



# ADVENT – CHRISTMAS

## LITURGICAL SUPPLEMENT

### Diocese of Syracuse 2021-2022

#### TABLE OF LITURGICAL DAYS

November 2021		
28	First Sunday of Advent	
December 2021		
5	Second Sunday of Advent	2:30 PM Immaculata Award Ceremony Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
8	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Solemnity Holyday of Obligation
12	Third Sunday of Advent	<i>Note: The <b>Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe</b> is <u>not</u> liturgically celebrated (i.e., Mass or the Liturgy of the Hours). However, other devotions (rosary, procession, holy hour, etc.) may honor Our Lady of Guadalupe.</i>
15, 17, 18	Advent Ember Days	<i>See attached</i>
19	Fourth Sunday of Advent	
20	“The Light is On For You” Campaign	4 PM – 7 PM in parishes around the diocese
24	Vigil for the Nativity of the Lord	<i>Note: Vigil Masses are <u>not</u> to be celebrated before 4:00 PM</i>
25	The Nativity of the Lord	Solemnity Holyday of Obligation <i>Note: All Masses celebrated at any time today are of the Nativity of the Lord. There are no Vigil Masses for the Feast of the Holy Family this year.</i>
26	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	Feast
	Octave of Christmas	

January 2022		
1	Solemnity of Mary, the Most Holy Mother of God; World Day of Peace	Solemnity <i>not</i> a Holyday of Obligation this year
2	The Epiphany of the Lord	Solemnity
9	The Baptism of the Lord	Feast

**ADVENT – Frequently Asked Questions:**

**When does the new liturgical year begin?**

Saturday, November 27<sup>th</sup> – with Evening Prayer I of the First Sunday of Advent

**When do the new Lectionary cycles begin?**

Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup> – Sunday Cycle Year C

Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup> – Weekday Cycle II

**The season of Advent – what is its purpose?**

Advent is a time of vigilance and preparation for the coming of God among us: in anticipation of the future, at the end of time, in celebration of the past, by the Incarnation, and in recognition of the present, that at every moment, particularly in the liturgy and sacraments of the Church, God comes to us (*from a sermon by Saint Bernard, abbot*).

**The season of Advent – when does it begin and end?**

It begins on Saturday, November 27<sup>th</sup> with Evening Prayer I of the First Sunday of Advent. It ends on Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup> with Midafternoon Prayer on Christmas Eve.

**The season of Advent – how is it divided?**

The first part of the season (from the First Sunday to December 16<sup>th</sup>) directs the mind and heart to await Christ’s Second Coming. The second part of the season (from December 17<sup>th</sup> to December 24<sup>th</sup>) prepares for the celebration of the Incarnation at Christmas.

**The season of Advent – why are the colors violet and rose and not blue?**

While Advent is not a penitential season proper (*Code of Canon Law 1983*, canon 1250), it does have a penitential tone. The liturgy during the first part of Advent invites us to be ready for the coming of God, particularly by turning away from sin and turning more completely toward Christ. Consequently, purple or violet is used. At the same time, Advent is a season of expectant delight. Consequently, the color rose is used on *Gaudete* Sunday to signify that the focus of the liturgy has shifted to preparing for the celebration of the coming of God among us.

**The season of Advent – what is *Gaudete* Sunday?**

The Third Sunday of Advent on which the tone of the Advent season changes: the Church now rejoices (*gaudete* from the Latin imperative “rejoice,” which is taken from the antiphon at the Introit) in joyful expectation of Christ’s birth and Second Coming. On this Sunday, rose vestments may be worn.

## ADVENT – Frequently Asked Questions:

### **The season of Advent – why is the *Gloria* not sung?**

The *Gloria* is a hymn of praise. It is not sung because of the penitential tone of the season.

### **The season of Advent – can the celebration of Matrimony take place?**

Yes, but with the same moderation that is employed in the decoration of the altar and the use of the organ and other musical instruments. Note: the *Gloria* is sung when the ritual Mass “For the Celebration of Marriage” is used.

### **The Advent wreath – what is its purpose?**

The Advent wreath is a symbol of eternity and a tangible way that growing anticipation and expectation of the coming of God is marked liturgically.

### **The Advent wreath – what should it look like?**

It should be made of fresh evergreens, the purpose of which is to remind us of the new life that Christ brings at his coming, particularly as these fresh smelling greens are brought into homes and churches in the dead of winter.

