

OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

DECEMBER 2023

Website for the Office for Divine Worship

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**EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL INFORMATION
FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA**

<https://www.phillyeucharisticrevival.org/>

LITURGICAL AND CIVIC CALENDAR ITEMS

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 3, 2023

As we approach the beginning of another year of the Liturgical Calendar, please note the Lectionary cycles for 2024 are:

- *Sunday Cycle – Year B*
- *Weekday Cycle – II*

The Blessing of an Advent Wreath may take place at the conclusion of the Universal Prayer on this Sunday. See *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 47, Order for the Blessing of an Advent Wreath. The Advent Wreath needs only to be blessed once, perhaps at the Anticipated Mass for the First Sunday of Advent.

**SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

Friday, December 8, 2023

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of the United States of America, is *always* a Holy Day of Obligation, even if it falls on a Monday or Saturday.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 24, 2023

All morning Masses on this day are of the Fourth Sunday of Advent without any explicit indication that the Christmas Mystery is also being observed.

The faithful are bound to observe the obligation of Holy Mass for a Sunday as usual for the Fourth Sunday of Advent with attendance at the Anticipated Mass or on Sunday morning.

The faithful are bound to observe the obligation of Holy Mass for Christmas at the Vigil Mass or on Christmas Day. Thus, the faithful have two obligations back to back.

The current *Code of Canon Law* states that “A person who assists at a Mass celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the feast day itself or in the evening of the preceding day satisfies the obligation of participating in the Mass (canon 1248, 1).” So, it is possible that someone may fulfill their Sunday obligation on Christmas Eve, if they did not go to Mass earlier for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, but would also need to fulfill the obligation for Christmas on Christmas Day.

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, CHRISTMAS

Monday, December 25, 2023

The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord is *always* a Holy Day of Obligation, even if it falls on a Monday or Saturday.

The time for Vigil Masses for Christmas in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is no earlier than 4:00 PM, without exception (see *Christus Dominus*, January 6, 1953).

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Sunday, December 31, 2023

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Monday, January 1, 2024

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God is not observed as a Holy Day of Obligation this year since it falls on a Monday.

The liturgical observance of a Solemnity typically begins the evening before with Evening Prayer I. The celebration of the Eucharist on the evening before would be the proper Vigil Mass of the Solemnity or, if there is no proper Vigil Mass, the Anticipated Mass.

Since the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God is not a day of obligation this year and the day before is a day of obligation, Sunday, the day of obligation takes precedence for the evening Mass. So, the Parish Sunday evening Mass on December 31, 2023 may be of the Sunday and for the Sunday with the Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Evening Prayer would be Evening Prayer I of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

BLESSINGS RELATED TO ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

- The rite for the blessing of an Advent Wreath, a Manger or a Nativity Scene, a Christmas tree, and of homes during the Christmas season, are found in the *Book of Blessings*. The introductions to these various blessings offer helpful pastoral and liturgical information. The provided blessings for an Advent Wreath and a Manger or Nativity Scene maintain an important balance and perspective with regard to these elements of devotion and the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.
- Priests and deacons may consider, in conjunction with Advent, using the *Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb*, published by the United States Conferences of Catholic Bishops in 2012. For more information on this Rite and to order in English or Spanish, see: <http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/prayers/pro-life-blessings.cfm>

COLDS AND FLU

AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRED LITURGY

- ❖ Ministers of Holy Communion should wash their hands before Mass begins, or even use an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution in the pew before distributing, and after purifying their fingers after the distribution of Holy Communion;
- ❖ People feeling ill should avoid receiving Communion from the chalice.

Priests are encouraged to use good pastoral common sense to allay the fears of the faithful during cold and flu season. An example of this might include refraining from the use of the Sign of Peace during the celebration of Mass and reminding the faithful not to receive the Precious Blood if they are ill.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

The Office for Divine Worship has the responsibility for direction, guidance and support of pastors and those who collaborate with them in the formation of adults for Christian Initiation. Additional information on Christian Initiation for adults can be found on the website for the Office for Divine Worship, under the heading *Christian Initiation*.

PLEASE NOTE

Full Sacramental Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation and the first Reception of Holy Communion—apart from the Easter Vigil, outside of the immediate danger of death, requires the permission of the Archbishop (see RCIA, no. 331) for someone 14 years of age or older. Archbishop Perez delegates the Office for Divine Worship to give this permission. Please contact the Office for Divine Worship for such circumstances.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

WORKSHOPS FOR LITURGICAL MINISTERS

The calendar for Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 workshops for liturgical ministers is posted on the website for the Office for Divine Worship. Register for these workshops at worship@archphila.org.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Saturday, December 2, 2023

Saint Andrew Church, Drexel Hill

10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Please register at: worship@archphila.org

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Saint Isaac Jogues Church, Wayne

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Please register at: worship@archphila.org

Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Epiphany of Our Lord Church, Plymouth Meeting

7:00 to 9:00 PM

Please register at: worship@archphila.org

Lectors

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Mother of Divine Providence Church, King of Prussia

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Please register at: worship@archphila.org

