



# FROM THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP...

## NOTES FOR NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015

<b>Contents</b>		<i>Book of Blessings</i> & Christmas _____	3
Thanksgiving _____	1	Feasts of Christmas Season _____	3
Immaculate Conception Notes _____	1	New Source for Low Gluten Hosts _____	4
Upcoming Conferences _____	2	Christmas Readings _____	4
Advent Wreaths _____	2	Christmas 2016 _____	4

### Liturgical Options for Thanksgiving

**Q.:** What are the liturgical options available for Thanksgiving Day?

**A.:** There are two primary options available to us. For the Mass, the *Roman Missal* provides proper prayers for Masses on Thanksgiving Day, complete with its own proper Preface. These are found in the Proper of Saints at the end of November. The readings may be from the day or could be taken from the section “In Thanksgiving to God,” nos. 943-947 of the *Lectionary for Mass* (volume IV).

In addition, the *Book of Blessings* provides a blessing of food for Thanksgiving Day, which may be used in or out of Mass. See chapter 58, nos. 1755-1780, for the full order of service.

Of course, every Mass is the greatest celebration of thanksgiving we can hope to offer (the word “Eucharist” coming from the Greek word *eucharistia*, meaning “thanksgiving”).

### Reminder for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in 2015

In 2015, December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, is a holy day of obligation. Not only is it our national feast day, it also marks the beginning of the Jubilee of Mercy with them opening of the holy door at Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

Scheduling Masses—Since the Solemnity takes precedent over Memorials and Feasts, Masses the evening of Monday, December 7 (Memorial of Saint Ambrose) would be anticipatory Masses for the Immaculate Conception. There are not proper vigil Mass prayers and readings for this Solemnity.

Ritual and Funeral Masses—According to the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), no. 372, Ritual Masses are not permitted on Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, as well as on Solemnities, days within the Easter Octave, All Souls’ Day, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week. Therefore, Ritual Masses, including the celebration of Matrimony within Mass, are not permitted, although a wedding outside of Mass would be allowed.

GIRM no. 380 prohibits Funeral Masses on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, Thursday of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum, and Solemnities that are Holydays of Obligation. Since this is a holy day of obligation for us this year, Funeral Masses are not permitted. If one were to need to celebrate a funeral liturgy on this day, the “Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass” found in the *Order of Christian Funerals*, nos. 177-203 would be used.

## Upcoming Conferences

*Treasures of the Triduum: Liturgy and Devotion*

January 22, 2016

The Liturgical Institute; University of Saint Mary of the Lake; Mundelein, Illinois

Join the Liturgical Institute for a one-day conference on the apex of the Church's liturgical year. Perfect for preachers, teachers, RCIA directors, liturgy directors, musicians, the lay faithful and all who desire to enter more deeply into the heart of the Paschal Mystery.

This year's conference considers the question of traditions, customs and devotions that accompany the public liturgies of the Sacred Triduum. Presenters Christopher Carstens and Fr. Douglas Martis will take participants on a journey of spiritual renewal and discovery into the rich tradition of the Church.

For more information or to register, please call (847) 837-4542, or visit

<https://liturgicalinstitute.org/conferences/>.

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*Liturgy and the New Evangelization: Notre Dame Center for Liturgy 2016 Symposium*

June 20-23, 2016

*Notre Dame Vision: Liturgical Music Ministers*

July 18-22, 2016

University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame IN

Mark your calendars now for both of these events. The 2016 Symposium seeks to discern how liturgical prayer, sacramental formation, and liturgical catechesis can contribute to the new evangelization.

Notre Dame Vision for Liturgical Music Ministers (a partnership between the Notre Dame Center for Liturgy and Notre Dame Vision) seeks to provide a formation opportunity that will cultivate personal and ministerial growth for the liturgical musician in the use of the gifts and talents they bring to their ministry.

For more information on both of these events, please visit the Center for Liturgy website:

<http://liturgy.nd.edu/>.

