

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

Guidelines for Advent and Christmas 2024 in the Archdiocese of Boston

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

1ST SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2024

- ✘ The color of the vestments is purple.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ Prior to 17 December, Advent Preface I is used.

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024

- ✘ The color of the vestments is purple.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used up to midnight (cf. “Table of Liturgical Days According to Their Order of Precedence” in *Norms*, 59).
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ Prior to 17 December, Advent Preface I is used.

SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION | MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2024

- ✘ This is a solemnity
- ✘ Holy day of obligation because the feast “must be observed as a day of obligation on the day to which it is transferred” (Dicastery for Legislative Texts, Response, 4 September 2024, Prot. N. 18329/2024).
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ The optional memorial of St. Juan Diego is omitted.
- ✘ A funeral Mass cannot take place on a holy day of obligation but a Mass should follow at the soonest availability afterwards ([RCAB Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites](#) 10, 17).

DEDICATION OF HOLY CROSS CATHEDRAL | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2024

ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEDICATION OF THE METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

- ✘ This is a Feast except at the Cathedral where it is a solemnity
- ✘ The Common for the Dedication of a Church is used
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ The Creed is said.

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024

- ✘ On the Third Sunday of Advent rose colored vestments may be used (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 252).
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ Prior to 17 December, Advent Preface I is used.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2024

- ✘ Advent Preface II is used moving forward.
- ✘ O Antiphons begin.
- ✘ Novena of Masses begin, such as *Las Posadas*, or *Simbáng Gabi*

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2024

- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ The Creed is said.

INAUGURATION OF THE ORDINARY JUBILEE | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024

- ✘ Pope Francis will open the Holy Door at the Basilica of St. Peter.

CHRISTMAS EVE

- ✘ During the Liturgy of the Hours, the Announcement of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord from the Roman Martyrology may be sung or recited from the ambo after the opening verse and hymn. This is the most appropriate time for it to be announced.
- ✘ The Christmas Vigil Mass may be celebrated before or after Evening Prayer I but should be avoided before 4:00pm.
- ✘ The Readings for Mass may be taken from any of the Christmas Masses according to the pastoral needs of the congregation.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2024

- ✘ The Christmas season begins with Evening Prayer I of Christmas.
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white or gold.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ The Creed is said
- ✘ Please see Christmas and Epiphany Proclamations containing the text to be used this year.
- ✘ At the Christmas Mass during the Night, the Announcement of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord from the Roman Martyrology may be sung or recited from the ambo after the greeting.
- ✘ On Christmas itself, priests may (con-)celebrate the three traditional Masses (During the Night, at Dawn, During the Day), provided they are celebrated at the proper times. A priest who celebrates three times may accept three Mass stipends (*Code of Canon Law*, 951, §1).
- ✘ The Readings for Mass may be taken from any of the Christmas Masses according to the pastoral needs of the congregation.
- ✘ In the Nicene Creed, at the words “and by the Holy Spirit... became man,” all genuflect at all masses celebrating the Nativity of the Lord.

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024

- ✘ This is a feast.
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ A priest may wish to make use of the “Blessing of a Family” (*Book of Blessings*, 62-67), making the necessary adjustments or additions as needed. The “Prayer of Blessing” (n. 65) normally takes place at the conclusion of the Prayers of the Faithful (*Book of Blessings*, 64).
- ✘ The archbishop will celebrate Mass at the Cathedral to solemnly begin the Jubilee Year according to the rite prescribed.

MARY, MOTHER OF GOD | WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2025

- ✘ This is a solemnity.
- ✘ Holy day of obligation.
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ A funeral Mass cannot take place on a holy day of obligation but a Mass should follow at the soonest availability afterwards ([RCAB Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites](#) 10, 17).

EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD | SUNDAY, JANUARY 05, 2025

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ On Epiphany Sunday, upcoming liturgical dates were “proclaimed.” After the singing of the Gospel, a Deacon or cantor, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year according to the formula: “The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts” which can be found in musical notation in the Roman Missal: Appendix I, Various Chants for the Order of Mass. Please see Christmas and Epiphany Proclamations containing the text to be used this year.

BAPTISM OF OUR LORD | SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 2025

- ✘ This is a Feast of Our Lord.
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ The Christmas Season is over with Evening Prayer II.
- ✘ It would appropriate to use the sprinkling rite found in the *Roman Missal* (Appendix II: Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water). If this rite is celebrated, it takes the place of the usual Penitential Act at the beginning of Mass.