If any parish or institution would like a workshop for liturgical ministers, especially Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, please contact the Office for Divine Worship. If a parish or institution conducts its own workshop for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, please contact the Office for Divine Worship to obtain the mandate letters from the Archbishop for the new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

The following resource is available from the Liturgical Institute at Mundelein for the formation of parish liturgical ministers, <https://liturgy.teachable.com/pl/instructions-for-liturgical-ministers>.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

- **All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, without exception, are to have a current appointment letter from the Archbishop.**
- **Extraordinary Ministers who serve in institutions and schools throughout the Archdiocese are typically commissioned for service in their parishes and likewise commissioned for service in the institution and/or school.**
- Candidates are to be fully initiated practicing Catholics, high school graduates, not in an invalid marriage, recognized for faith and devotion to the Holy Eucharist as well as for service in the parish/institution/school. Pastors/chaplains are reminded to be discerning in the invitation to members of the lay faithful to carry out this ministry.
- Pastors and chaplains are encouraged to send new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the archdiocesan formation sessions. Letters of Appointment from the Archbishop will then follow. *Veteran Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are also welcome to attend.*
- Pastors and chaplains are reminded to inform the Office for Divine Worship if they conduct their own formation and to send to this office their request for new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Request forms can be found on the Office for Divine Worship website. Letters of Appointment from the Archbishop will then follow.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are appointed for a three-year term and for the place where they are commissioned. Terms may be renewed if agreeable to both the pastor/chaplain and the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.
- All records of active Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are maintained by the parish/institution/school.
- **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are commissioned after participation in a training session, according to the form found in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 63, "Order for the Commissioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion."**

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion only serve in the parishes/institutions/schools for which they are commissioned.

PUBLICATION OF SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY READINGS FOR THE PARISH WEBSITE AND THE PARISH BULLETIN

Pastors are encouraged to publish resources for the Sunday and Weekday readings for Mass on the parish website and/or in the parish bulletin to foster a reading of the Word of God outside of Mass and also as a preparation for Mass. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops provides the following website which could be published: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings>.

RECURRING INFORMATION

THE PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL, THE ARCHANGEL

Many parishes and institutions within the Archdiocese have responded positively to pray the prayer to Saint Michael in conjunction with the celebration of Mass. You are reminded that this devotional prayer is to take place outside of Mass. It is not to be prayed as the concluding prayer of the Universal Prayer nor as part of the Communion Rite.

TIME FOR VIGIL MASSES AND ANTICIPATED MASSES

The time for Vigil Masses and Anticipated Masses in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is no earlier than 4:00 PM. This applies to Holy Days of Obligation as well, including Christmas.

THE MASS SCHEDULE FOR HOLY DAYS WHEN THE OBLIGATION IS SUSPENDED

In the United States, there are three Holy Days, Solemnities, when the obligation to participate in Mass is suspended when the observance falls on a Monday or a Saturday—the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God (January 1), the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15), and the Solemnity of All Saints (November 1). In these instances, the Mass schedule certainly can be modified. However, there should be the celebration of one Mass at least for the benefit of the faithful who desire to attend Mass.

TIME OF THE EASTER VIGIL 2024

The Easter Vigil is the first Mass of Easter Sunday and not in any way to be considered an Anticipated Mass for Easter Sunday. This is why the discipline of the Church insists that it should not begin before nightfall in any circumstance. It may be helpful to know that sunset, according to a variety of models, occurs

approximately at 7:23 PM on March 30, 2024. This information is provided at this time to assist with calendar planning for 2023-2024. In general, given the variable date for Easter, it seems best to schedule the Easter Vigil each year for 8:00 PM or later.

ON-LINE COURSES ON THE SACRED LITURGY

AVAILABLE FROM THE LITURGICAL INSTITUTE AT MUNDELEIN

This is a new online liturgy program as a resource for both church professionals and the laity. This new online program extends the mission of the Institute to diocesan and parish professionals as well as interested individual Catholics. Composed of five one-hour classroom sessions followed by online quizzes, each course awards one-half Continuing Education Unit and brings a fresh, energized approach to the study of liturgical renewal. For additional information, please see: <https://www.liturgicalinstitute.org/>.

SPECIAL BUNDLES OF COURSES ON THE SACRED LITURGY DESIGNED FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

Please take a moment and look at the link below:

<https://liturgy.teachable.com/p/philadelphia>

The **Liturgical Institute** at Mundelein (at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake) has made available to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia a special bundle of their on-line courses at a most reasonable rate. These courses provide foundational information on the Sacred Liturgy for clergy and the lay faithful. They are excellent refresher courses as well as new learning opportunities for liturgical ministers and catechists.

LINKS TO HELPFUL INFORMATION

THE LITURGICAL EXCHANGE

For information about the new Liturgical Exchange in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, please see: <https://www.liturgicalexchange.com/>.

FOR THE MOST RECENT NEWSLETTER FROM THE USCCB

Individual issues of the Newsletter are posted online around the fifteenth of the month approximately three months after they have been released to subscribers.

For information on subscribing to the newsletter, visit:

<https://www.usccb.org/committees/divine-worship/newsletter>.

FOR PAST MONTHLY MAILINGS OF THE OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

Visit: <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/sacred-liturgy/monthly-mailings/>.