

2017 Liturgical Calendar Reminders for the Archdiocese of Boston

RCAB Office of Divine Worship

The 2017 liturgical year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2016. This resource is not meant to replace the use of the *ordo* but is meant as a supplement. The official documents that guide the arrangement of the Church's liturgical year are the [Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar](#), and the [General Instruction of the Roman Missal](#). Below are certain highlights to these documents.

Cycles - Lectionary for Mass

Sunday Cycle	YEAR A	27 November 2016 – 26 November 2017
Weekday Cycle	Cycle 1	10 January – 28 February 2017 5 June – 2 December 2017

The Liturgy of the Hours

27 November 2016 – 9 January 2017	Advent, Christmas	Vol. I
10 January – 28 February 2017	(Ordinary Time, Weeks 1-8)	Vol. III
1 March– 4 June 2017	Lent, Triduum, Easter	Vol. II
5 June – 5 August 2017	Ordinary Time, Weeks 9-17	Vol. III
6 August – 2 December 2017	Ordinary Time, Weeks 18-34	Vol. IV

Holy Days of Obligations in the United States

Date	Feast
December 8 (Thursday)	The Immaculate Conception
December 25 (Sunday)	The Nativity of the Lord
January 1, 2017 (Sunday)	Mary, the Holy Mother of God*
May 25, 2017 (Thursday)	The Ascension of the Lord
August 15 (Tuesday)	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
November 1 (Wednesday)	All Saints *

*If this day falls on a Monday or Saturday, it is not a holy day of obligation.

Regulations for Holy Days:

- Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses are not allowed; Ritual masses are forbidden both for the Holy Day and its Vigil, thus marriages celebrated within Mass must use the Mass of the day with nuptial blessing and the readings may not be changed. Marriage Rite outside of Mass may be used with no restrictions.

Calendar Advisories for 2017



Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph: In 2016, since a Sunday does not occur between December 25 and January 1, this Feast is celebrated on Friday, December 30, with only one reading before the Gospel.

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: In 2017, since the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord is celebrated on January 8, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord is transferred to the following Monday, January 9, with only one reading before the Gospel.

Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of Mary: Since March 19, 2017 is the Third Sunday of Lent, this Solemnity is transferred to the following Monday, March 20.

The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is celebrated on Friday, June 23, and the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist on Saturday, June 24, 2017. The Memorial of the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary is omitted this year.

Parish Celebrations of Patronal Feasts and Anniversaries of Church Dedications: Parishes are reminded that the Anniversary of Dedication of their church and the patronal feast of their church are celebrated as Solemnities for that community. Because these outrank Sundays in Ordinary Time, those celebrations can be moved to the Sunday of that week, as long as they are in Ordinary Time (*Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars*, § 58).

Principal Celebrations of the Liturgical Year 2016

First Sunday of Advent	November 27, 2016
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	December 8, 2016 - <i>Holy day of Obligation</i> - Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses not allowed.
Anniversary of the Dedication of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Holy Cross	December 9, 2016 (transferred from Dec 8) Solemnity at Cathedral, feast for all parishes
The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)	December 25, 2016 – In the Nicene Creed, at the words “and by the Holy Spirit... became man,” all genuflect at all Masses celebrating the Nativity of the Lord.
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God	January 1, 2017 - <i>Holy day of Obligation</i> - Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses are not allowed.
The Epiphany of the Lord	January 8, 2017 – Please see attachment for the Epiphany Proclamation, announcing the movable Feasts for the coming year.
The Baptism of the Lord	January 9, 2017 – Transferred to a Monday
Ash Wednesday	March 1, 2017
RCIA Rite of Election for Catechumens & Call to Continuing Conversion for Candidates	March 5, 2017 – Note times and locations: 1:30 – Immaculate Conception, Weymouth 4:30 – St. Mary of the Assumption, Lawrence
Feast of St. Patrick	March 17, 2017 <i>Patron Saint of the Archdiocese of Boston, celebrated as a Feast in parishes of RCAB, and as a Solemnity only in those parishes bearing his name.</i>
Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord	March 25, 2017
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	April 9, 2017
Chrism Mass	Tuesday, April 11, 2017 11AM - Our Lady Help of Christians, Newton <i>Note: Procession begins promptly at 10:45. Every effort must be made not to schedule other parish activities this morning that would conflict. Every parish must send a representative to pick up the oils following the Mass.</i>

Holy Thursday	April 13, 2017
Good Friday	April 14, 2017
Holy Saturday	April 15, 2017 - Time for Nautical Twilight (darkness) in Boston is 8:31pm. Parishes are not permitted to start the Easter Vigil any earlier than 8:30pm.
Easter Sunday	April 16, 2017
Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord	May 25, 2017 - <i>Holy day of obligation</i>
Pentecost Sunday	June 4, 2017
Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination (1984) of Seán Patrick Cardinal O'Malley, OFM Cap	August 2, 2016 – Ranks as a Feast in the Archdiocese of Boston
The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	August 15, 2017
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross	September 14, 2017 <i>Titular Feast of the Metropolitan Cathedral of the Holy Cross</i>
All Saints' Day	November 1, 2017 - <i>Holy day of obligation</i>
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe	November 26, 2017

The Season of Advent

“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 for the Liturgical Year and the Roman Calendar, 39).

- Prior to 17 December, Advent Preface I is used. On Memorials of the BVM and the saints, however, in this or any other season, the corresponding Preface in the *Roman Missal* may be used in place of the weekday or seasonal Preface.
- The use of organ and other 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 same moderation should be observed in the celebration of Matrimony (*The Order of Marriage*, 32).
- The official color for the season of Advent is violet. The use of blue vestments for Advent is not approved for the United States.

