

# Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

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**D**o you want to cause some trouble? Here are two suggestions: bring a skunk to a garden party... or ask that your parish keep – really keep – the seasons of Advent and Christmastime. This article (you will be happy to know) deals with the latter. So, if you want to cause some trouble, read further.

Comprising about six or seven weeks, the two distinct but interrelated seasons of Advent and Christmastime celebrate the self-emptying of God who takes on human nature in Jesus Christ, and in a marvelous exchange enables humans to take on the divine life of grace. This astonishing love story was long prepared for and long-awaited.

The liturgy of these seasons is rich and has inspired many devotional, domestic and even folk customs among the people. But isn't the task of pastoral and catechetical leaders to evaluate these customs in the light of the Church's full tradition, even at

ancient expectancy... the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming." [Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC), #522, 524] The mood produced is described in the *General Norms of the Liturgical Year and Calendar* as "a period of devout and joyful expectation." (#39)

A successful observance of Advent is an oasis in the desert. The quiet of Advent is a quiet of expectancy: the mother waiting for pregnancy to come to term; the early riser waiting for the midnight blue horizon to become rosy dawn. The use of a dark shade of blue-violet (a midnight or sarum blue) dominates the vestments and decorations of Advent, a practice that keeps a clear distinction between the color of Advent and Lent and is supported by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (*Newsletter*, Sept., 1988). Although Advent is not a penitential season, the *Gloria* is not used and sanctuary decoration is kept to a minimum. It is the sparseness of a winter night. The mood of expectation is expressed in the tradition by a variety of practices that involve incremental increase: the Advent wreath, in home and in church, the Jesse Tree, and the Advent calendar (exclusively a home practice).

Present Advent in all its richness and complexity, as it is found in the Lectionary and Sacramentary, your most authoritative source books. Advent will not allow itself to be contained in one or another "theme," so don't impose one. Also, don't surrender to "creeping Christmas." Empty stables and crèche figures making their way around the church are inappropriate. The patience to keep Advent is both a reminder of an essential spiritual discipline and of allowing the subliminal music of Advent to be heard: expectation of the second coming, the call to justice-making, the Baptist's demand for single-heartedness.

Stress home practices at this

very home-centered time of year. In church, instead of a Christmas carol concert, try a "Festival of the Coming Christ", where only Advent music is used for choir and also for congregation. Or perhaps plan one or more candlelight Advent Evening Prayer that features a Light Service and Advent music. Begin to develop a parish consensus that will eventually lead organizations to plan their Christmas parties for the Christmas season, not during Advent. Watch the planning of the children's services that conclude the semester. It is no more appropriate to anticipate Christmas for children than it is for adults.

Keeping Advent in all its distinctive simplicity involves confronting not only cultural mores but also established parish customs. It can cause trouble, but in time it can make Advent one of people's best loved seasons.

"Next to the yearly celebration of the paschal mystery, the Church holds most sacred the memorial of Christ's birth and early manifestations." (*General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*, #32) Christmas is not about looking backward to a touching scene, but rather about looking at the here and now through the lens of the sacred events commemorated. "Christ enables us to live in him all that he himself lived, and he lives it in us." (CCC #521 emphasis in the original).

The planning of Christmas must attend to two realities: the celebration of the Solemnity of the Nativity on December 24-25 and the keeping of the season of Christmastime. The celebration of Christmas begins with a festive evening Mass on December 24. A problem with Christmas and its Eve is addressed by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy in its November, 1991 *Newsletter*, which observes that more and more people are participating in Mass on Christmas Eve and

## Celebrating Advent & Christmastime

the risk of seeming to be tagged as the skunk at the garden party or the liturgical grinch who stole Christmas?

And what is that full tradition?

"The coming of God's Son to earth is an event of such immensity that God willed to prepare for it over centuries.... When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this

parishes are scheduling more of them, earlier and earlier in the afternoon, often as "Children's" or "Family Masses." Consequently the Masses of Christmas Day are underattended, or reduced in number and often lacking in the "care and solemnity given to the celebration of the Vigil Mass(es)."

