



Upcoming Holy Days of Obligation

- **Wednesday, November 1 — Solemnity of All Saints**
- **Friday, December 8 — Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**
- **Monday, December 25 * — Nativity of the Lord**

*** Regarding the Obligations for the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas:**

There are two separate obligations that must be fulfilled: the Fourth Sunday of Advent (Sunday, December 24) and Christmas (Monday, December 25). The Sunday obligation can be fulfilled by going to Mass on Saturday evening (Dec. 23) or anytime on Sunday (Dec. 24). The Christmas obligation can be fulfilled by going to Mass on Sunday evening or anytime on Monday (Dec. 25). So this year, for example, someone can actually go to a Christmas Eve Vigil Mass to fulfill the Sunday obligation, and then go to a Christmas Day Mass on Monday to fulfill the Christmas obligation. No matter how it is accomplished, the key is that the two obligations must be fulfilled separately.

- ◊ January 1, 2018 (Mary, the Holy Mother of God) falls on a Monday and is therefore NOT a holy day of obligation this year. As such, any Masses on the evening of Sunday, December 31, 2017, should still observe the Feast of the Holy Family.
- ◊ Funeral Masses and ritual Masses are not permitted on any Holy Day of Obligation. If there is a 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.

Other Important Dates

- ♦ **Saturday, December 9** marks this year’s observance of the anniversary of the dedication of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, and should be observed as a Feast outside the Cathedral, using option II in the Common of the Dedication of a Church.
- ♦ **January 22 - Mass in Thanksgiving for the Gift of Human Life**

January 22, 2018—the observance of the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*—is a “particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life, and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion” (GIRM #373). The Roman Missal’s “Mass for Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life” is found at no. 48/1 (with A & B options for the prayers) in “Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions.” White vestments are used.

New Spanish *Misal Romano* for U.S. to be Implemented in 2018

The USCCB has announced that the official Spanish edition of the Roman Missal for use in the United States (the *Misal Romano, Tercera Edición*) will be published in the spring and can be used as early as Pentecost Sunday (May 20, 2018). The mandatory implementation date throughout the United States will be the First Sunday of Advent (December 2, 2018). The *Misal Romano* will be available from three American publishers: Catholic Book Publishing, Liturgical Press, and Magnificat. More information will be sent this spring.

(Also, please note that work on a new *Leccionario* [Spanish Lectionary] has only just begun, so a new edition should not be expected in the near future.)

Christmas Notes

- ♦ **Genuflection at Christmas Masses** – At all Masses for the Nativity of the Lord, the assembly should be reminded beforehand to **genuflect during the Creed** at the mention of the Incarnation: “**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**” Particularly on this day (and also on the Solemnity of the Annunciation), we pay homage to the great mystery of the Incarnation by symbolically touching ourselves to the ground, just as the Son of God came down among us as man.
- ♦ **Christmas Décor** – “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” (*Built of Living Stones*, #125).

If a manger or crèche scene is set up in church, it should be not be placed in the main part of the sanctuary, but should be somewhere easily accessible for the prayer and devotion of the faithful (*Book of Blessings* #1544). The Nativity scene should only be blessed once each season (typically at the first Mass on Christmas Eve, or prior to it), though it could be reverenced with incense at subsequent Christmas liturgies.

