



Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Office for
Divine Worship
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Advent Season 2025 Sunday, November 30, 2025 - Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Beginning the Church's liturgical year, Advent (from, "ad-venire" in Latin or "to come to") is the season encompassing the four Sundays (and weekdays) leading up to the celebration of [Christmas](#).

The Advent season is a time of preparation that directs our hearts and minds to Christ's second coming at the end of time and the celebration of the mystery of the Incarnation on Christmas. From the earliest days of the Church, people have been fascinated by Jesus' promise to come back. But the scripture readings during Advent tell us not to waste our time with predictions. Advent is not about speculation. Our Advent readings call us to be alert and ready, not weighted down and distracted by the cares of this world (Lk 21:34-36). Christ came. Christ comes. Christ will come again. These summaries the season of Advent.

Like Lent, the liturgical color for Advent is **purple** since both are seasons that prepare us for great feast days. Advent also includes an element of penance in the sense of preparing, quieting, and disciplining our hearts for the full joy of Christmas.

As we prepare for Christmas, the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)* notes some differences to the Mass that should be observed during the season. For instance, the priest wears **violet** or **purple** during Advent, except for the Third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete* Sunday) when **rose** may be worn (GIRM, no. 346). Aside from what the priest wears, other aesthetic changes in the Church can include a more modestly decorated altar.

The final days of Advent, from December 17 to December 24, we focus on our preparation for the celebrations of the Nativity of our Lord at Christmas. In particular, the "O" Antiphons are sung during this period and have been by the Church since at least the eighth century. They illustrate magnificent theology by using ancient biblical imagery drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim the coming of Christ as the fulfillment not only of Old Testament hopes, but of present ones as well.

Advent devotions including the Advent wreath, Posadas, and Simbang Gabi, remind us of the meaning of the season.

PENANCE CELEBRATIONS

A well-prepared Penitential Service will help the people of God to welcome the Lord. It may also serve as preparation for the celebration of individual Reconciliation.

While this service may be celebrated any time during Advent, it is especially recommended during the days closer to "The Nativity of the Lord" (Christmas), demonstrating the community's desire to welcome the Lord with purified hearts.



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SEASON OF ADVENT II (DEC 17–24)

The Advent weekdays from December 17-24 are intended as a direct preparation for Christmas (GNLY, no. 42). Memorials of Saints are observed only as Optional Memorials during this time (GNLY, no. 16b). Except where special devotion exists, the Seasonal Mass should be celebrated (see CSL, nos. 108 and 111; GNLY 56f).

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD – CHRISTMAS

Christmas and its Octave center on the great truth of the Incarnation: God loves us and sent his Son to be one of us that we might believe and love and have eternal life (see John 3.15-16; GNLY, nos. 32-37).

The Solemnity of The Epiphany of the Lord continues the Christmas cycle celebrating the ways in which God's love is manifested or revealed to us through his Son, Jesus. The Christmas Season ends with the Feast of The Baptism of the Lord and Ordinary Time begins.

Advent & Christmas Devotionals

Q. Must an Advent wreath be placed in the sanctuary of the church? What about the creche/manger scene?

A. No. In fact, nothing should detract from the centrality of the altar in the sanctuary, even as regards seasonal décor. An Advent wreath or creche may be placed in the sanctuary, but it should not obscure the centrality of the altar. The U.S. bishops teach: "The altar should remain clear and free-standing, not walled in by massive floral displays or the Christmas crib, and pathways in the narthex, nave, and sanctuary should remain clear" (*Built of Living Stones*, 124). Consider the gathering space, foyer, side chapels, etc. for placement of seasonal devotional symbols rather than the sanctuary itself.

The order for blessing says: "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. 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. If the manger is set up in the church, it must not be placed in the presbyterium. A place should be chosen that is suitable for prayer and devotion and is easily accessible by the faithful" (1541).

During the liturgical year the Church unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from his incarnation and birth through his passion, death, and resurrection to his ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of his coming in glory. In her celebrations of these mysteries the Church makes these sacred events present to the people of every age. Through a well-done liturgical environment, that appeals to the senses of the faithful, empowers the experience of divine worship.

