*Book of Blessings*, 1544).
  
- The “Epiphany Proclamation” (*Roman Missal*, Appendix I, Various Chants for the Order of Mass)
  - On the Epiphany of the Lord, after the singing of the Gospel, (a Deacon or cantor) may, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year.



**Season of Christmas**  
**(December 25, 2024 – January 12, 2025)**

**December 2024**

24	Tuesday	Vigil of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord	white
<p><b><i>Vigil Masses for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord may not begin earlier than 4:00 p.m.</i></b></p> <p><i>The Gospel reading at any Mass is to be proclaimed by either a deacon or a priest. It is not permitted to replace the appropriate Gospel reading with a pageant or portrayal of the Gospel. Such events are to occur outside of the context of Mass.</i></p> <p><i>The “Christmas Proclamation” (The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ) may be chanted or recited, most appropriately on December 24, during the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. It may also be chanted or recited before the beginning of Christmas Mass during the Night. It may not replace any part of the Mass (see the Roman Missal: Appendix I).</i></p>			
25	Wednesday	Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord ( <i>Christmas</i> )	white
26	Thursday	Feast of St. Stephen, The First Martyr	red
27	Friday	Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist	white
28	Saturday	Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs	red
29	Sunday	Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	white
30	Monday	Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord	white
31	Tuesday	Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord	white

*Vigil Masses for the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God may not begin earlier than 4:00 p.m. EST on December 31<sup>st</sup>*

January 2025

1	Wednesday	Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God <i>The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord</i> <i>Holyday of Obligation</i>	white
2	Thursday	Memorial of Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church	white
4	Saturday	Memorial of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious	white
5	Sunday	Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord	white

*The “Epiphany Proclamation” (The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts) may take place after the reading of the Gospel\* (see the Roman Missal, Appendix I).*

*\*The minister who chants the proclamation (a Deacon or cantor) should be chosen based upon their ability to render the text well to the edification of the assembly. (cf. Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship, USCCB, § 23).*

12	Sunday	Feast of the Baptism of the Lord	white
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