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

ADVENT PRACTICES

Advent has a two-fold 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 and the General Roman Calendar, 39

- ✠ The Season of Advent is a season of hope and expectation, and it would be pastorally beneficial to offer expectant parents the opportunity to receive the Church's blessing and prayerful support as they prepare to welcome new life into their families. Copies of this Rite of Blessing are available in both Spanish and English at: bit.ly/3zd30iv.
- ✠ In the United States, the official color for the season of Advent is violet.
- ✠ The Advent Wreath may be placed in the narthex/gathering area, or near the ambo. See the *Book of Blessings* 1509-1540 for the appropriate "Blessing of the Advent Wreath."
- ✠ Parishes may offer a novena of dawn or dusk Masses leading up to Christmas according to the various traditions in the Church. These Masses are known as *Rorate*, *Las Posadas*, or *Simbáng Gabi*. *Rorate* Masses are Marian votive Masses that may take place on the same day of the week each week of Advent or during the last week of Advent. They often begin in the early morning in the dark and end with sunrise. *Las Posadas* commemorates the journey of Joseph and Mary prior to the birth of Jesus. It begins with a simple procession to the church followed by Mass and a celebration. It is common among hispanic cultures. *Simbáng Gabi* is a Filipino tradition symbolized by lighted lanterns. The novena of Masses is always December 16th-24th and each day concludes with a communal meal.
- ✠ Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patronness of the Americas. Some communities may to honor this feast with the tradition of *Las Mañanitas*. It occurs on the eve of the feast with a procession, prayer, and songs to Mary (the first of which is *Las Mañanitas*).

SUGGESTED ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS MANGER AT CHRISTMAS EVE MASS

- ✠ In preparation for the Mass, the image of the Infant Jesus, covered with a small white or gold cloth, is placed near the ambo on a small, decorated table or stand.
- ✠ Before the Entrance Procession begins, a deacon or server gently uncovers the statue of the infant, revealing, as it were, the birth of Christ, the Word made Flesh.
- ✠ Following the proclamation of the Gospel, the open Book of the Gospels is placed behind, or in front of and slightly below the statue of the Infant Jesus. The Infant and the open Book of the Gospels remain together for the entire Mass.
- ✠ At the conclusion of the Mass, after the Final Blessing and Dismissal, the servers take their places in the center aisle (as they would for the recessional). The deacon, if there is one present, otherwise the priest, takes the statue of the Infant Jesus from its place and, instead of the usual recessional, the priest and ministers move in solemn procession toward the place of the manger scene. This procession may go throughout the church accompanied by instrumental music or in silence.
- ✠ Arriving at the manger scene, the statue of the Infant Jesus is placed in the crib and the priest incenses the manger with three sets of double swings. After a moment of silent adoration, the manger is blessed, the recessional hymn is announced, and the priests and ministers process out of the Church.

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS MANGER OR NATIVITY SCENE

From the *Book of Blessings*:

1541 In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to Saint Francis of Assisi who made the Christmas crèche or Manger for Christmas Eve of 1223. However, as early as the Fourth Century, representations of the nativity of the Lord were painted as wall decorations depicting not only the infancy narrative accounts of Christ's birth, but also the words of the prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk taken to mean that the Messiah would be born in the midst of animals in a manger.

1542 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.

1543 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.

1544 If the manger is set up in the 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 by the faithful.

CHRISTMAS PRACTICES

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 on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar, 32

- ✘ The scheduling of "Christmas pageants" or visits by Santa Claus within Mass are not permitted. "The Mass is not a historical reenactment of the events of salvation history and care should be taken not to give the impression that the Liturgy of the Word is a play. Care should be taken especially at Christmas... not to stage the various liturgies as plays. The Christmas Mass should not be presented as a birthday party for Jesus, nor should secular notions of Santa Claus be introduced into the Christmas liturgy" (*Lectionary for Masses with Children, 52*).

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS AND THE RITES DURING THE SEASONS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance during Advent. Every effort should be made to schedule communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance during the season of Advent and ample time for individual confession outside of a communal liturgy. In the Archdiocese of Boston, no parish may schedule general absolution at communal services per *Code of Canon Law* c. 961 § 1, 2.

FUNERALS DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Good liturgical practice would suggest reflecting the liturgical season in the choice of music and scripture (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 39). A funeral Mass may not be said on the Sunday's of Advent or on Christmas Day, but a funeral without a Mass is allowed. On these days the body of the deceased may be brought into the church for the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass using the Order of Christian Funerals, Part I Chapter 4. A Mass for the deceased should be offered as soon as is convenient after Christmas Day (RCAB Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites 10, 17).

MARRIAGES DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

The Sacrament of Matrimony may take place during the Advent and Christmas Seasons as long as it does not occur on Christmas day or on Sundays (cf. *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, 372). The use of musical instruments and the decoration of the altar with flowers should be done in a moderate manner, as is consonant with the character of the season, without anticipating the full joy of Christmas (cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 236; *The Order of Marriage*, 32).

THE COMMEMORATION OF SAINTS DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Solemnities and feasts are celebrated as usual. Memorials of the saints are celebrated during Advent and Christmas, but not during the Christmas Octave.

Until December 17th, Advent I Preface should be used except on Memorials of the BVM and the saints. The corresponding Preface in the *Roman Missal* may be used in place of the seasonal Preface.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE 2025 JUBILEE YEAR

Every 25 years the Church hosts a jubilee year to call the faithful to renewed zeal and a personal encounter with Jesus Christ by passing through a Jubilee Door in Rome. The passing through the door is symbolic of passing from sin to grace and expresses the great eagerness of our Lord to show mercy.

You can find more information about the Jubilee events in Rome at [Iubilaeum 2025](#). For events in the United States, you can read more on the [USCCB site](#). Events and pilgrimage sites in the Archdiocese of Boston are forthcoming and will be posted on the Archdiocesan website. Information about gaining indulgences during the Jubilee will be found in the forthcoming [2025 Liturgical Reminders](#).