

LITURGY UPDATE

Liturgical Memos

December 9:

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

In 2019, Sunday, December 8 is the Second Sunday of Advent. The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is transferred to the following day, Monday, December 9. Parishes will want to announce that the obligation to attend Mass on this day, however, does not also transfer. The optional memorial of Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin on December 9 is omitted in 2019.

December 16:

Reconciliation Monday

All parishes in the Archdiocese will have priests available to hear confessions from 4-8pm on this day. Pastors may wish to prepare parishioners for the celebration of this Sacrament by scheduling an [Advent Penance Service](#).

April 11:

Easter Vigil Start Time for 2020

Easter once again falls on a later date in 2020, and this will impact the start time of the Easter Vigil. On Saturday, April 11, the end of civil twilight will take place at approximately 8:00pm EDT in the New York area. Inasmuch as the *Roman Missal* states that the Vigil must begin in true darkness (*i.e.*, "after nightfall"), parishes should not schedule the start of the Easter Vigil until at least 8:30pm in 2020.



Musical Considerations For Advent and Christmas

The Advent and Christmas seasons offer opportunities for parishes to vary their musical choices at Mass, to learn new songs, and to revisit cherished favorite hymns. What follows is a description of some liturgical options and practices associated with these seasons which have grown in popularity in recent years and about which parishes may have interest or questions:

- An observance which may be new to many communities is the singing of "The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ" from the *Roman Martyrology*. Located in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*, this ancient and solemn proclamation of Christ's birth may be chanted or recited, either during the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours or before beginning the Christmas "Mass during the Night." While this proclamation should not replace any part of

the Christmas Mass, it can serve as a jubilant prelude to a parish's Midnight Mass just prior to the entrance procession, when it may be sung by a cantor, deacon or priest. A recording of this chant is available at the [National Association of Pastoral Musicians' \[NPM\] website](#).

- Also found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal* is the “Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts.” This chant may be proclaimed after the Gospel at the “Mass during the Day” for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (January 5, 2020). The Announcement serves as a sung listing and reminder of all of the most important feasts and seasons in the coming months, highlighting the centrality of the resurrection of the Lord in the liturgical year. The dates for these celebrations are conveniently located in the “Table of Principal Celebrations of the Liturgical Year,” which is found in the introductory material of the *Roman Missal*. A recording of this chant is also available at [the NPM website](#).
- The Liturgy Office occasionally receives questions concerning the use of the popular hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” throughout the Advent season. The text of this hymn has its origins in the famous “O Antiphons,” which are found in Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and the Alleluia verse at Mass during the last half of Advent, from December 17-24. The “O Antiphons” present several Old Testament names given to the Messiah, including: O Sapientia (O Wisdom), O Adonai (O Lord), O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse), O Clavis David (O Key of David), O Oriens (O Dawn of the East), O Rex Gentium (O King of the Nations), and O Emmanuel (O “God is with us”). Since these titles form part of the Church’s liturgical texts for the latter half of the Advent season, it is sometimes asked whether the use of the hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” should be reserved to those same days immediately preceding Christmas.



In response, while this hymn’s use is certainly very appropriate during this period, it should be noted that the *Liturgy of the Hours* lists this song as an option during the first half of the Advent season as well. This practice follows the liturgical theology of the Advent season described in the *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*: “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.” Thus, the *General Norms* presents the Advent season as having two complementary foci: the liturgical texts of the first weeks of Advent focus more on the Second Coming of Christ, while those in the latter half are centered primarily on the First Coming of the Messiah. Given that the titles ascribed to Christ in “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” are applicable to both His Glorious Second Coming and His First Coming in Bethlehem, it is appropriate to sing this hymn throughout the entirety of the Advent season.



- Often, parish communities wish to sing beloved Christmas hymns during the Advent season as an expression of the joy felt during this favorite time of year, and perhaps also as a result of the influence of the commercial observance of Christmas, which usually begins soon after Halloween! It is important to recognize, however,

that the liturgical season of Advent has a unique character that is different from the celebratory spirit of Christmas. As noted above, Advent is a time of joyful anticipation, and the music that is used during these weeks should reflect the sense of expectant waiting and spiritual preparation observed during the season.

