



FROM THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP...

NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2017

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Misal Romano, Tercera Edición Implementation Set

For many years, the United States Bishops have been carefully reviewing and approving sections of the Spanish-language text of the *Roman Missal* for use in dioceses of the United States. Never having a Spanish edition that was specific to the United States, this translation of the third edition would rightfully contain adaptations for use in the dioceses of our country.

In the Fall of 2016, the USCCB received word that the USA edition of the *Misal Romano, tercera edición* had received a *recognitio* from the Holy See. After some requested changes from the Holy See and some final editorial reviews, a decree of publication has been issued (dated September 14, 2017). The mandatory implementation date will be the **First Sunday of Advent 2018**, and a first use date has been set for **Pentecost 2018**.

Some highlights of the new *Misal Romano*:

- ✘ The *Misal* mostly parallels the arrangement of the English version, making it easier for cross-referencing between versions.
- ✘ Much more chant notation is included in the *Misal*, helping ministers and congregations to sing the texts of the Mass in Spanish.
- ✘ The responses of the congregation remain the same. Other prayers differ in translation but not in content.
- ✘ The Proper of Saints calendar follows the US liturgical calendar, but an appendix contains the prayers for many patronal feasts from Latin America.

Similar to what was done with the English version of the Missal in 2011, this change will be an opportunity to not only help congregations learn to pray the texts of the *Misal* but also a time to explore why we do what we do at Mass, with an obvious focus on our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters. As with the English Missal, the Office of Worship, in collaboration with the Office of Hispanic Ministry, will serve as a resource and clearing house to prepare priests, ministers, and congregations for its usage.

There will be three publishers of the ritual edition: Catholic Book Publishing Company, Liturgical Press, and Magnificat. Much like the various English editions, one can expect these editions to be similar in layout but vary primarily in aesthetics and material (such as paper quality, covers, etc.). It is the understanding of the Office of Worship that these new editions will not be shipped until the beginning of May 2018. Watch for more details over the coming months.

(Information from the September 2017 FDLN Newsletter was used for this article.)

Honoring Veterans on November 11

Q.: What are some ways we could honor our veterans on November 11?

A.: While there is no “official” blessing or prayer that is used to recognize and thank those who have served in the armed forces, there are a few options for this day as well as one Providential coincidence:

- ✘ The simplest method is to include a petition in the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass for our veterans;
- ✘ also at Mass, Solemn Blessings #12 and 13 speak of the blessings of peace, and safety from adversity;
- ✘ Chapters 70-71 in the *Book of Blessings* could be adapted to give thanks for their service;
- ✘ Thanks to Divine coincidence, November 11 is the Memorial of Saint Martin of Tours, patron of soldiers. Perhaps a prayer card or medal of the saint could be blessed and given to veterans that day.

Liturgical Options for Thanksgiving

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

A.: There are several options available to us. On the liturgical calendar, November 23 has three listings—the optional Memorials of Saint Clement I, Saint Columban, and Blessed Miguel Agustin Pro. With the persecution of Christians still alive in the world today, we should not overlook the sacrifice of the martyrs both ancient (Clement) and recent (Miguel).

For Thanksgiving, the *Roman Missal* also 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). These proper prayers and readings may be used at the discretion of the pastor or priest celebrant. If this option is exercised, it would be appropriate to still acknowledge the saints of the day either in the introduction to the Mass or perhaps in the intercessions (for example—using the Collect for Blessed Miguel as the concluding prayer of the intercessions).

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 2017

Just another reminder that in 2017, December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, is a holy day of obligation. It is our national feast day, with the United States under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrating her Immaculate Conception.

Scheduling Masses—Since the Solemnity takes precedent over Memorials and Feasts, Masses the evening of Wednesday, 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.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you!

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.

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

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

December 31—The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—This Feast is typically celebrated on the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas.

January 1—Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord: Mary, the Holy Mother of God—Since it is a Monday, it is not a holy day of obligation in 2018. This is our diocesan feast day, however, with the diocese under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title “Mother of God.” Why not go to Mass this day to pray for the diocese and for the discernment of our next bishop?

January 7—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 6. The readings, however, remain the same for both days.

January 8—The Baptism of the Lord—This Feast, typically celebrated the Sunday after Epiphany, moves to Monday when the Sunday lands on January 7 or 8. This is the conclusion of the Christmas season. **Please note**—this is a “weekday Feast,” so only one reading (along with the Responsorial Psalm) is used before the Gospel. Please remind your readers which reading will be used. As with any proper Feast, the *Gloria* is to be sung at this Mass.

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+18.

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>

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.



If the king of this world or a family father invited you to his birthday celebration, what garment would you wear other than the newest, most elegant, and most handsome one, so that neither its old age, nor little worth, nor any other unfavorable quality might be offensive in the eyes of your host? With equal care, then, as best you can and with the help of Christ, make sure you prepare your soul, adorned with the many ornaments of virtue, the jewels of simplicity, the flowers of temperance, a sure conscience, the beauty of chastity, the radiance of almsgiving, and the splendor of charity, for the solemn celebration of the Eternal King: the Nativity of Our Lord and Savior.

—Saint Caesarius of Arles, *Sermons*, 187, 3.5

Christmas and the Creed

Every time we proclaim the Creed at Mass, the Church asks us for a sign of reverence (a profound bow) at the words that speak of Christ's Incarnation and birth. However, on Christmas (and also the Solemnity of the Annunciation), we are instead asked to genuflect or kneel at those words. Since this is one of those points that only comes up twice a year, it may be worth reflecting on why we make a sign of reverence during the Creed at all, and then asking reflecting on why we are asked for more on those feasts.

Some sign of reverence has been a part of the Creed since at least the 1200s. Prior to the reforms of Vatican II, the faithful were asked to genuflect, but this was subsequently changed to a bow (except for Christmas and the Annunciation). Even though this rubric continued to appear in the Missal, its practice was seen to be sporadic, at best. It seems to have gotten its "second wind" with the publication of the revised Missal in 2011.

What makes this particular gesture important? We should look at it the way we look at the other postures and gestures at Mass — as an outward reflection of our interior disposition. In this case, we look at the words we have been praying in the Creed prior to and in connection with this sign of reverence. We have professed a faith in these things:

- ✦ A God who has made everything
- ✦ "One Lord Jesus Christ" who not only stands as the only Son of this God (who made everything as mentioned above) but is also "of the same substance" (consubstantial) with God, meaning he is divine as God is divine
- ✦ This divine person comes into the world in the flesh (incarnate) and is born of a woman

It is no wonder the angels sang their song of *Gloria* before the shepherds that first Christmas night! If we truly do believe the words we have been professing, the thought of this person, divine and human, being conceived and born into the world ought to elicit some sort of response from us. We enact that liturgically by bowing at those words on most Sundays and Solemnities, and then by genuflecting on those days in which we remember in a special way the Incarnation and birth of our Savior. We, in turn, can live that out in our lives by keeping before us the Incarnational nature of our Church and that this encounter with divinity continues to be mediated in a very fleshy way through us and all that God has made.

So, let us take those words we profess to heart, and let the liturgy continue to form us and train us in how we are to live.

Prayer for Bishop Siegel

**O Lord, who for the feeding of your flock
have set your servant Joseph over it
as a successor to the Apostles,
grant him, we pray,
a spirit of counsel and fortitude,
a spirit of knowledge and piety,
so that, by faithfully governing the people entrusted to him,
he may build up in the world the sacrament of the Church.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

(Roman Missal: Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions, #3)