



Upcoming Holy Days of Obligation

- Thursday, December 8 — Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- December 25 (Nativity of the Lord) and January 1, 2017 (Mary, the Holy Mother of God) both fall on Sundays.

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

- ◆ **Friday, 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 23 - Mass in Thanksgiving for the Gift of Human Life**
January 23, 2017—the observance of the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* (moved to Monday this year)—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.

Reminders and Updates

- ◆ **Use of the new *Order for Celebrating Matrimony*** becomes **mandatory** as of December 30, 2016 (the Feast of the Holy Family). At that time, the old English edition of the *Rite of Marriage* may no longer be used. Materials to help navigate the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* are available at <http://www.diocesefwsb.org/Order-of-Celebrating-Matrimony>
- ◆ **Correction regarding a rubric in the *Order for Celebrating Matrimony*** — It had previously been conveyed by the USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship that when weddings are held during Mass on solemnities or other days listed in nos. 1-4 of the Table of Liturgical Days, one of the day’s prescribed readings could be replaced with a Marriage reading. However, the Secretariat has since clarified that this was a misreading of no. 34 in the Introduction, which permits such an exception only for those rare weddings at a regularly scheduled Mass with the parish community on Sundays of Ordinary Time and Christmas. No. 56 in the Liturgy of the Word rubrics clearly says that no substitute readings are possible for Matrimony within Mass on any days listed in nos. 1-4 of the Table of Liturgical Days.
- ◆ ***Misal Romano, Tercera Edición* receives approval** — The USCCB has announced that the long-awaited Spanish edition of the Roman Missal (the *Misal Romano, Tercera Edición*) for use in the United States has been granted the *recognitio* by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. The *Misal Romano* now needs to be prepared for publication—a process that will take some time. While no official implementation date is yet available, the USCCB is hoping it will be published and ready for use in late 2017. We will convey any further updates on the publishing and implementation.

Reminders and Updates (continued)

- ◆ **Lectionary for Mass Supplement forthcoming**—The USCCB Committee on Divine Worship has announced the planned publication of a *Lectionary for Mass Supplement* in early 2017. It will incorporate a number of additions and corrections that have been compiled since the current Lectionary was published fifteen years ago, including: updates within the Proper of Saints, adding Ephesians 4:1-6 to the Marriage readings, grouping a set of reading options for the Mass for Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life, providing readings for the three Votive Masses (Mercy of God, Our Lady Queen of Apostles, Saint John the Baptist) that were new with the *Roman Missal*, and providing all the optional readings for the extended form of the Pentecost Vigil Mass.

You will be informed once this supplement is published, at which time it can be put into use immediately

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 revered 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://www.npm.org/Chants/others.html>
- ◆ **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. 8, 2017). A recording is at <http://www.npm.org/Chants/others.html>
- ◆ **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+17**. 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>

Christmas Notes (continued)

- ◆ **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, as noted last year, 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, as the Prayer over the Offerings for Immaculate Conception on December 8 says, being already cleansed by a “prevenient grace”). 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.

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 2017

Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion:

South Bend: Sunday, February 26, 2:00 PM—St. Matthew Cathedral

Fort Wayne: Sunday, March 5, 2:00 PM—Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Chrism Masses:

South Bend: Monday, April 10, 7:30 PM—St. Matthew Cathedral

Fort Wayne: Tuesday, April 11, 7:30 PM—Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

Easter Vigil, 2017

Easter Vigil Time: On Saturday, April 15, 2017, the end of civil twilight is at 8:49 PM EDT on the Fort Wayne side, and 8:55 PM EDT on the South Bend side. Therefore, shortly before 9:00 PM would be the earliest appropriate time to begin the Vigil throughout the diocese.

The Roman Missal states that the Vigil must begin in true darkness, “after nightfall.” The USCCB even encourages waiting an extra 15-30 minutes after civil twilight ends, if possible.

Save the Date: Notre Dame Center for Liturgy Summer Symposia

In summer 2017, the McGrath Institute for Church Life’s Center for Liturgy will host three different symposia. June 19-23 is Liturgy and Life: Encountering Jesus Christ in the Bible and the Liturgy. June 26-30 is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: The Senses of Scripture. And July 17-21 is ND Vision for Liturgical Music Ministers: The Word, Music, and the Saint John’s Bible. Enrollment is limited, and details are at <https://liturgy.nd.edu/events/summerliturgy/>