

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

Guidelines for Advent and Christmas 2025-2026 in the Archdiocese of Boston

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2025

- ✠ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is not said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ Use Advent Preface I prior to December 17.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025

- ✠ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is not said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ Use Advent Preface I.
- ✠ Vigil Masses for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception are not permitted on this day.

CLARIFYING FULFILLING THE SUNDAY AND IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OBLIGATIONS

- ✠ Someone may fulfill the Sunday obligation for Sunday 12/7 by attending Mass any time between 4pm on Saturday, December 6 and midnight on Sunday, December 7.
- ✠ Someone who has already fulfilled his or her Sunday obligation may fulfill the Immaculate Conception Holy Day Obligation for Monday 12/8 by attending Mass any time between 4pm on Sunday, December 7 and midnight on Monday, December 8.
- ✠ It is necessary to attend Mass twice – once each at the appropriate times mentioned above - to fulfill both obligations. It is not possible to fulfill both obligations by attending Mass once on Sunday evening.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY | MONDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2025

- ✠ This is a solemnity.
- ✠ Holy day of obligation.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ A funeral Mass cannot take place on a holy day of obligation but a Mass should follow at the soonest availability afterwards ([RCAB Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites](#) 10, 17).

DEDICATION OF HOLY CROSS CATHEDRAL | TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

ANNIVERSARY OF DEDICATION OF METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL

- ✠ This is a Feast except at the Cathedral where it is a solemnity.

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- ✠ The Common for the Dedication of a Church is used.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Creed is only said at the Cathedral.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2025

- ✠ This day was raised to the rank of Feast throughout the Americas on March 25, 1999.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ Prefaces of the Blessed Virgin Mary I-II are used.
- ✠ Pope Pius XII declared Our Lady of Guadalupe patroness of the Americas.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2025

- ✠ On the Third Sunday of Advent rose vestments may be used (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 252).
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is not said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ Use Advent Preface I.

ADVENT WEEKDAY | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025

- ✠ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ Use Advent Preface II for the rest of the season starting today.
- ✠ The O Antiphons begin.
- ✠ Novena of Masses begin, such as *Las Posadas* or *Simbáng Gabi*.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2025

- ✠ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is not said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ Use Advent Preface II.

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VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2025

- ✠ This is a solemnity.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white or gold.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Readings for Mass at the Vigil may be taken from any of the Christmas Masses according to the pastoral needs of each celebration.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ All genuflect at the words “any by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.”
- ✠ Use Advent Weekdays propers for Mass before the Mass of the Vigil of Christmas.
- ✠ Use Evening Prayer I of Christmas for Liturgy of the Hours.
- ✠ The Christmas Vigil Mass may be celebrated before or after Evening Prayer I but should not take place before 4:00PM.

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2025

- ✠ The Christmas season begins with Evening Prayer I of Christmas.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white or gold.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Readings for Mass may be taken from any of the Christmas Masses according to the pastoral needs of each celebration.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ All genuflect at the words “any by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.”
- ✠ At the Christmas Mass during the Night, the Announcement of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord from the Roman Martyrology may be sung or recited from the ambo after the greeting.
- ✠ On Christmas itself, priests may (con-)celebrate the three traditional Masses (during the Night, at Dawn, during the Day), provided they are celebrated at the proper times. A priest who celebrates three times may accept three Mass stipends (*Code of Canon Law*, 951, §1).

SAINT STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2025

- ✠ This is a feast.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is red.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.

SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST | SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2025

- ✠ This is a feast.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.

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THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2025

- ✠ This is a feast.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ A priest may wish to make use of the “Blessing of a Family” (*Book of Blessings*, 62-67), making the necessary adjustments or additions as needed. The “Prayer of Blessing” (n. 65) normally takes place at the conclusion of the Prayers of the Faithful (*Book of Blessings*, 64).
- ✠ The archbishop will celebrate Mass at the Cathedral to solemnly close the Jubilee Year according to the rite prescribed.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD | THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026

- ✠ This is a solemnity.
- ✠ Holy day of obligation.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ A funeral Mass cannot take place on a holy day of obligation but a Mass should follow at the soonest availability afterwards ([RCAB Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites](#) 10, 17).

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD | SUNDAY, JANUARY 04, 2026

- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ On the Epiphany, there is an ancient custom of announcing the dates of movable feasts for the coming year. This Epiphany Proclamation ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)) may take place after the reading of the Gospel or within or after the homily. It may be solemnly sung by the deacon, presider, or cantor from the ambo. See the *Roman Missal*, Appendix I: The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts.

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD | SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2026

- ✠ This is a Feast of Our Lord.
- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ The Christmas Season ends on this day.
- ✠ It would appropriate to use the sprinkling rite found in the *Roman Missal* (Appendix II: Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water). If this rite is celebrated, it takes the place of the usual

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Penitential Act at the beginning of Mass.

