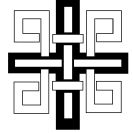


SEASON OF CHRISTMAS 2026-2027

Sunday Cycle B; Weekdays Year I
24 December 2026 – 10 January 2027



The Christmas season begins with Evening Prayer I of Christmas on Thursday, December 24, 2026, and continues through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday, January 10, 2027.

SEASONAL FOCUS

The Christmas season celebrates the memorial of Christ's birth and early manifestations. This season is second only to the yearly celebration of the Triduum. (*UNLY* #32)

LECTIONARY

⌘ **Cycle B** of Sunday readings is proclaimed. **Year I** readings are proclaimed for weekdays.

KEY DATES

⌘ **NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) – Friday, December 25, 2026 [White]**
[Holy Day of Obligation]

Reminder: Masses for Christmas Eve may not begin before 4:00 p.m.

The texts at #13-16 in the Lectionary may be used, according to the pastoral needs of each celebration, for any Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. (Lectionary #13)

At all Christmas Masses, during the Creed all kneel at the words “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

The Gloria is sung or recited at all Christmas Masses and on all days within the Octave of Christmas (December 25-January 1, inclusive).

Vigil of Christmas (Thursday, December 24, 2026):

Lectionary #13 (or #14-16)

Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25 or 1:18-25

Mass during the Night:

Lectionary #14 (or #13, 15, or 16)

Isaiah 9:1-6; Psalm 96:1-3, 11-13; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ may be sung or recited during the Liturgy of the Hours or before the beginning of the Christmas Mass during the Night. It may not replace any part of the Mass. The text can be found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*.

Mass at Dawn (Friday, December 25, 2026):

Lectionary #15 (or #13, 14, or 16)

Isaiah 62:11-12; Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20

Mass during the Day:

Lectionary #16 (or #13-15)

Isaiah 52:7-10, Psalm 98:1-6; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Participation Aids

The Masses of Christmas are probably the best attended of the entire year. This offers us the opportunity to show Christian hospitality. A worship aid can be a great help to the many visitors we encounter at these Masses. A sample Christmas pew card in English or Spanish can be downloaded at www.archlou.org/worship and may be reproduced on letter size paper, front and back. The card includes the spoken texts of the liturgy for the assembly. The texts of the Gloria, Sanctus, and Mystery of Faith are included, even though in most cases these will be sung.

✠ FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN, MARTYR—Saturday, December 26, 2026 [Red]

Lectionary #696

Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59; Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6-8ab, 16bc-17; Matthew 10:17-22

✠ FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH – Sunday, December 27, 2026 [White]

Lectionary #17

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Psalm 128:1-5; Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40 *Or* Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Psalm 105:1-6, 8-9; Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

At Mass on the Feast of the Holy Family, a priest may wish to make use of the “Blessing of a Family” as found in the *Book of Blessings* #62-67.

✠ FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS—Monday, December 28, 2026 [Red]

Lectionary #698

1 John 1:5-2:2; Psalm 124:2-5, 7c-8; Matthew 2:13-18

✠ SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD – Friday, January 1, 2027 [White] [Holy Day of Obligation]

Gloria and Creed are said or sung.

Lectionary #18

Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21

✠ THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – Sunday, January 3, 2027 [White]

Lectionary #20

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

On the Solemnity of the Epiphany, the traditional Proclamation of the Date of Easter and other feasts of the liturgical year may be sung or recited after the Gospel according to the text given in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*. This may be sung or recited at the ambo by a deacon, cantor, or other minister.