### **The Advent wreath – where does it go?**

In the church, the Advent wreath may be placed in the narthex/gathering space, or near the ambo.

### **The Advent wreath – when is it blessed and its candles lighted?**

The Advent wreath is blessed according to the liturgies provided in the *Book of Blessings* (1509-1540). The first candle is lighted when the wreath is blessed. The other candles are lighted on the appropriate Sundays of Advent before Mass begins. See below.

### **Advent in practice – how should the sanctuary be decorated?**

“During Advent the floral decoration of the altar should be marked by a moderation suited to the character of this time of year, without expressing in anticipation the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord” (*GIRM*, 304). For example, fresh evergreens may be used, and fresh flowers may be added on the Third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete* Sunday). Artificial greens should always be avoided (see “Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship: *Guidelines of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*,” 124). Moreover, the decorations used for Advent should be maintained throughout the entirety of the liturgical season.

### **Advent in practice – what prayers are said?**

Prior to December 17<sup>th</sup>, it is possible to choose “either the weekday Mass, or the Mass of the saint, or the Mass of one of the saints whose memorial is observed, or the Mass of any saint listed in the Martyrology for that day” (*GIRM*, 355). Also, Advent Preface I is used. Beginning on December 17<sup>th</sup>, “the Mass for the current liturgical day is to be used; but the collect may be taken from a memorial which happens to be listed in the General Calendar for that day” (*GIRM*, 355). Also, Advent Preface II is used. On Memorials of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints the corresponding Preface may be used.

## ADVENT – Frequently Asked Questions:

### **Advent in practice – what music is appropriate?**

The proper antiphons of *Advent* or other *Advent* hymns that proclaim the coming of God and encourage us to prepare for his coming. Note: the popular Advent hymn, “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” is more suited to the later part of the season. It is based on the antiphons that accompany the Magnificat during Evening Prayer from December 17<sup>th</sup> through December 23<sup>rd</sup>, when the focus of the Church’s liturgy is on the coming Solemnities of Christmas. Like the decorations on the altar, the use of the organ and other musical instruments is to be employed in a moderate manner.

### **“Penance service” – what is it?**

The Sacrament of Penance is one of the primary ways to be vigilant as well as to prepare for the coming of God. A “penance service” is a communal celebration of the sacrament of Penance, which “shows more clearly the ecclesial nature of penance” (*Rite of Penance*, 22). The faithful gather together to hear God’s mercy proclaimed in the scriptures, prepare themselves to experience his mercy by making a good confession, and then praise God for his love and salvation. A “penance service” has a particular structure set forth in the *Rite of Penance: Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution* (i.e., Introductory Rites, The Celebration of the Word of God, The Rite of Reconciliation, and the Dismissal of the People).

### **“Penance Service” – can general absolution be given or received?**

When it is either morally or physically impossible for presbyters to hear individual confessions, they are to grant general absolution. This can be done by law only: (1) in danger of death, (2) when there is not enough time, and (3) there are not enough confessors for individual confession. Likewise, in situations of grave necessity presbyters are to grant general absolution. For example, a presbyter in the missions – but not one on a pilgrimage or at a parish penance service – may grant general absolution when there are not enough confessors to hear confessions within a suitable time and penitents will be deprived of the grace of this sacrament or of Holy Communion for some time, (c. 961 §1, 1<sup>o</sup> and 2<sup>o</sup>). For the *valid* reception of general absolution, the faithful must be (1) suitably disposed and (2) intend to confess individually any grave sins as soon as possible (*Rite of Penance*, 34). Accordingly, general absolution is ***not permitted*** at a scheduled penance service.

### **“Anointing service” – is this the same as the Sacrament of Penance?**

No. An “anointing service” is the communal celebration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. When celebrated communally, presbyters are to ensure that the sick are suitably prepared and properly disposed (c. 1002). For example, they should instruct those present concerning who can present themselves to receive the sacrament (i.e. those who begin to be in danger of death because of sickness or old age). Note: the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick forgives only those sins that cannot be confessed because of physical or moral constraints (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 6).

## CHRISTMAS – Frequently Asked Questions:

### **The season of Christmas – what is its purpose?**

Christmas recalls the Incarnation. It celebrates the memorial of the Nativity of the Lord and his first manifestations as: the Son of God, the Messiah of the Jewish people, and a light to the nations.