The problem is how to assure the celebration of Christmas as a sacred feast, a time set apart, in the midst of a secular culture that places high value on convenience. Some dioceses have acted to restrict the number of Vigil Masses. In the Archdiocese of Newark, Archbishop McCarrick has directed that no Vigil Mass begin before 4:00 P.M. Planners must ask hard questions about the real needs of families and the danger of secularization even in very committed Catholic families.

The center of our Christmas observance must be the eucharist of Christmas. Not only are all the Masses of Christmas to be celebrated with all the dignity and talent at our disposal, but they must also be characterized by a palpable sense of hospitality, especially for those who rarely attend at other times. Make sure that all the Masses of Christmas Day have adequate ministers and something very special musically. Soloists hired for the Midnight Mass should be hired for Christmas Day also. If the entire choir cannot be induced to return, perhaps a quartet can be formed for at least the major Masses.

The children's Christmas pageant presents a special problem in this area, since in many parishes it is already a long-standing and much-loved tradition. With every good intention, in recent years, it has been absorbed into the Mass, with the result that this eye-catching (and heart-catching) spectacle becomes the center of the celebration. It is best to keep the pageant separate from the Christmas Mass, a part of a children's stage presentation,

where it used to be located. In places where the tradition of the pageant during Mass already is firmly and emotionally rooted, work toward a change. Be guided by the spirit of number 52 of the introduction to the *Lectionary of Masses with Children*, which states that care must be taken not to turn the liturgy of the word into a play and suggests that the use of costumes, etc., is more appropriate at other times. Dramatic elements may be introduced into the readings, for example through the use of multiple readers, particularly readers with a proven ability to make the Word come alive.

A major challenge to liturgy planners at this time of year is the effort to extend the celebration of the Incarnation beyond a warm and joyous Christmas Eve and Day, and make it into a season. And the key to the restoration of Christmastime is the restoration of the great festival of Epiphany, always celebrated in this country on a Sunday. In the Western churches, Epiphany celebrates the manifestation (literal meaning of "epiphany") of the divine in history in the adoration of the Magi from the East, revealing God's saving will (Eph.1:9) directed to non-Jews and Jews on an equal footing. Replete with symbols, scriptural allusions and home practices, the liturgy of this ancient feast is a gold mine waiting to be explored by planners and homilists. The feast is succinctly described in the *Sourcebook For Sundays and Seasons* (Liturgy Training Publications, 1800 North Hermitage Ave., Chicago, IL 60622), a reliable guide to all that has been discussed heretofore. The eucharist of the feast should be celebrated with a solemnity virtually equivalent to Christmas. The Christmas decorations remain in place and everything is done to show that this is a feast of the Christmas season.

Eventually, when Epiphany assumes its rightful importance

in the calendar, it will become a magnet that collects many holiday observances that are now scattered through Advent or crowded around Christmas Day. It would be an ideal time for a glorious holiday choir concert; the days between Christmas and Epiphany (the "twelve days of Christmas") are ideal for parties for parish organizations; perhaps even the children's pageant could be redesigned to focus on the Magi and be scheduled near Epiphany.

The Christmas season concludes with feast of the Baptism of the Lord, usually celebrated on the Sunday after Epiphany. Up to this point, the music of Christmas continues to be used and the decorations and vestments and liturgical pattern remain constant. Special arrangements might have to be made with the florist to keep flowers fresh or to replace wilted poinsettias, and repeated catechesis will be necessary to explain our reason for being so "late" in keeping our Christmas decorations.