✠ FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – Sunday, January 10, 2027 [White]

Lectionary #21

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7; Psalm 29:1a, 2, 3ac-4, 3b, 9b-10; Acts 10:34-38; Mark 1:7-11 *Or* Isaiah 55:1-11; (Ps.) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6; 1 John 5:1-9; Mark 1:7-11

RITUAL CELEBRATIONS

- ⌘ The funeral Mass may not be held on Christmas or on the Solemnity of the Mary, Mother of God. The funeral liturgy outside Mass may be celebrated on any day during the Christmas Season. (*GIRM* #380, *OCF* #271)
- ⌘ “A Mass for the Dead, on receiving the news of a death, for the final burial, or the first anniversary, may be celebrated even on days within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord ...” (*GIRM* #381)
- ⌘ The nuptial Mass may not be used on Christmas, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, or on the Solemnity of the Epiphany. The Order for Celebrating Matrimony without Mass may be celebrated on any day during the Christmas Season. (*OCM* #34)

MUSIC

- ⌘ The Gloria is sung or recited at all Christmas Masses and on all days within the Octave of Christmas (December 25-December 31, inclusive), on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (Jan. 1), on the Solemnity of the Epiphany (Jan. 3), and on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (Jan. 10).
- ⌘ Common Psalms: “The psalm as a rule is drawn from the Lectionary ... Nevertheless, in order that the people may be able to join in the responsorial psalm more readily, some texts of responses and psalms have been chosen, according to the different seasons of the year and classes of saints, for optional use, whenever the psalm is sung, in place of the text corresponding to the reading.” (Lectionary #173/174)
 - ⌘ Common Response for the Season of Christmas [Lectionary #173]
“Lord, today we have seen your glory.”
 - ⌘ Common Psalm for the Season of Christmas [Lectionary #174]
Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6 – “All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.”
 - ⌘ Common Psalm for Epiphany [Lectionary #174]
Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 – “Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.”

WORSHIP ENVIRONMENT

- ⌘ “Plans for seasonal decorations should include other areas besides the sanctuary. Decorations are intended to draw people to the true nature of the mystery being celebrated rather than being ends in themselves. Natural flowers, plants, wreaths and fabric hangings, and other seasonal objects can be arranged to enhance the primary liturgical points of focus. 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.” (*BLS* #124)
- ⌘ “These seasonal decorations are maintained throughout the entire liturgical season. Since the Christmas season begins with the Vigil Mass on Christmas and ends with the Baptism of the Lord, the placement and removal of Christmas decorations should coincide with these times...” (*BLS* #125)
- ⌘ “Objects such as...the Christmas crib, and other traditional seasonal appointments proportioned to the size of the space and to the other furnishings can enhance the prayer and understanding of the parish community.” (*BLS* #128)

- ⌘ “The use of living flowers and plants, rather than artificial greens, serves as a reminder of the gift of life God has given to the human community. Planning for plants and flowers should include not only the procurement and placement but also the continuing care needed to sustain living things.” (*BLS* #129)
- ⌘ Color of Sacred Vestments: White is the designated color for vestments during the Christmas season. Gold or silver colored vestments may be worn on more solemn occasions. Red vestments are designated for the Feast of the St. Stephen (Dec. 26) and the Feast of the Holy Innocents (Dec. 28). (*GIRM* #346)

BLESSING OF A MANGER OR NATIVITY SCENE (See *Book of Blessings* #1541-1569)

The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another more suitable time, according to the rite in the *Book of Blessings* #1541-1569.

The blessing may be given during a celebration of the word of God, during Mass, or even during another service, e.g., a service of lessons & carols (*BB* #1542, 1543)

The Christmas manger or nativity scene should be placed in an area that is suitable for prayer and devotion and is easily accessible by the faithful. It must not be placed in the presbyterium, the area encompassing the altar, ambo, or presider’s chair. (*BB* #1544 and *Bishop’s Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter*, October-November, 1989)

If the manger or nativity scene is blessed during Mass, a priest gives the blessing. If it is blessed outside of Mass, a priest, deacon, or lay minister may give the blessing. (*BB* #1546, 1547, 1562)

If the manger or nativity scene is blessed during Mass, this occurs at the conclusion of the General Intercessions (Universal Prayer). (*BB* #1563, 1564)

BB = Book of Blessings
 BLS = Built of Living Stones
 GIRM = General Instruction of the Roman Missal
 LMI = Lectionary for Sunday Mass, Introduction
 UNLY = Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year
 OCF = Order of Christian Funerals
 OCM = Order of Celebrating Matrimony