### **The season of Christmas – when does it begin and end?**

It begins on Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup> with Evening Prayer I of Christmas. It ends on Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup> with the Baptism of the Lord.

### **The Nativity Scene – where does it go?**

It may go in the church but not in the sanctuary (*Book of Blessings*, 1544).

### **The Nativity Scene – how and when is it blessed?**

It is blessed according to the liturgies provided in the *Book of Blessings* (1541-1569). It *may* be blessed during the vigil of Christmas or at another more suitable time (e.g., outside Mass, during Mass, during a service of lessons and carols). See below.

### **Christmas in practice – how should the sanctuary be decorated?**

“The altar should remain clear and free-standing, not walled in by massive floral displays or the Christmas crib...” (*Built of Living Stones*, 124). “Since the Christmas season begins with the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and ends with the Baptism of the Lord, the placement and removal of Christmas decorations should coincide with these times” (*Ibid.*, 125).

### **Christmas in practice – what music is appropriate?**

The proper antiphons of *Christmas* or other *Christmas* hymns that celebrate the Incarnation.

### **Mass on Christmas – how many Masses are there?**

The celebration of Christmas includes a vigil as well as the three traditional Masses of Christmas (at Night, at Dawn, During the Day). Priests who (con-)celebrate the three traditional Christmas Masses may accept three Mass offerings (c. 951 §1).

### **Mass on Christmas – the Vigil?**

The Vigil Mass was originally a way for Christians to extend their celebration of the Nativity of the Lord, not to condense or hasten it. Although it is often the most well-attended Mass, the faithful should still be encouraged to attend Mass on Christmas Day.

### **Mass on Christmas – at Midnight?**

There is no proper Christmas “Mass at Midnight.” There is, however, a Christmas “Mass at Night,” which may be celebrated at any time during the night.

## CHRISTMAS – Frequently Asked Questions:

### **Mass on Christmas – the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ from the *Roman Martyrology*?**

The “Christmas Proclamation” may be announced prior to the opening procession at the Mass at Night. The musical notation is found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition.

### **Mass on Christmas – what prayers are said?**

The proper texts for each Mass are to be used (Vigil, at Night, at Dawn, During the Day).

### **Mass on Christmas – what readings are used?**

The proper readings for each Mass are to be used (Vigil, at Night, at Dawn, During the Day). However, any *set* of readings may be used at any Mass according to the pastoral needs of each celebration (*Ordo*, 19).

### **Mass on Christmas – what happens during the Creed?**

All kneel at the words “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate...”

### **Mass on Christmas – can there be a pageant / Nativity play?**

Christmas pageants or Nativity plays should not take the place of the proclamation of the Gospel. “Care should be taken not to give the impression that the liturgy of the word is a play...” (Lectionary for Masses with Children, 52). Christmas is about the fact that Christ is born for us today (*Hodie, Christus natus est*). The celebration of the liturgy is to reflect this and, more importantly, draw those who are gathered to participate fully, actively, and consciously in the mystery of Christ present and active (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 41). What may be a suitable introduction to the Christmas Eve liturgy is the Posada – where the Holy Family seeks a place to dwell. The rite may precede the entrance procession. A copy of it is included at the end of this resource.

### **Celebrating Christmas – what about the Feast of the Holy Family this year?**

December 25<sup>th</sup> is on a Saturday this year (2021). All Masses celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup> are of the Nativity of the Lord. Vigil Masses for the Feast of the Holy Family are not to be celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup> because this feast ranks lower on the table of liturgical days. Both the Nativity of the Lord and the Feast of the Holy Family are days of precept (obligation).

### **Celebrating Christmas – how is the Octave celebrated?**

Proper Masses are arranged for each day. The *Gloria* is sung or recited. Optional memorials may be omitted or commemorated. When commemorated, the collect of the saint may replace the collect of the day.

### **Celebrating Christmas – what about the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God?**

It is *not* a holyday of obligation this year.

## CHRISTMAS – Frequently Asked Questions:

### **Celebrating Christmas – what about the Epiphany?**

The Solemnity of the Epiphany outranks the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God on the Table of Liturgical Days. Therefore, Masses celebrated at 4:00 PM or after on Saturday, January 1<sup>st</sup> are Vigil Masses for the Solemnity of the Epiphany.