What we have described here demands a thoroughgoing review and reorientation of the way we celebrate the seasons of Advent and Christmastime. Ultimately, it is the divine dynamic at work in the liturgy that is our most powerful motivation in working toward an authentic celebration of these seasons, even when that means disturbing time-honored patterns and practices of great emotional content. It is not an exercise in nit-picking. Vatican II's *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* states, "In the course of the year she (the Church) unfolds the whole mystery of Christ." (#102) Our efforts to present that mystery in its integrity has great spiritual and catechetical impact upon the lives of the people of our parishes. For such a reason, it might be worth being, at least for a while, a "skunk at a garden party."†

Rev. Robert H. Slipe  
St. Peter the Apostle  
River Edge



On April 29, 1994, Msgr. Robert N. Lynch, General Secretary of the NCCB/USCC, notified the members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) that the Congregation for Bishops has confirmed the Conference's action approving the norm for the age of confirmation in the Latin rite diocese of the United States. The norm was approved by the Latin rite members of the NCCB at their June 1993 plenary meeting in New Orleans, LA. It does not apply to the Eastern Catholic Churches who have their own legislation regarding confirmation (chrismation).

The decree from the Congregation for Bishops, dated February 8, 1994, states that "in consideration of the vote of the bishops, the above-mentioned norm is approved for five years, in order that the bishops, with the lapse of time and the addition of new perspectives, may again raise this question and bring a norm once again to the Holy See for review." In a decree issued May 1, 1994 Archbishop Keeler, President of the NCCB, states that the general decree will become effective July 1, 1994 and continue to be effective through July 1, 1999. The text of Archbishop Keeler's decree follows.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops  
United States of America

#### Decree of Promulgation

In June 1993, the members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United

States of America approved the following action:

"The National Conference of Catholic Bishops hereby decrees that the sacrament of Confirmation in the Latin rite shall be conferred between the age of discretion, which is about the age of 7 and 18 years of age, within the limits determined by the diocesan bishop and with regard for the legitimate exceptions given in canon 891, namely, when there is danger of death or, where in the judgment of the minister grace cause urges otherwise."

The Congregation for Bishops has given the formal *recognitio* for this action of the National Conference of Bishops, made in accord with canon 891 of the Code of Canon Law, for five years, in a general decree (Prot. No. 296/84), signed by Bernardin Cardinal Gantin, Prefect of the Congregation, and dated February 8, 1994.

By the authority given to me by the Conference, I hereby declare that this general decree will become effective July 1, 1994 and continue to be effective through July 1, 1999.

Given at the offices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, May 1, 1994.

+Most Reverend William H. Keeler  
Archbishop of Baltimore  
President, NCCB  
Monsignor Robert N. Lynch  
General Secretary  
NCCB/USCC

The Secretariat for Liturgy has received inquiries concerning the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The first of these concerns the proper title of the rite. The title of the rite has not been changed to the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* (OCIA). The proper title of the English translation of the *Ordo initiationis christinae adultorum* is *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA). Any change in the title of the English translation of liturgical books must be approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and

confirmed by the Apostolic See. The second inquiry concerns the title of the rite celebrated with unbaptized children of catechetical age. There is no *Rite of Christian Initiation of Children* (RCIC). The Church has the *Rite of Baptism of Children* which is to be celebrated with all children under catechetical age who do not have the use of reason. The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Part II Chapter I is celebrated with all unbaptized children who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age.

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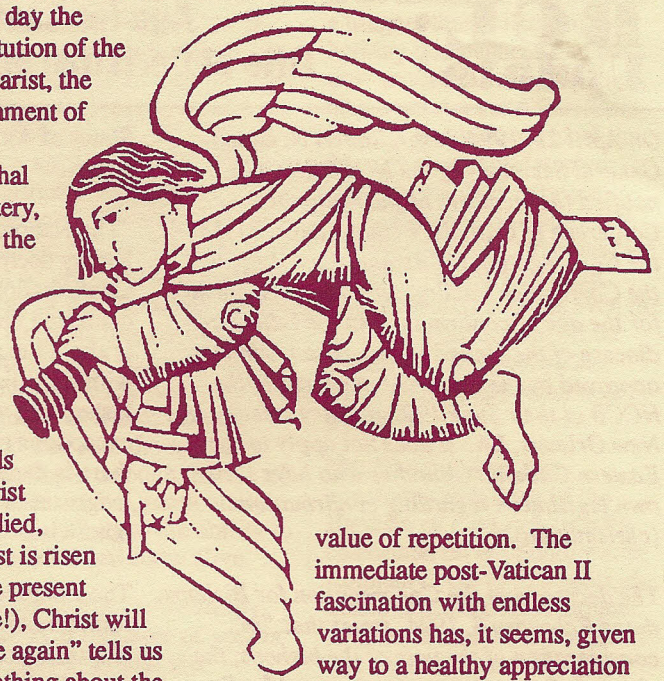
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Several years ago I ordered a box of Easter cards from a nationally-known publishing house; on each one was a photo of bread and wine, and the words "Easter Every Day." There were a few cards left over after I sent them out to various friends who would appreciate the theology behind the message. I gave serious thought to saving them for Christmas and sending them to my more liturgically-aware associates. They'd understand! After all we celebrate the paschal mystery, the dying and rising of Jesus, in every liturgical celebration in every season of the Church year.