The tradition of decorating or not decorating the church for liturgical seasons and feasts heightens the awareness of the festive, solemn, or penitential nature of these seasons. Plans for seasonal decorations should include other areas besides the sanctuary, and even outside the church or courtyard. Exterior decorations can reflect and point



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toward the sacred mysteries celebrated within. Ultimately, all decorations should help guide the faithful toward the true meaning of the mystery being observed, rather than serving as ends in themselves (cf. BLS, 122-124).

Liturgical Environment

Advent

The character of Advent is one of waiting and expectation for the full joy of Christmas, and decoration should express this. Flowers are permitted during Advent, but only in moderation (GIRM, 305). Decoration of the church during Advent should use the colors violet and rose. *Gaudete* Sunday, however, is meant to convey an expectant joy, and more flowers could be used (without a resemblance to Christmas decorations, including poinsettias). The sanctuary should reflect simplicity and moderation during this season. **Advent is not yet Christmas!**

The Advent wreath may be displayed in the narthex or in the sanctuary as the primary visual symbol. It may also be displayed near the ambo or in another suitable place. It is customarily “constructed of a circle of ever-green branches into which are inserted four candles” (*Book of Blessing*, 1510), three violet and one rose. The Advent wreath should be visible to the congregation, but “should not interfere with the celebration of the liturgy, nor should it obscure the altar, the lectern, or the chair” (*Book of Blessing*, 1512). The wreath should have real candles, not electric ones.

Since the focus of the Advent Season is of preparation and anticipation, all Christmas decorations are inappropriate at this time (e.g., trees, festive lights) should not be displayed until the Vigil of Christmas. Christmas colors (white or gold) must be avoided. However, if limited volunteers or time make it difficult to complete the decorations on Christmas Eve, some Christmas preparations may begin earlier. For instance, the Christmas tree may be brought into the church in advance, but it should not be lit nor fully decorated before the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

The Advent and Christmas Transition

The season of Advent concludes with the Evening Prayer of December 24. The Christmas season begins with the Vigil Mass of the Nativity of the Lord on the evening of December 24. The change of environment, music, and vesture should clearly mark the transition from expectation to celebration.

Christmas

In harmony with the use of white or gold vestments, the liturgical environment (altar linens, banners, flowers, and decorations) should reflect the joy and light of the Christmas Season. Colors and materials should convey festivity and reverence while maintaining liturgical dignity.

The proper liturgical color for the Christmas Season is white (or gold). White symbolizes joy, purity, light, and the glory of the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The use of gold vestments may replace white on more solemn occasions as an expression of festivity. It should be noted that red is not a liturgical Christmas color.



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The Christmas Season begins with the celebration of the Vigil Mass of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Eve) and continues through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

During the Christmas Season, the liturgical color white (or gold) is used for all Masses, the Liturgy of the Hours, and other liturgical celebrations, except where a specific feast may indicate another color.

Exceptions:

- Feast of St. Stephen (December 26): Red is used, as it is the color proper to martyrs.
- Feast of the Holy Innocents (December 28): Red is used, as it commemorates the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents.
- Outside of these designated feast days, red is not to be used during the Christmas Season. Red is not the proper color for the celebration of Christmas itself or for the Sundays within the Christmas Season.

Music for Advent

Advent has a twofold 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 (*Roman Missal*, Ch. 1, No. 39).

1. A time of subdued excitement as we prepare for the Incarnation of Christ, as well as for his Second Coming.
2. This "subdued excitement" should reflect in all liturgical aspects of the Season.
3. The use of the organ and other musical instruments should be marked by a moderation suited to the character of this time of year, without expressing in anticipation the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord (GIRM, 313).
4. The singing should also be marked by moderation. Considering that the specific texts of Advent hymns emphasize, in subdued excitement the coming of Christ, the manner in which the hymns are sung should reflect what the texts convey.
5. The selection of hymns, as related to the use of musical instruments, should also not anticipate the full joy of the Nativity of the Lord. Hymns that are suited for the Christmas season should be reserved solely for that time of year.
6. It is highly recommended that during this Season, a few common hymns be utilized within the Liturgies. The same Gathering and Sending hymns can be sung at every Sunday Advent Mass, in that only one verse of each of those hymns is selected and rendered based on the themes of the readings. This type of hymn commonality not only assists in connecting all four weeks of Advent, but also enables the gathered faithful, in a much more profound way, to prayerfully journey together as one through the entire Season. In addition, a common second Communion or post-Communion hymn can be sung, in which only one or two verses that pertain to the themes of the readings are selected and rendered each Sunday.