With this in mind, what hymns are appropriate for Advent? Although some songs like “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” may be used during the entirety of the season (as described above), other popular Advent hymns often focus more exclusively on awaiting either the First or Second Coming of Christ; these can be selected depending on the thematic emphasis of the readings and other liturgical texts (e.g., proper antiphons and prayers) of the day. Below is a sample listing of hymns which are more appropriate for the beginning and end of Advent, respectively:

From the beginning of Advent through December 16	Third Sunday of Advent and from December 17 to December 24
Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People Creator of the Stars of Night Lo, He Comes with Clouds Descending O Come, Divine Messiah On Jordan’s Bank People, Look East When the King Shall Come Again	The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came Behold a Virgin Bearing Him Come, O Long Expected Jesus Gaudete! Gaudete! Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates! Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

- Lastly, in recent years, a Christmas song entitled “Mary, Did You Know?” has become popular in both secular and religious contexts, and it has even sometimes been adopted into liturgical settings. It should be noted that several rhetorical questions posed in the song’s lyrics present serious theological difficulties for Catholics. For example, the lyrics ask Our Lady, “Did you know that your Baby Boy has come to make you new? This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you?” This question appears to be at least an implicit denial of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which affirms that Mary was preserved from all stain of Original Sin from the moment of her conception. While there is assuredly an atemporal aspect to God’s activity, at face value, the phrase “This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you” conveys a sense that Mary was still awaiting redemption at the time of the birth of Christ, rather than having been already preserved from Original Sin from the first instant of her existence by a “prevenient grace” (see: Prayer over the Offerings for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception). Due to these problematic lyrics, this song should not be introduced into a liturgical setting.

Liturgical Q and A: Church Décor and Manger Scenes in Churches during Advent

The Liturgy Office regularly receives questions concerning church décor and the use of manger scenes during Advent. Bearing in mind that the Advent season is distinct from Christmas in its focus and manner of celebration, the USCCB's *Built of Living Stones* notes that "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" (125). Thus, manger scenes and other decorations usually associated with Christmas (e.g., red and white poinsettias, Christmas trees with multicolored lights, red bows, etc.) should be reserved for use during the Christmas season only.

The practice of displaying figures depicting the birth of Christ has its origins in the ministry of Saint Francis of Assisi, who constructed the first Christmas crèche for Christmas Eve in 1223. Already by the fourth century, however, representations of the birth of Christ were painted as wall decorations; these depictions were sometimes adorned with quotes from the prophets Isaiah (1:3) and Habakkuk (3:2), which speak of the Messiah being born amongst animals in a manger.

In our own time, it is a very popular devotion to display a manger in parish churches during the Christmas season. If this takes place, the scene should be not be placed in the main part of the sanctuary, but somewhere that is more easily accessible and set aside for private prayer and devotional acts of the faithful (*Book of Blessings*, 1544). The Nativity scene should be blessed only once each season, typically either at the first Mass on Christmas Eve, or just prior to it. Since the crèche should not be erected before the start of the Christmas season, there does not seem to be a need to keep the crib empty and without a figure of the infant Christ for any period of time. The Nativity scene may remain as a place of devotion throughout the entirety of the Christmas season, until the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord (January 12, 2020).

New Order of Baptism of Children

A new English translation of the *Order of Baptism of Children, Second Edition* has been confirmed by the Holy See and will soon be available in the United States. The earliest that the revised text may be used is February 2, 2020—the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. The use of the new *Order of Baptism of Children* becomes mandatory on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020. From that date forward, no other translation of the rite may be used in the (arch)dioceses of the United States.