- ♦ **The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ from the Roman Martyrology** – Located in Appendix I of the Roman Missal, it “may be chanted or recited, most appropriately during the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. It may also be chanted or recited before the beginning of Christmas Mass during the Night.” This proclamation “may not replace any part of the [Christmas] Mass.” A recording of the chant is available at the bottom of this page: <http://npm.org/chants-of-the-roman-missal/appendix-1-other-chants/>
- ♦ **The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts** – Found in Appendix I, it may be proclaimed after the Gospel at Mass during the Day for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (Jan. 7, 2018). A recording is at <http://npm.org/chants-of-the-roman-missal/appendix-1-other-chants/>
- ♦ **Blessing of Homes** – The Christmas season—and especially Epiphany—is a traditional time when homes are blessed. Parishes could promote the pious Epiphany custom of families using chalk to mark the year and the initials of the Magi (which also form a Latin abbreviation for “May Christ bless this house”) above the doors of their homes: **20+C+B+M+18**. This could be done in conjunction with a home blessing provided online by the USCCB: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/blessing-of-the-home-and-household-on-epiphany.cfm>
- ♦ **Regarding the song “Mary, Did You Know?”** – A Christmas song titled “Mary, Did You Know?” has become popular through radio and pop culture, and has sometimes been adopted in liturgical contexts around Christmas. However, several rhetorical questions posed to Mary in the song’s lyrics present difficulties for us as Catholics. Besides the fact that the first chapter of Luke’s Gospel makes it clear that Mary did indeed know that her Son would bring salvation and rule the nations, the biggest problem comes in these lines: “Did you know that your Baby Boy has come to make you new? This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.” This is at least an implicit denial of the Immaculate Conception, by which Mary was extraordinarily preserved from sin at her first moment of existence.

While there is an atemporal side to God's activity, at face value “This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you” conveys a sense of Mary at that moment still awaiting salvation

along with everyone else (as opposed to being already cleansed by a “prevenient grace,” as the Prayer over the Offerings for Immaculate Conception on December 8 says). And since the song was not written by/for Catholics, that’s surely the intent. But we have to affirm that Mary was not still awaiting a future salvation when Jesus was born—in fact, her purity was necessary for the Incarnation. Due to these problematic lyrics, this song should not be employed in any liturgical context—even as prelude music.

CanticaNOVA: Free Planning Resource for Liturgical Music

CanticaNOVA’s liturgical planning website, http://www.canticanova.com/pln_main.htm, provides free lists of recommended music for every Sunday and major feast throughout the liturgical year. The suggestions are quite comprehensive and include:

- ◆ options for the propers of the Mass (Introit, Communion antiphon, etc.)
- ◆ numerous hymns chosen to complement the day’s prayers and readings
- ◆ choral and organ music

CanticaNOVA seeks to promote “traditional music for the contemporary Church,” and the website also contains suggestions for weddings and funerals, as well as articles on a variety of liturgical and musical topics.

Flu Season: If it seems prudent as a means to reduce the spread of illness during flu season, any priest has the ability to omit the sign of peace after the Our Father at Mass. Offering or withholding of the Precious Blood to the people is also a decision made at the parish level.

The faithful may be reminded that anyone who is seriously ill (e.g., impaired by fever or other flu symptoms) has no obligation to attend Sunday Mass.

Looking Ahead to Early 2018

Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion:

South Bend: Sunday, February 11, 2:00 PM—St. Matthew Cathedral

Fort Wayne: Sunday, February 18, 2:00 PM—Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Chrism Masses:

South Bend: Monday, March 26, 7:30 PM—St. Matthew Cathedral

Fort Wayne: Tuesday, March 27, 7:30 PM—Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Easter Vigil Start Time, 2018

On Saturday, March 31, 2018, the end of civil twilight is at 8:32 PM EDT on the Fort Wayne side, and 8:37 PM EDT on the South Bend side. Therefore, around 8:30 PM would be the earliest possible time to begin the Vigil throughout the diocese.

Since the USCCB encourages waiting an extra 15-30 minutes (because total darkness occurs after civil twilight ends), 8:45 PM or later would really be the most appropriate start time.

The Roman Missal states that the Vigil must begin in true darkness, “after nightfall.”

Save the Dates: Notre Dame Center for Liturgy Summer Symposia

In summer 2018, the McGrath Institute for Church Life’s Center for Liturgy will host three different symposia. June 18-22 is Liturgy and Life: The Eucharistic Life. June 25-29 is The Sacramental Catechist: The Art of Eucharistic Catechesis. And July 16-20 is the Church Life Summer Institute for Liturgical Music Ministers: Music for the Liturgical Year. Registration should be available soon at <https://liturgy.nd.edu/events/summerliturgy/>

Please contact the Office of Worship at (260) 399-1426 with any questions