Advent and Christmas are not merely devotional times for the sentimental recall of a birthday and its preparations, but strong liturgical seasons for celebrating the continuing incarnation of the Lord who came at a particular time and place in history, who comes daily in life, in word, and in sacrament, and who will come again in glory at the end of time. When we celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons, we are not pretending to live again in the time before Christ and to wait for the Messiah's birth; rather we are focusing upon the second coming of the

fact that we acclaim each day the institution of the eucharist, the sacrament of the paschal mystery, with the



words "Christ has died, Christ is risen (note present tense!), Christ will come again" tells us something about the Church's view of the death and resurrection of the Lord in relation to any other aspect of the mystery that we may be celebrating on a given day or in a given season.

Besides the paschal and eschatological aspects of the Advent and Christmas seasons, we need also to see it in terms of its placement in the calendar year, at least in the Northern Hemisphere. We approach the shortest days and the longest nights of the year, the time when, in many places, we experience the "death" of being buried in snow and ice and darkness, with nothing but evergreens and holly to remind us of our hope in the victory of life and light. The experience of light and darkness is a powerful and primal one; we need to capitalize on it not only in liturgical environment, but even in the choice of hymn texts used during the season.

Having reflected on all this, let's consider one other important aspect of liturgy which will hold us in good stead as we begin to look at more specific ideas about music for these seasons: the

value of repetition. The immediate post-Vatican II fascination with endless variations has, it seems, given way to a healthy appreciation for a balance of variety and predictability. There is value to hearing a familiar psalm response that evokes the thought "Ah! Advent!" There is value to looking forward each year to a particular *Gloria* that is used only during the Christmas season. Aside from the comfort level of familiar melodies, repetition creates a sense of the season that works upon us. And it's important to remember that we don't work on liturgy; it works on us!

Thus it's a good idea to select a set of eucharist acclamations, for example, that are used throughout the Advent season. If they are simple melodically and are accompanied with minimal instrumentation, you will have paved the way for a more festive set, appropriately accompanied, to be used throughout the Christmas season. It will "feel" different to the congregation, even if they can't tell exactly what's different about it, and the contrast between Advent's longing and Christmas's fulfillment will be manifest musically.

Hymn selection should be

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## Music for Advent and Christmas

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One who we await and upon the implications of his first coming for the transformation of our world. Those who prepare liturgy should reflect seriously upon this. Our assemblies should not go home from our celebrations merely feeling a warm glow of comfort; they should also feel a sense of challenge by the very fact of the incarnation of our God in human flesh. The

strictly seasonal at this time of year. Use only Advent hymns during Advent, and only Christmas hymns during Christmas. *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow* is a wonderful piece, but it, and its other ordinary time companions, should be politely shelved until after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Another good way to highlight the distinction between Advent and Christmas is to tone down choral and instrumental work in general during Advent. Simple organ, piano and guitar accompaniments, without added wind or brass, can be quite effective. A solo flute or recorder or other wind, played perhaps at the preparation of the gifts, can also provide the reflective, sober tone that marks the Advent season. When all the stops are literally pulled out for the Christmas season, with brass or percussion accompaniment (if your parish is blessed with such instruments), the passage to a new liturgical time will be evident.