ADVENT PRACTICES

Advent has a two-fold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas, in which the First Coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. For these two reasons, Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar, 39

- ✠ The Season of Advent is a season of hope and expectation, and it would be pastorally beneficial to offer expectant parents the opportunity to receive the Church's blessing and prayerful support as they prepare to welcome new life into their families. You will find a copy of the [Rite of Blessing of a Child in the Womb](#) in both Spanish and English.
- ✠ In the United States, the official color for the season of Advent is violet.
- ✠ The Advent Wreath may be placed in the narthex/gathering area, or near the ambo. See the *Book of Blessings* 1509-1540 for the appropriate "Blessing of the Advent Wreath."
- ✠ Parishes may offer a novena of dawn or dusk Masses leading up to Christmas according to the various traditions in the Church. These Masses are known as *Rorate*, *Las Posadas*, or *Simbáng Gabi*. *Rorate* Masses are Marian votive Masses that may take place on the same day of the week each week of Advent or during the last week of Advent. They often begin in the early morning in the dark and end with sunrise. *Las Posadas* commemorates the journey of Joseph and Mary prior to the birth of Jesus. It begins with a simple procession to the church followed by Mass and a celebration. It is common among Hispanic cultures. *Simbáng Gabi* is a Filipino tradition symbolized by lighted lanterns. The novena of Masses is always December 16th-24th and each day concludes with a communal meal.
- ✠ Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patronness of the Americas. Some communities may choose to honor this feast with the tradition of *Las Mañanitas*. It occurs on the eve of the feast with a procession, prayer, and songs to Mary (the first of which is *Las Mañanitas*).

SUGGESTED ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF THE CHRISTMAS MANGER AT CHRISTMAS EVE MASS

- ✠ In preparation for the Mass, the image of the Infant Jesus, covered with a small white or gold cloth, is placed near the ambo on a small, decorated table or stand.
- ✠ Before the Entrance Procession begins, a deacon or server gently uncovers the statue of the infant, revealing, as it were, the birth of Christ, the Word made Flesh.
- ✠ Following the proclamation of the Gospel, the open Book of the Gospels is placed behind, or in front of and slightly below the statue of the Infant Jesus. The Infant and the open Book of the Gospels remain together for the entire Mass.
- ✠ At the conclusion of the Mass, after the Final Blessing and Dismissal, the servers take their places in the center aisle (as they would for the recessional). The deacon, if there is one present, otherwise the priest, takes the statue of the Infant Jesus from its place and, instead of the usual

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recessional, the priest and ministers move in solemn procession toward the place of the manger scene. This procession may go throughout the church accompanied by instrumental music or in silence.

- ✠ Arriving at the manger scene, the statue of the Infant Jesus is placed in the crib and the priest incenses the manger with three sets of double swings. After a moment of silent adoration, the manger is blessed, the recessional hymn is announced, and the priests and ministers process out of the Church.

BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS MANGER OR NATIVITY SCENE

From the *Book of Blessings*:

1541 In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to Saint Francis of Assisi who made the Christmas crèche or Manger for Christmas Eve of 1223. However, as early as the Fourth Century, representations of the nativity of the Lord were painted as wall decorations depicting not only the infancy narrative accounts of Christ's birth, but also the words of the prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk taken to mean that the Messiah would be born in the midst of animals in a manger.

1542 The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene, according to pastoral circumstances, may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another more suitable time.

1543 The blessing may be given during a celebration of the Word of God, during Mass, or even during another service, e.g. a carol service.

1544 If the manger is set up in the church, it must not be placed in the presbyterium (sanctuary). A place should be chosen that is suitable for prayer and devotion and is easily accessible by the faithful.

CHRISTMAS PRACTICES

After the annual celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the Church has no more ancient custom than celebrating the memorial of the Nativity of the Lord and of his first manifestations, and this takes place in Christmas Time.

Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar, 32

- ✠ The scheduling of "Christmas pageants" or visits by Santa Claus within Mass are not permitted. "The Mass is not a historical reenactment of the events of salvation history and care should be taken not to give the impression that the Liturgy of the Word is a play. Care should be taken especially at Christmas...not to stage the various liturgies as plays. The Christmas Mass should not be presented as a birthday party for Jesus, nor should secular notions of Santa Claus be introduced into the Christmas liturgy" (*Lectionary for Masses with Children, 52*).

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS AND THE RITES DURING THE SEASONS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance

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during Advent. Every effort should be made to schedule communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance during the season of Advent and ample time for individual confession outside of a communal liturgy. In the Archdiocese of Boston, no parish may schedule general absolution at communal services per *Code of Canon Law* c. 961 § 1, 2.

FUNERALS DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Good liturgical practice suggests reflecting the liturgical season in the choice of music and Scripture (*Order of Christian Funerals*, 39). A funeral Mass may not be said on the Sundays of Advent or on Christmas Day, but a funeral without a Mass is allowed. On these days the body of the deceased may be brought into the church for the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass using the Order of Christian Funerals, #s 177-203. A Mass for the deceased should be offered as soon as is convenient after Christmas Day ([RCAB Policy on Ecclesiastical Funeral Rites](#) 10, 17).

MARRIAGES DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

The Sacrament of Matrimony may take place during the Advent and Christmas Seasons as long as it does not occur on Christmas day or on Sundays (*General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, 372). The use of musical instruments and the decoration of the altar with flowers should be done in a moderate manner, as is consonant with the character of the season, without anticipating the full joy of Christmas (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 236; *The Order of Marriage*, 32).

THE COMMEMORATION OF SAINTS DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Solemnities and feasts are celebrated as usual. Memorials of the saints are celebrated during Advent and Christmas, but not during the Christmas Octave. Until December 17th, Advent I Preface should be used except on Memorials of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) and the saints. The corresponding Preface in the *Roman Missal* may be used in place of the seasonal Preface.