Five publishers will be printing the new book, which may be [purchased directly from ICS](#) for the following prices:

Publisher	Size	English	Bilingual
Catholic Book	10.25" x 7.25"	\$24.95	\$29.95
Liturgical Press	10.5" x 7.25"	\$29.95	\$37.45
Liturgy Training Publications	10" x 7"	\$29.95	\$41.20
Magnificat	6.75" x 9.25"	\$24.55	n/a
USCCB	10.5" x 7.25"	\$32.35	n/a

Planning Catholic Funeral Liturgies Workshop - February 1

On February 1, from 10am-12pm, Fr. Matthew Ernest, S.T.D. will lead a workshop on “Planning Catholic Funeral Liturgies” at Saint Joseph’s Seminary. When facing the loss of a loved one, Catholics are often asked to help plan the funeral liturgy for a family member or friend. Questions about music at the funeral, Scriptural readings, words of remembrance, and other aspects of the wake, the funeral Mass, and the burial service frequently arise. This workshop will assist family members and friends in preparing prayerful and beautiful funeral liturgies that are faithful to Catholic belief and tradition and which give honor to the deceased in Christ. Topics to be covered will include: the Catholic understanding of death, the history of Catholic funeral rites, the role of the funeral rites in the mourning process, liturgical options (readings, music, prayers, words of remembrance), cremation questions, and the importance of the Funeral Mass. Registration is \$15 and may be found at: nyliturgy.org/funeralworkshop.



New Online Training Course for Lectors

Building on the Liturgy Office’s popular online training course for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, the Liturgy Office is pleased to announce that [online training and certification for lectors](http://nyliturgy.org/lectors) is now available as well at nyliturgy.teachable.com. The program is convenient and interactive and includes an instructional video, a short quiz, and opportunities for reflection and questions.

This free course is offered in both [English and Spanish](#) and may be accessed directly from the [Liturgy Office webpage](#).

This new training program is intended to standardize the material received by lectors throughout the Archdiocese, reduce the need for parishes to schedule their own training sessions, and create a comprehensive listing of active lectors along with the dates of their training. Completion of the training course does not of itself indicate that one is able to exercise this ministry. After finishing the course, the student will receive a certificate of completion via email. The prospective lector should present this certificate to his/her pastor, who may then request a mandate from the local dean for those who are qualified and have been trained to serve in this ministry. In the Archdiocese of New York, the mandate to serve as a lector is given for a term of three years; terms are renewable.

While archdiocesan parishes are ultimately entrusted with the training of lectors, the use of the new online training and certification program is encouraged, either in place of parish sessions or at least as a supplement to them. Lastly, parishes are reminded that archdiocesan guidelines for lectors are also available in [English and Spanish](#) at the [Liturgy Office website](#).

Announcement: Optional Memorial of Our Lady of Loreto



On October 7, Pope Francis inscribed the optional memorial of Our Lady of Loreto into the General Roman Calendar; this celebration will be observed on December 10. While proper liturgical texts will have to be translated into English and Spanish before receiving the requisite approval for liturgical use, what follows is a listing of interim liturgical guidelines for the celebration of this memorial:

Roman Missal

The Collect prayer for the new celebration is identical to one already found in the *Roman Missal* in the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary: II. In Advent, Second Option. The remainder of the formulary - Prayer over the Offerings, Preface, Prayer after Communion, and Entrance and Communion Antiphons - can be drawn from the same Mass formulary as the Collect. White vestments are worn.

Lectionary for Mass

Aside from the usual Mass readings of the day, any *Lectionary* readings from the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be used for Our Lady of Loreto. The following readings are also recommended by the Holy See (with citations from nos. 707-712 of the *Lectionary for Mass*):

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10 (no. 707-7)

The virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

Responsorial Psalm

Luke 1:46-47, 48-49, 50-51, 52-53, 54-55 (no. 709-5)

R. *The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.*
or: R. *O Blessed Virgin Mary, you carried the Son of the eternal Father.*

Gospel Acclamation

See Luke 1:28 (no. 711-1)

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women.

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38 (no. 712-4)

Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son.