#### ADVENT

Given Advent's first concern for the second coming of the Lord, there should be ample evidence of this in the music chosen. In fact, from the First Sunday of Advent until December 16, the focus is primarily eschatological. The week of December 17-24 focuses more specifically upon the preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ. These last seven days are the optimum time for singing *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, since the verses of that lovely hymn are the antiphons for the gospel canticle at evening prayer of that week. Consider having penitential rite Cii sung on the four Sundays. It speaks of the coming of the Lord and of the new age.

The four Sundays of Advent each have their own character. The first Sunday speaks strongly of the final coming; the second and third, of John the Baptist's call "to prepare the way of the Lord." And the fourth Sunday, which always falls within the Dec. 17-24 sequence, speaks directly of Mary and her conception of the Messiah. Thus it is important to look at hymn texts and determine which pieces will reflect the various dimensions of Advent as it moves along, week after week. Verses of hymns speaking of the Christ Child should wait until that final week. And, needless to say, absolutely NO Christmas music should be used during Advent.

A particular musical and textual gem that should be part of every community's liturgical life is the traditional Advent hymn *Creator of the Stars of Night*. Like so many hymns coming from the early days of the Christian tradition, it blends theology, mysticism, poetry, and salvation history in a way that evokes emotion without wallowing in sentiment. It's a good model for contemporary hymn-text writers.

Advent brings with it several weekday feasts and solemnities, and these should be celebrated as part of the season. On December 8th we remember the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and appropriately enough, for Advent is much more a "Marian" season than are the months of May or October. Mary's strong role in the history of salvation can be reflected in pieces like *Mary How Lovely the Light of Your Glory*, *The God Whom Earth and Sea and Sky, Behold a Virgin*, and others. Of course, these same songs also fit well in that final week before

Christmas. Our Lady of Guadalupe ranks as a feast in the USA and, even though it falls on a weekday, it is important enough to warrant at least an appropriate gathering song and sung acclamations at the Eucharistic Prayer. Finally, St. Andrew (November 30) often ushers in the beginning of Advent, and can be fittingly remembered on the appropriate weekday with a song like *By All Your Saints Still Striving*.

Penance services held during Advent should utilize both lectionary texts and musical selections appropriate to the season. Advent funerals may well take musical advantage of the seasonal longing for the Lord's deliverance from all sorrow, for an eternity of light and life. *Wake Awake for Night Is Flying* is most appropriate, and *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* brings strong texts of hope to bear on the experience of a loved one's death. Consider the seasonal responsorial psalms. If you are involved in working with couples planning an Advent wedding, RESIST the suggestion of Christmas carols and the Christmas environment in the Church!

#### CHRISTMAS

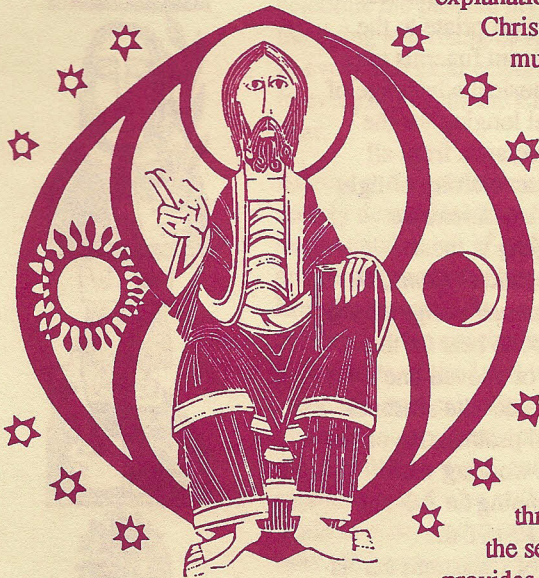
If Advent is not a time of pretending to wait for a Messiah who has not yet come, neither is Christmas a *birthday* celebration. It is not a fond looking-back to the day of Jesus' birth. Rather it is a strong and challenging recognition of the continuing presence of the incarnate God in our midst, and an acceptance of the implications of that presence for men and women of every nation and race. It continues the eschatological thrust of Advent in looking to the parousia when time will be no more and nations will be gathered to the Lord. Thus there is no "pastoral reason" to



justify the singing of "Happy Birthday Jesus" at Christmas liturgies celebrated for children!