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Example:

Utilizing the Same Gathering and Sending Hymns

When selecting hymns to be proclaimed within the Liturgy regardless of Season, Solemnity, or Feast, it is noteworthy to select a Gathering hymn in which its text reflects the themes of the day's First Reading. The hymn at Preparation of the Gifts can reflect the themes of the day's Second Reading. In regard to the hymn that is proclaimed at the Communion Processional, it is appropriate to select one that reflects the themes of the day's Gospel. It is also appropriate to select a Communion hymn that reflects the liturgical action of the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ (STTL, 191). The Sending hymn can reflect the overall theme of all readings combined.

Gathering

As we begin Liturgical Year A, let us say that we have selected *Maranatha, Come* (Francis Patrick O'Brien, GIA) as our consistent Gathering hymn during the Advent season. We then took some time to read, reflect, and pray upon each of the First Readings of this season. After discerning the themes of all four First Readings, we then surveyed the verses of the hymn and have decided that based upon each reading's themes, the following single verses will be sung per each Mass:

- 1st Sunday of Advent: Vs. 1
- 2nd Sunday of Advent: Vs. 3
- 3rd Sunday of Advent: Vs. 2
- 4th Sunday of Advent: Vs. 7

If the music is about to conclude while the Entrance Procession is still taking place, the refrain can be repeated until the Priest Celebrant has arrived at the presidential chair. Singing only one verse per Mass reminds all of us that the Advent journey continues through the upcoming week and into the following Sunday until we arrive at Christmas.

Sending

At the conclusion of the liturgy, let us say that we selected *Lead Us to Your Light* (Carol Browning, GIA) as our consistent Sending hymn. After discerning the overall scriptural theme of each Sunday of Advent, we noticed that the following verses best reflect each one:

- 1st Sunday of Advent: Vs. 4
- 2nd Sunday of Advent: Vs. 2
- 3rd Sunday of Advent: Vs. 3
- 4th Sunday of Advent: Vs. 1 & 5

Since the Fourth Sunday of Advent is a few days away from Christmas, two verses can be sung that day. Just as with the Gathering hymn, the refrain can be repeated as many times as needed to accompany the Recessional Procession.



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Music Planning Resources

- OCP: [MasterIndex2026_Web.pdf](#) (go to pages 67 and 68 for Advent and Christmas hymns)
- GIA: [GIA Publications - Planning Page Directory \(RC\)](#)
- ILP (St. Augustine Hymnal): [Planner](#)
- ILP (Credo Hymnal): [Planner](#)
- Cantica Nova: [CNP Articles - Liturgical Planning, Year C](#) (still waiting for planner updates at the time of this writing -- keep checking back)

Considerations When Planning Music for the Christmas Season

When planning music to be proclaimed within the Christmas liturgies, the priority in regard to hymn selection is twofold: 1.) to make sure that all hymn selections are appropriately **sacred** and **liturgical**, and 2.) to select appropriate hymns that are well-known and common amongst the gathered faithful to ensure full, active, and conscious participation.

Due to the universality of Christmas, there are numerous well-known songs of the season that feel "sacred," or that "beautifully capture and exemplify this particular time of the year." While it is true that much beauty can be found within the overall music of Christmas, we as Music Ministers must always, first and foremost, prioritize **liturgical and theological appropriateness** over personal preferences. When planning the music to be proclaimed within the liturgies that celebrate the Incarnation of the Lord, we must consider the following:

*While there is a wide selection of Christian and secular music that is inspired by Sacred Scripture, **not all** is appropriate for use in Catholic worship, which is, among other elements, **Eucharistic-centered**. Additionally, not all music that speaks about love and/or God is theologically sound and appropriate for use within the Catholic Mass.*

The planning resources listed above also contain titles of appropriate hymns that can be utilized within the liturgies of the Christmas season.

Blue for Advent or Marian Celebrations?

Liturgical Colors

Violet or purple vestments are worn throughout Advent.