## Advent Wreaths

**Q.:** What is the most appropriate place for the Advent wreath in the church?

**A.:** Advent wreaths, in terms of usage in churches, are a relatively recent development. This Germanic custom has become the customary reminder that the Advent season is upon us and stands as a visual reminder of our anticipation of the celebration of the Nativity at Christmas.

There is actually some leeway as to the placement and usage of the Advent wreath. Traditionally, the wreath consists of three violet candles and one rose candle that correspond to the Sundays of Advent. However, one may use four candles of the same color. A new candle is then lit for every Sunday of Advent.

While there is no hard and fast rule for the placement of the wreath, there are some basic guidelines for its usage:

- ✘ It should be of a suitable size for the space – do not use a small tabletop wreath for your church, but also do not use an oppressively large wreath that overwhelms everything around it, either.
- ✘ It may be placed in the sanctuary, at the entrance of the church, in another visible location or devotional chapel in the church proper, or perhaps even suspended from the ceiling.
- ✘ Wherever it is placed, it should never obscure or interfere with the action of the Mass or other liturgies that are celebrated in the church. It also should not replace the altar candles or the Easter candle.

The blessing of the Advent wreath may take place on the first Sunday of Advent in the context of Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, or a Liturgy of the Word. Ideally, the wreath should only be blessed at one liturgy and not repeatedly blessed over the course of a weekend. For all subsequent uses of the Advent wreath, the appropriate candles may be lit either before Mass or other liturgy, or just before the Collect of Mass.

For more information on blessing, placement, and usage of the Advent wreath, please see chapter 47 of the *Book of Blessings*, nos. 1509-1540.

## Book of Blessings and the Christmas Season

While the official liturgical season that is Christmas is relatively short, there are several liturgical blessings particular to the season that are good to recognize and celebrate. The *Book of Blessings* (BB) and *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* (HB) provide the content.

**Blessing of Nativity: BB, chapter 48; HB, pg. 78**—Probably the most obvious blessing is the blessing the nativity scene or manger, either at the parish or at home. Chapter 48 of BB provides the Order for blessing the nativity either in or out of Mass. It would seem to make sense that the nativity be blessed only once over the course of the Christmas liturgies, ideally at the first Mass of Christmas Eve or prior to it. However, it could also be revered with incense at any subsequent Christmas liturgies, perhaps during the incensing of the altar and cross at the Entrance. The shorter form found in BB is the same as what is found in HB for blessing the home nativity.

**Blessing of a Christmas Tree: BB, chapter 49; HB, pg. 78**—Both BB and HB also provide a blessing for the Christmas tree (BB, chapter 49; HB, pg. 78). Trees set up in the church are not blessed in the context of Mass. At home or at church, the blessing may be celebrated during Liturgy of the Hours or a liturgy of the Word.

**Blessing of Family: BB, chapter 1**—The Feast of the Holy Family is an appropriate time to recognize the sacredness of the family and ask for God's special blessing upon them. BB chapter 1 (nos. 62-67) would be most useful for this.

**Blessing of Homes During the Christmas Season: BB, chapter 50; HB, pg. 88**—The Christmas season, and especially Epiphany, is a traditional time when homes are blessed. One could also easily incorporate the Epiphany custom of marking the doors of the home with the year and the initials of the Magi (which is also an abbreviation for "May Christ bless this house" in Latin): 20+C+B+M+14.

Texts for these blessings are also available online from the USCCB at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/index.cfm>

## Upcoming Holy Days of Obligation and Movable Feasts During the Christmas Season

Here are a few reminders of upcoming holy days and feasts in the Christmas season:

**December 25—Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)**—It is always a holy day of obligation!

**December 27—The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**—This date is typically the Feast of Saint John, but the Feast of the Holy Family (the Sunday within the Christmas Octave) takes precedent this day. **Please note**—the *Lectionary* provides optional readings for Year C which can be used this day. Please remind your readers which readings will be used.