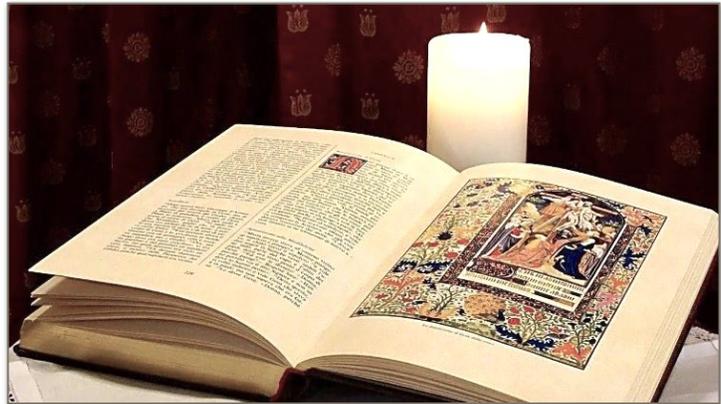
Liturgy of the Hours

The Office of Readings, Morning Prayer, and Evening Prayer should observe the psalmody of the day. Other elements may be taken from either the psalter of the day or the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The concluding prayer is from the Collect at Mass (see above).

On this day, parishes may also wish to recite the famous Litany of Our Lady of Loreto, which is available at the [following link](#).

Announcement from the Holy See: Word of God Sunday

On September 30, His Holiness Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter *motu proprio* entitled *Aperuit illis*, which establishes the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time as a day devoted to the celebration, study, and dissemination of the Word of God. Recalling the importance given by the Second Vatican Council to rediscovering Sacred Scripture for the life of the Church, Pope Francis indicated that he wrote this Apostolic Letter in response to requests from the faithful around the world to celebrate a Sunday with a particular focus on the Word of God. Pope Francis invited local communities to find ways to “mark this Sunday with a certain solemnity.” For example, he suggested that the sacred text could be enthroned “in order to focus the attention of the assembly on the normative value of God’s Word. Pastors can also find ways of giving a Bible, or one of its books, to the entire assembly as a way of showing the importance of learning how to read, appreciate and pray daily with Sacred Scripture.”



In response to this papal initiative, the following resources have been developed and assembled by the Liturgy Office to assist parishes in keeping this new observance; these may be accessed by clicking on the following links:

[Enthronement of the Word of God Service](#)

[Liturgical suggestions, including homily notes and choice of liturgical texts](#)

[Sample Prayer of the Faithful](#)



Liturgical Preparation Aid for Seasons of Advent and Christmas

The *Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions* has published a free resource for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. This preparation aid includes: the full text of the Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution, music suggestions, sample penances, calendar advisories for the seasons of Advent and Christmas, the text of the Christmas Proclamation (to be sung before the Mass at Midnight), and the text of the Proclamation of the date of Easter (to be sung before the Mass on Epiphany). This resource may be downloaded from the [Liturgy Office website](#) and distributed freely with the permission of the Confraternity for Christian Doctrine, the USCCB, and the International Commission on English in the Liturgy.

How to Select Music for Mass Workshop - February 22

Are you a parish musician looking for direction on how to choose uplifting, beautiful, and singable music for your congregation? Are you eager to learn more about the Church's understanding of the role of sacred music at Mass? On February 22, from 10am-12pm, Dr. Jennifer Donelson, professor and director of sacred music at Saint Joseph's Seminary, will explore these questions in a workshop focused on selecting music for Mass. This workshop will take place at Saint Joseph's Seminary and will include a discussion of the Church's teaching on sacred music, the role of the propers at Mass, the Church's understanding of "progressive solemnity," the distinction between devotional, liturgical/sacred, and religious music, and instrumentation used at Mass. Registration is \$15 and may be found at: nyliturgy.org/selectmusicformass.



Upcoming Events

Saint Joseph's Seminary Advent/Christmas Concerts: Sunday, December 8, 4:30 pm (Saint Joseph's Seminary, Dunwoodie). Tickets: \$40. More information: dunwoodie.edu/advent-christmas-concert.

Candlelight Christmas Concert Celebrating the Feast of Santa Lucia. Friday, December 13, 2019 at 7pm. Church of the Assumption, Peekskill. Adults - \$20, Children - \$10. More information: 914-737-2071.

Pueri Cantores Music Festival for Youth. March 27-28, 2020. Saint John Nepomucene Church (Treble Choirs) and Saint Malachy/Actors' Chapel Church (High School Choirs) in Manhattan. More information: pcchoirs.org

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