Ritual Masses During the Season of Advent

Ritual Masses for Confirmation or Marriage are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, taking due account of the norms given in the ritual books or in the Masses themselves. (GIRM #372)

Advent Penance Service

Every effort should be made to schedule communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance during the season of Advent. Please note that no parish may schedule general absolution (cf. Code of Canon Law c. 961 § 1,2) Additionally, ample time for individual confession outside of a communal liturgy should be provided.

The Advent Wreath

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.

The Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb

“The Church welcomes with joy and compassion the mothers who, recognizing that all life is a gift from God, come to the Church seeking a blessing for their unborn child. Such a blessing sustains the parents by imparting grace and comfort... and fosters respect for human life within society” (USCCB, Rite of Blessing). 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. Copies of this Rite of Blessing are available in both Spanish and English at: <http://usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/upload/Rite-for-the-Blessing-of-a-Child-in-the-Womb.pdf>

The Season of Christmas

“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, 32).

- The Christmas season extends from Evening Prayer I of Christmas through the Baptism of the Lord, Sunday, 10 January 2016.
- 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).
- In the Nicene Creed, at the words “and by the Holy Spirit... became man,” all genuflect at all masses celebrating the Nativity of the Lord.

“Christmas Pageants” and “Santa Claus” within Mass

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).

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.

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.

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 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.

The Blessing of Families on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

The Feast of the Holy Family falls on Friday, December 30, 2016. A priest may wish to make use of the **Blessing of a Family** as found in the Book of Blessings, numbers 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, which may be found in the Book of Blessings (n. 64).

The Epiphany Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts

While a day like Christmas is fixed on the calendars on December 25th, many of the important feasts of the Church year move, based upon the date that Easter is set. Easter changes each year moving to the Sunday after the "Paschal Full Moon," and can fall between March 22 and April 25. In ancient times before calendars were common, most people did not know the dates for the upcoming Liturgical year. On Epiphany Sunday, the upcoming dates were "proclaimed". After the singing of the Gospel, a Deacon or cantor, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year according to the formula: "The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts" which can be found in musical notation in the Roman Missal: Appendix I, Various Chants for the Order of Mass. Please see the attachment containing the text to be used this year.

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord falls on Sunday, January 9, 2017. 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 Penitential Act at the beginning of Mass.

Ordinary Time and General Liturgical Considerations

Liturgical Formularies for Civil Holidays

Please consult the Ordo to see the liturgical options and Mass texts for civil holidays such as Labor Day, the 4th of July and Thanksgiving Day.

Sundays and Solemnities

- The liturgical day runs from midnight to midnight, except for Sundays and Solemnities which begin with the evening of the preceding day (or the Vigil). (GNLYC #2)
- Because of its importance Sunday gives way only to solemnities and feasts of the Lord inscribed in the General Calendar, except that the Sundays of the Advent, Lent, and Easter seasons take precedence over all feasts of the Lord and over all solemnities. (GNLYC #5)
- Solemnities are counted as the principal days in the calendar and their observance begins with the Evening Prayer I of the preceding day. (GNLYC # 11)

Ordinary Time

- On weekdays in Ordinary Time when there is an optional memorial or the Office is of the weekday, it is permissible to use any Mass or oration for various circumstances, though not from the Ritual Masses. (GIRM # 377)
- Votive Masses of the mysteries of the Lord or in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of the Angels or of any given Saint or of all the Saints may be said for the sake of the faithful's devotion on weekdays in Ordinary Time, even if an optional memorial occurs. (GIRM # 375)
- On memorials of Saints, the Collect proper to the day is used or, if none is available, one from an appropriate Common. The prayer over the offerings, however, and the prayer after Communion unless they are proper, may be taken either from the Common or from the weekdays of the current Season. (GIRM # 363)
- On the weekdays in Ordinary Time, however, besides the orations from the previous Sunday, orations from another Sunday in Ordinary Time may be used, or one of the prayers for various needs provided in the Missal. It is always permissible, however, to use the collect alone from these Masses (GIRM #263)

Lent and Easter

Guidelines for Lent and Easter will be provided as a separate resource as in years past. Parishes wishing an advanced copy of these guidelines may contact the Office of Divine Worship.

Ritual Masses

- Ritual Masses are connected to the celebration of certain Sacraments or Sacramentals, i.e. Confirmation or Marriage. They are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, on solemnities, on days within the octave of Easter, on the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Soul's Day), on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week, taking due account of the norms given in the ritual books or in the Masses themselves. (GIRM #372)

Choice of Eucharistic Prayer: (GIRM # 365)

- **Eucharistic Prayer I**, which may always be used, is especially suited on days when there is a proper text for the *Communicantes* (*In union with the whole Church*) or in Masses endowed with a proper form of the *Hanc Igitur* (*Father, accept this offering*) and also in the celebrations of the Apostles and Saints mentioned in the Prayer itself; with Eucharistic Prayer III it is especially appropriate on Sundays.
- **Eucharistic Prayer II** is more appropriately used on weekdays or in special circumstances.
- **Eucharistic Prayer III** is preferred for use on Sundays and feast days.
- **Eucharistic Prayer IV** may be used when a Mass has no Preface of its own and on Sundays in Ordinary Time. The preface that is proper to Eucharistic Prayer IV must always be used when it is prayed.

Masses on Saturdays in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Outside Advent, Christmas Time, Lent and Easter Time, on Saturdays which have no commemoration having the rank of Obligatory Memorial or higher, a Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be celebrated. The readings and prayers may be selected from the Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Roman Missal and in the Lectionary.

