



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

Office of Worship

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Advent and Christmas 2024

Liturgical Reminders

Advent

The Advent Wreath

Promoting practices like lighting Advent Wreaths in the domestic church helps the Faithful celebrate the mysteries of Christ. It may be blessed at home by a parent¹, so it is helpful to provide families access to the prayer or refer them to *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers* or the USCCB website². During Mass the Wreath is blessed after the Universal Prayer during the first Mass celebrated in Advent. It may be placed in the sanctuary so long as it does not block the view of the altar, ambo, or chair³. This particular blessing could be repeated at all the First Sunday of Advent liturgies. Despite the title of the blessing, both options for the prayer invoke a blessing upon “us” as we light the candles, rather than upon the wreath itself. Lighting the candles without the blessing is envisioned in the rite only for the “Second and succeeding Sundays of Advent”.⁴ On these days it is lighted “either before Mass begins or immediately before the opening prayer”.⁵

Advent Penance Services

The Rite of Penance includes sample penitential services for Advent.⁶ When the Sacrament of Penance is celebrated in these services, “after the readings and Homily, and The Order for Reconciling Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution (nos. 54-59) is used. . .”.⁷

Simbang Gabi

The traditional Simbang Gabi novena of Masses in the Diocese of Sacramento adheres to the liturgical guidelines appropriate to the Season of Advent. The readings and prayers are taken from the Mass of the Day. Vestments are violet (or, optionally, rose on Gaudete Sunday). The Gloria should not be sung at Simbang Gabi Masses except on Solemnities. The Creed is only recited when indicated by the Ordo, such as at Sunday Masses and Solemnities.

¹ *Book of Blessings* #1514

² <https://www.usccb.org/prayers/blessing-advent-wreath> or <https://www.usccb.org/es/prayers/bendicion-de-la-corona-de-adviento>

³ *Book of Blessings* #1512

⁴ *Book of Blessings* #1513

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ *Rite of Penance* Appendix II, II

⁷ *Order of Penance* Appendix II, “Preparing Penitential Celebrations”, #4

Christmas

Like the Advent Wreath, the Christmas crèche may be blessed at the beginning of its respective liturgical season, but it must not be placed in the presbyterium.⁸ Here again it is worth encouraging families to celebrate the liturgical rite of blessing for the manger or nativity scene at their home. If a Christmas Tree is used in the church it may be blessed as well, as may Christmas Trees used in the home, as well as the home itself,⁹ according to the respective liturgical rites.

Updated July 30, 2024

DECEMBER 2024		
Dec. 1	First Sunday of Advent	
Dec. 8	Second Sunday of Advent	On December 8, 2024 the evening Mass and Evening Prayer II of the Liturgy of the Hours should observe the Second Sunday of Advent rather than anticipate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
Dec. 9	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Patroness of the United States	Solemnity; holy day of obligation
Dec. 12	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Solemnity; Co-Patron of the Diocese of Sacramento, along with St. Patrick (Statute 123 §1(b)).
Dec. 25	Nativity of The Lord	Solemnity, holy day of obligation
Dec. 26	St. Stephen, The First Martyr	Feast
Dec. 27	St. John, Apostle and Evangelist	Feast
Dec. 28	The Holy Innocents	Feast
Dec. 29	Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph	Feast
JANUARY 2025		
Jan. 1	Mary, the Holy Mother of God	Solemnity (holy day of obligation)
Jan. 5	Epiphany of the Lord	Solemnity
Jan. 12	Baptism of the Lord	Feast

⁸ *Book of Blessings* #1544

⁹ *Book of Blessings*, “Order for the Blessing of Homes During the Christmas and Easter Seasons”