CALENDAR NOTES

DEC 8
Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Holy Day of Obligation
- GLORIA AND CREED are said.
- Patroness of the United States of America

DEC 11
Third Sunday of Advent
- GAUDETE SUNDAY: Rose vestments may be worn. No Gloria.
- Due to the higher rank of the liturgical celebration of the Third Sunday of Advent, the Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe may not be celebrated at any time on this day.

DEC 12
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- The Gloria is said.
- READINGS: Note there are options for the readings to be proclaimed.
- SECONDARY PATRONESS for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City: Consider invoking the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe for our diocese in the Prayers of the Faithful.

DEC 16
Anniversary of the appointment of the Metropolitan, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley

DEC 24-25
The (Vigil of the) Nativity of The Lord
- MASS TIMES: Mass for the Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord may not be celebrated before 4PM on Dec. 24.
- GENUFLECTION DURING THE NICENE CREED: Everyone should genuflect at the words, “and by the Holy Spirit...became man.” Consider making an announcement before Mass or indicating in a worship aid.
- THE CHRISTMAS PROCLAMATION: “The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ,” from the Roman Martyrology is a

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THE CHOICE OF THE MASS AND ITS PARTS
PART III

Continuing to reflect on the Choice of the Mass and its Parts, we look now at an important element of the Mass which has options, namely the Liturgy of the Word. (The promised consideration on the choice of parts for Masses for the Dead has been postponed.) The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM pars. 357-362) and the General Instruction of the Lectionary (GIL pars. 78-91) describe in detail the various criteria and options which correspond to this part of the Mass. We will highlight some various points regarding the selection of readings in Mass based on these citations in the GIRM and the GIL.

Progressive Solemnity dictates the strictness with which readings are to be selected. Each Sunday and Solemnity has readings assigned to them and they should be “followed strictly.” (GIRM 357) Likewise for Feasts, two readings are assigned, unless they are Feasts of the Lord, where three are assigned. These should also be strictly guarded. If a Feast is raised to a Solemnity in a particular parish or for a diocese, a third reading should be chosen from the appropriate common. For some memorials, proper readings are given which are indicated in the Lectionary and the Ordo, but most obligatory and optional memorials do not have proper readings. However, “In certain cases, particularized readings are provided, that is to say, readings which highlight some particular aspect of the spiritual life or activity of the Saint. The use of such readings is not to be insisted upon, unless a pastoral reason truly suggests it.” (GIRM 357, cf GIL 83)

A key theme in the introduction of the Lectionary arises to guide the selection of readings, namely, the preference for the continuous reading of the books of Sacred Scripture. The weekday readings should be generally chosen over the particularized readings, and when interruptions occur in the continuous reading, there is the permission given to the priest “either to combine parts omitted with other readings or to decide which readings are to be given preference over others.” (GIRM 358) If, for example, a Feast interrupts the reading of St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans, the priest may tack-on the omitted reading to the next day or the previous day, or replace the omitted reading with nearby reading in the week.

On some occasions there is the option for a longer or a shorter form for the reading. The Introduction to the Lectionary gives the following criteria for deciding: “The main consideration must be the capacity of the hearers to listen profitably either to the longer or to the shorter reading; or to listen to a more complete text that will be explained through the homily.” (GIL 80) While both short and long options are equally licit and good, the capacity of the listener and the readings used in the homily should be considered in making the decision. However, longer texts with “difficult” or challenging readings should not be omitted because of their perceived difficulty. (cf GIL 76).

When options are given for readings, all options are acceptable, and preference should be given to the needs of the gathered assembly in view of readings that will come up in the Lectionary
Keeping the preferential option for continuous readings, the weekday readings are permissible in Masses for various needs and occasions, votive Masses, and Masses for the dead. However, several other options are given for these Masses found in Vol. IV of the Lectionary which may be used. In Ritual Masses, however, there is a preference for readings proscribed by the rite itself.

Finally, a note about options for the responsorial psalm and the Alleluia verse. While supplied psalms are preferred for each weekday, feast day and Sunday, there is an “appendix” which offers options for “Common Texts for Sung Responsorial Psalms” (Lectionary #173, #174) which may be used instead in order to “make it easier to join in the response of the psalm.” (GIL 89) Likewise, in Ordinary Time, the “proposed text” for the Alleluia verse may be replaced by one of the many found in Lectionary #163 and #509 found at the end of the Ordinary Time section.

Zachary M. Boazman

RESOURCES FROM OUR OFFICE

The Catholic Handbook for Visiting the Sick and Homebound 2023
J. Philip Horrigan
Available in English and Spanish

All lay ministers who provide care to those who are sick, homebound, isolated, or suffering in some way will benefit from the contents of this book. It includes the official rites they will need from the Book of Blessings and Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum to bring Holy Communion to, pray with, and share the Gospel with those who cannot regularly worship with their parish community on Sunday.

These rites include: Communion in Ordinary Circumstances, Communion in a Hospital or Institution, Celebration of Viaticum outside Mass, Orders for the Blessing of the Sick, Order for the Blessing of a Person Suffering from Addiction or from Substance Abuse, Order for the Blessing of a Victim of Crime or Oppression, Order for the Blessing of Parents after a Miscarriage, Visits to the Sick and to a Sick Child, Pastoral Care of the Dying.

To help you with your ministry, this book also includes: The Gospel for Sundays and holydays of obligation for Year A, New explanations of the readings for Year A, A list of patron saints for the sick and the suffering.

This handbook is specially designed for the use of lay ministers of care, so it does not contain the rites for the sacraments of penance or the anointing of the sick, or the special prayers and blessings used by ordained bishops, priests, or deacons.