Proper Masses are arranged according to the time before or after the Epiphany. The Epiphany proclamation announces the dates of movable feasts for the coming year. It may be proclaimed on the Solemnity of the Epiphany after the reading of the Gospel. The musical notation is found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*, Third Edition (also, see attached).

# ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF AN ADVENT WREATH WITHIN MASS

## GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

The form below may be used. The celebrant concludes the Universal Prayer with the Prayer of Blessing.

### Celebrant:

Christ came to bring us salvation and has promised to come again. Let us pray that we may be always ready to welcome him.

### Assisting minister:

That the keeping of Advent may open our hearts to God's love, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer or ℟. Come, Lord Jesus.*

### Assisting minister:

That the light of Christ may penetrate the darkness of sin, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer or ℟. Come, Lord Jesus.*

### Assisting minister:

That this wreath may constantly remind us to prepare for the coming of Christ, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer or ℟. Come, Lord Jesus.*

### Assisting minister:

That the Christmas season may fill us with peace and joy as we strive to follow the example of Jesus, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer or ℟. Come, Lord Jesus.*

## PRAYER OF BLESSING

[celebrant with outstretched hands]

Lord God,

Your Church joyfully awaits the coming of its Savior,  
who enlightens our hearts and dispels the darkness of ignorance and sin.  
Pour forth your blessing upon us as we light the candles of this wreath;  
may their light reflect the splendor of Christ,  
who is Lord, for ever and ever. *℟. Amen.*

The first candle is then lighted.

Mass continues with the Preparation of the Altar and the Presentation of the Gifts.

## ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF A NATIVITY SCENE WITHIN MASS

### GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

The form below may be used. The celebrant concludes the Universal Prayer with the Prayer of Blessing.

#### Celebrant:

Let us ask for God's blessing on this Christmas manger and upon ourselves, that we who reflect on the birth of Jesus may share in the salvation he accomplished.

#### Assisting minister:

For the Church of God, as we recall the circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ, that we may always proclaim with joy his gift of new life for all people, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer.*

#### Assisting minister:

For the world in which we live, that it may come to recognize Christ who was greeted by the angels and shepherds, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer.*

#### Assisting minister:

For our families and our homes, that Christ who was laid in the manger may dwell with us always, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer.*

#### Assisting minister:

For parents, that their love for their children may be modeled on that of the Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph, we pray to the Lord. *℟. Lord, hear our prayer.*

### PRAYER OF BLESSING

[celebrant with outstretched hands]

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation  
you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Savior was  
great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.

To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger;

may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,

and raise up our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us

and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**R.** Amen.

Mass continues with the Preparation of the Altar and the Presentation of the Gifts.

## ***LOS POSADAS*** (Procession to the Crib)

Prelude: "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

*Church may be darkened. At the doors of the church, a knock is heard.*

Joseph: In the name of heaven, good friends, give me and my wife a place to rest.  
The night is cold. Please let us enter.

**All: This is not a place where travelers lodge. Be on your way!  
We do not know you.**

*At the doors of the church, a knock is heard.*

Joseph: I am Joseph, a carpenter from Nazareth.  
Do not refuse us, that God may reward you.

**All: But the night is late, and we are wrapped in sleep.  
You waken us like a thief in the night. Be on your way! We do not know you.**

*At the doors of the church, a knock is heard.*

Joseph: My beloved wife Mary can go no further.  
She and I have traveled far, and, as you can see full well, she is great with child.

**All: Then forgive us, good Joseph and Mary, and be welcome.  
Come inside, you and the little One you bear. Enter, holy pilgrims!  
Enter and find rest.**

Joseph: Then peace with this house and with all who live here! Swing wide the doors and  
welcome Mary, the Queen of heaven! Swing wide the doors, that the King of glory  
may come in! For the child of Mary is the Child of God, our Lord and Savior, Jesus  
Christ. The Holy Child comes this night to live with us, one with us, for ever and  
for evermore.

*Lights are illumined.*

Presider: In peace, let us go now to Bethlehem and give witness to the birth of our Lord and  
Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Joseph & Mary et al. can process with the Infant figurine to the creche scene.*

*The Nativity scene may be blessed at the end of the Universal Prayer.*

*If incense is used, the Nativity scene may be incensed at the placement of the Christ Child figurine at the beginning of Mass.*