



# FROM THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP...

## NOTES FOR NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2014

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### 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 2014

In 2014, December 8, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, is a holy day of obligation. As our national feast day, it is not impacted by the concession given to some of our holy days to remove the obligation when they land on a Saturday or a Monday.

Scheduling Masses—Since the Sunday in Advent still takes precedent over the Solemnity, Masses the evening of Sunday, December 7 would still be for the Second Sunday of Advent and not anticipatory Masses for the Immaculate Conception.

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: The Chants of Holy Week*

January 30, 2015

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, seen through the lens of the chants of Holy Week. 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, the popular conference Treasures of the Triduum will explore the rich theology of the texts and rites of these sacred days through their sung settings in the Church's liturgical books, and in newly composed English chant settings. The Church's chant tradition, which the Second Vatican Council called a "treasure of inestimable value, greater even than any other art," provides a musical commentary on the liturgical texts, bringing out details and dimensions that are apparent in the texts alone. Come and explore these riches of our tradition, and discover simple and accessible English chant settings that you can introduce to your liturgical assembly this Holy Week.

This year's presenter, Adam Bartlett, is an internationally recognized composer, editor, conductor and teacher of Catholic sacred music. He serves as Assistant Director and faculty member of the Liturgical Institute, lecturer in Liturgical Chant at Mundelein Seminary, and editor of *Illuminare Publications*. Active as a teacher, workshop leader and speaker, Adam has travelled around the country offering catechetical and training workshops on topics of Catholic sacred music and liturgical chant. He has served as a parish music director for over ten years, most recently as Director of Sacred Music at SS. Simon and Jude Cathedral in Phoenix, AZ.

Registration fee, which includes lunch, coffee, and snacks, is \$75. Overnight accommodations and additional meals are also available for extra fees.

For more information or to register, please call (847) 837-4542, or visit <http://www.usml.edu/the-liturgical-institute>.

## 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 28—The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**—This date is typically the Feast of the Holy Innocents, but the Feast of the Holy Family (the Sunday within the Christmas Octave) takes precedent this day. However, it would still be praiseworthy to remember the innocent victims of abortion, starvation and war this day in the Prayer of the Faithful.

**January 1—Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord: Mary, the Holy Mother of God**—It is a holy day of obligation in 2015. 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 4—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 3. The readings, however, remain the same for both days.

**January 11—The Baptism of the Lord**—This Feast, celebrated the Sunday after Epiphany, concludes the Christmas season.

## 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 prior to and in connection with this sign of reverence. To use the Nicene Creed as our example, 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

Did you hear what had just happened? 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.

## 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.

## Outdoor Statuary Donations

A request from Sister Jane McConnell, Director of Mission Integration for St. Mary's Hospital:

Pastors and Parish Leaders:

Do you have any outdoor statues such as St. Francis or others in storage or ones you are not using, and would be willing to donate them to be used at St. Mary's Medical Center locations? If so, please contact Sister Jane McConnell at 812 485-7723.