If the eucharistic acclamations chosen for Advent were simple and even a bit subdued musically, the assembly would feel the difference when new acclamations appear for the Christmas season. More complex melodies, more intricate choral work and festive instrumentation will articulate what is happening liturgically, without any explanation.

Christmas music used



throughout the season provides a

connection among the five major Christmas celebrations: Christmas, Holy Family, Solemnity of Mary, Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord. It is a good idea to vary the use of carol verses during the Masses of the season. Don't stick simply to the first and second verses; there's a wealth of poetry and theology to be found throughout these songs.

Special attention can be paid to the feasts of the *Comites Christi* (Companions of Christ) which occur on December 26-28: Stephen the first martyr, John the apostle and evangelist, and the Holy Innocents. These feasts only drop out of the calendar if they coincide with a Sunday, and

they surely deserve, even at weekday Mass, at least a gathering-song carol and perhaps some eucharistic acclamations sung *a capella*. In fact, it might be a good idea to attempt such a musical practice all through the Octave of Christmas. Singing the acclamations really does not add much extra time to the "commuter Mass" of weekday mornings. Who knows – the congregation may want to continue the custom even after the Christmas season has ended!

Weddings held during the Christmas season may of course make use of Christmas carols; the often-mute congregations that attend weddings may actually be impelled to sing them! As for funerals, with due attention to pastoral sensitivity, you may find some slots for Christmas carols even there, and in fact some verses of these carols can provide immensely consoling sentiments at a time of loss. Take a look at verses 3 and 4 of *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*, or the third verse of *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*, or the second and third verse of *Good Christians All Rejoice*. The paschal mystery is very much a part of the texts of those carols.

It has already been mentioned that penitential rite Cii is best suited for Advent. Similarly, rite Ciii uses terminology born of the Christmas season, and can be set to music. Given the top heavy nature of our introductory rites, of course, it is probably preferable to sing the *Gloria* only and recite the penitential rite, but if it is sung, then Ciii is the one to choose. Finally, parish musicians should gently encourage shy presiders to sing a bit more of the presidential texts. The prefaces of some of the major Christmas feasts at least could be attempted, as well as the

orations.

#### RESOURCES

An invaluable resource for those who prepare liturgy is the *Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons* published annually by Liturgy Training Publications. *Sourcebook* provides various suggestions for both reclaiming the best of seasonal traditions and creating new liturgical practice. Ideas for music, environment, and other aspects of liturgy are there in abundance.

An effective setting of the responsorial psalm proper to the Mass at Midnight is Marty Haugen's *Today Is Born Our Savior, Christ the Lord*. Its lullaby-like rhythm and gentle inflections are balanced by a growing sense of excitement in the verse texts which speak of the coming age of peace and justice. If you are looking for a setting of Psalm 98 consider Howard Hughes' setting (GIA 2703) or Rawn Harbor's rendition in *Lead Me, Guide Me*.

The *Gloria*, of course, comes to us from the infancy texts of Luke's gospel, and so it is fitting that this liturgical hymn be sung at all major feasts of the Christmas cycle. Gibson's setting, published by Oregon Catholic Press, utilizes the familiar *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* as a refrain, alternating with interesting choral settings of the verses. Your congregation will not tire of it, season after season, both because of its well-written music and because its nature demands that it be reserved for the Christmas season only.