**January 1—Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord: Mary, the Holy Mother of God**—It is a holy day of obligation in 2016. Please remind the people of this in the days leading up to the New Year. The Diocese of Evansville is under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title "Mother of God."

**January 3—The Epiphany of the Lord**—While the traditional date for this Feast is January 6, in the United States it is moved to the Sunday between January 2 and January 8. **Please note**—in the *Roman Missal*, there are proper prayers to be used for Vigil Masses of Epiphany celebrated the evening of Saturday, January 2. The readings, however, remain the same for both days.

**January 10—The Baptism of the Lord**—This Feast, celebrated the Sunday after Epiphany, concludes the Christmas season.

## New Source for Low-Gluten Hosts Approved

In the dioceses of the United States, there have been three approved distributors of low gluten hosts known to the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship:

- ✘ Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration ([www.altarbreadsbpa.com](http://www.altarbreadsbpa.com))—Gluten Content: 0.01%
- ✘ Parish Crossroads ([www.ParishCrossroads.com](http://www.ParishCrossroads.com))—Gluten Content: 0.016%
- ✘ GlutenFreeHosts.com Inc. ([www.GlutenFreeHosts.com](http://www.GlutenFreeHosts.com))—Gluten Content: 0.002%

In early 2015, a fourth U.S. distributor of hosts for Mass came forward that offers low-gluten Communion hosts for persons living with celiac-sprue disease: the Cavanagh Company of Greenville, Rhode Island. Their low-gluten hosts contain 4.2 parts-per-million (ppm), or 0.00042%, of gluten, and have been confirmed as valid matter for the Eucharist by the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship. The low-gluten hosts provided by all four suppliers approved by the USCCB contain far below the recommended safe allowance of gluten, but do contain sufficient amounts of gluten to be used as valid matter for the Eucharist.

Parishes who wish to purchase these hosts can contact the supplier at the following:

Cavanagh Company Phone  
610 Putnam Pike Web:  
Greenville, RI 02828  
[www.CavanaghCo.com](http://www.CavanaghCo.com)  
(toll-free): (800) 635-0568

Never purchase or offer low-gluten hosts unless they have been obtained from a verified provider. Updated information on distributors of low-gluten hosts and mustum may be found on the USCCB website at [www.USCCB.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/celiac-disease-and-alcohol-intolerance.cfm](http://www.USCCB.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/celiac-disease-and-alcohol-intolerance.cfm).

As a reminder—truly “gluten free” bread is not considered valid matter for the Eucharist. The lay faithful who, unfortunately, are not able to receive Holy Communion at all under the species of bread, even with the use of these low-gluten hosts, should be offered Holy Communion under the species of wine only, regardless of whether the Precious Blood is offered to the rest of the faithful present at a given celebration of Mass. Also, low-gluten hosts are intended for those who are living with celiac-sprue disease, which can be a very serious medical condition, and not for those who have voluntarily removed gluten from their diet for other health or personal reasons. Please contact the Office of Worship if you have any other questions or concerns.

## Readings for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Just a reminder—per the *Lectionary for Mass*, the readings for the proper Vigil Mass of the Nativity (#13 in the *Lectionary*) may be used for the Masses of Christmas Day, and, in fact, the readings from any of the Christmas Masses (#s 14-16) may be used at the other Christmas Masses depending on pastoral need. The preference would still seem to be to use the assigned readings at their assigned Masses since there is some continuity in their order (especially Mass at Midnight and Mass at Dawn), but they may be rearranged if it is pastorally helpful.

## Christmas 2016

Talk about “Christmas Creep”—in 2016, December 25 will land on a Sunday. The typical schedule of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses become the weekend Masses at the parish. Please keep this in mind when scheduling Mass intentions as well as accounting for Mass collections (in theory, there would be one less weekend collection since the Christmas collection and the Sunday collection are the same).

This also can be said for the following weekend and the 2017 New Year’s Day Masses for Mary, Mother of God.