Rose vestments may be worn on the Third Sunday of Advent (*Gaudete* Sunday) as a sign of joy amid expectation.

The use of blue

While blue is not generally permitted, there is a limited *indult* (special permission) granted in certain regions for the celebration of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is known as the *Privilegium Caeruleum* — the “Blue Privilege.” Granted by the Holy See to Spain and its former territories, including some parts of Latin America and the Philippines.



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It allows blue vestments to be used only on feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, such as: The Immaculate Conception and other Marian solemnities, feasts, or votive Masses for Mary.

Since this privilege is not universal and may only be used where the Apostolic See has expressly granted it, thus, parishes in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles cannot use blue vestments in the liturgy, even on Marian feasts. However, vestments may have blue accents as part of its décor.

Approved Colors of Liturgical Vestments

To summarize or further clarify in regard to the inquiries: whether blue is allowed during Advent or Marian Celebrations. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the liturgical color of the Season of Advent is purple or violet, while blue is not.

Following is an excerpt from *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*:

GIRM § 346

346. As to the color of sacred vestments, the traditional usage is to be retained: namely,

- a. **White** is used in the Offices and Masses during the Easter and Christmas seasons; also on celebrations of the Lord other than of his Passion, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Holy Angels, and of Saints who were not Martyrs; on the Solemnities of All Saints (November 1) and of the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (June 24); and on the Feasts of Saint John the Evangelist (December 27), of the Chair of Saint Peter (February 22), and of the Conversion of Saint Paul (January 25).
- b. **Red** is used on Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion and on Good Friday, on Pentecost Sunday, on celebrations of the Lord's Passion, on the feasts of the Apostles and Evangelists, and on celebrations of Martyr Saints.
- c. **Green** is used in the Offices and Masses of Ordinary Time.
- d. **Violet or purple is used in Advent and Lent.** It may also be worn in Offices and Masses for the Dead (cf. below).
- e. Besides violet, white or **black** vestments may be worn at funeral services, All Souls' Day, and at other Offices and Masses for the Dead in the Dioceses of the United States of America.
- f. **Rose may be used, where it is the practice, on Gaudete Sunday (Third Sunday of Advent) and on Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent).**
- g. On more solemn days, sacred vestments may be used that are festive, that is, more precious, even if not of the color of the day.
- h. **Gold or silver** colored vestments may be worn on more solemn occasions in the dioceses of the United States of America.

Marian Celebrations During Advent

- **Monday, Dec. 8** - Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception - Holy Day of Obligation
- **Wednesday, Dec. 10** - Optional memorial of Our Lady of Loreto
 - See this link for more information: [Our Lady of Loreto | USCCB](#)
- **Friday, Dec. 12** Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe



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CHRISTMAS SEASON

~ December 24, 2025 - January 11, 2026 ~

~ **Christmas Vigil to Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord** ~

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us” Isaiah 9:6

At Christmas, we celebrate one of mysteries of our faith: the Incarnation—the Word made flesh, God dwelling among us. Yet this mystery is not only about God coming close to us; it is also about us being brought close to God. In Jesus, our fallen humanity is redeemed. Through Him, we are invited to share in the very life of God Himself.

The child of Bethlehem came to do the Father’s will, a mission that would lead Him all the way to the cross. From the stable to Calvary, His love never shaken. The manger and the cross are part of the same story of mercy—God giving Himself completely so that we might have life.

God became human, not simply to walk beside us, but to lift us up into His own divine life. The Incarnation is the beginning of our transformation—our divinization, as the Church Fathers called it. Through Christ, we are made new, filled with His Spirit, and called to live as children of God. But this gift is not meant to remain private or hidden within us. It is given so that, together with Christ, we might help rebuild the world—healing what is broken, restoring what is lost, and bringing light where there is darkness.

Christmas reminds us that we are not spectators to God’s work. We are participants—beloved sons and daughters invited to share in His mission. If we can now see and touch God, it is because the eternal Word has taken on our humanity. And this same incarnate Lord is still with us, especially in the Eucharist. There, His glorified body is truly present—no longer bound by time or space, but alive in our midst whenever we gather in His name.

So this Christmas, as we gaze upon the manger, may we remember that the story does not end there. God has come among us so that we might live in Him. Emmanuel—God with us—means also that we are with God.