David Haas' *Advent/Christmas Gospel Acclamation* (also OCP) does not boast of any melodic sophistication, but its driving accompaniment and abundance of verses that take one from the first week of

(continued on page 23)

# LITURGICAL CALENDAR PLANNING AHEAD

## November 27 • First Sunday of Advent

Advent, a season of devout and joyful expectation, has a twofold character: (1) to prepare for Christmas, the celebration of Christ's first coming; and (2) to await the Lord's second coming at the end of time. From the First Sunday of Advent to December 16 the focus of the Liturgy is on the Lord's second coming. From December 17 thru 24, the time of the great "O" Antiphons, the focus is on the preparation for the celebration of the first coming of the Lord at Christmas. Thus Advent is not *primarily* a penitential season.

If an Advent wreath is used in the church, consult the *Book of Blessings*, No. 1509f. The color for Advent is violet with the bluer shades of violet used to distinguish Advent from Lent. Light blue vestments are not permitted.

School Masses in this season should be Advent Masses. Christmas prayers, readings and carols should not be used in liturgies during Advent.

Begin Vol. 1 of the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

## December 8 • Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception

Always a holyday of obligation in the United States.

## December 9 • Blessed Juan Diego

Optional memorial in the United States.

## December 11 • Third Sunday of Advent

While rose colored vestments are permitted, it is better to maintain the integrity of the Advent season and wear the same color on all the Sundays of Advent.

## December 12 • Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Celebrated as a feast in the United States.

## December 17

Begin use of the Second Preface of Advent and the "O" Antiphons. From this date on the Marian character of the Advent season is clearly seen. As we draw closer to Christmas a communal Advent Penance Service is appropriate.

## December 24 • Christmas Eve

A Vigil Mass is permitted, but only after 4:00 pm. The secularization of Christmas Masses (e.g. Santa Claus, Christmas pageants, birthday cakes for baby Jesus, etc.) are inappropriate.

## December 25 • Christmas

Always a holyday of obligation in the United States. For the blessing of the Christmas creche, see the *Book of Blessings*, No. 1541f. Christmas carols should be sung throughout the Christmas season which extends through the Baptism of the Lord.

## December 30 • Feast of the Holy Family

Observed on a Friday this year.

## January 1 • Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

Christmas carols which mention Mary are particularly appropriate this day.

## January 4 • Elizabeth Ann Seton

Obligatory memorial in the United States.

## January 5 • John Neumann

Obligatory memorial in the United States.

## January 6 • Blessed Andre Besette

Optional memorial in the United States.

## January 8 • Epiphany

Consider the use of Christmas carols which mention the Magi and their gifts this day.

## January 9 • Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Celebrated on Monday this year.

## January 10 • Ordinary Time begins.

Begin Vol III of the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

## January 18

The week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins.

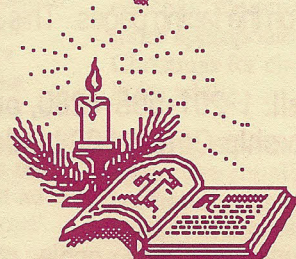
## February 2 • Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

Traditionally observed with a procession and the blessing of candles in honor of Christ, the light of the world. See the *Sacramentary* for the blessing of candles.

## February 3 • Saint Blase

Optional memorial in the United States. See *Book of Blessings* No. 1622 f. The blessing of throats may not be transferred to a Sunday.

## March 1 • Ash Wednesday



## Music for Advent and Christmas

(continued from page 22)

Advent to the Baptism of the Lord, make it a worthwhile possibility. It can be embellished instrumentally to create a sense of the change of season.

The use of instrumental concertati and choral descants can also provide interest as the assembly sings those well-worn but beloved Christmas carols. And it's always worthwhile to look

into GIA, OCP, and World Library's current crop of choral pieces for the season.

### CONCLUSION

The seasons of Advent and Christmas should be prepared for as a whole, and not as two unrelated entities. In this way, both their common threads and their distinctiveness will be articulated and appreciated. The paschal nature of our winter liturgical festivals should be

apparent and should give our assemblies a joyous anticipation of what they will celebrate in the coming spring, when Emmanuel completes his victory of light and life. †

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