

WITH HUMBLE SPIRIT

DECEMBER 2025

CALENDAR NOTES

DEC 8

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- Holy Day of Obligation.
- **GLORIA AND CREED** are said.
- Note, because it falls on a Monday, it is not permitted to anticipate the liturgical celebration on Sunday evening.

DEC 12

Our Lady of Guadalupe

- **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.
- Please refer to the [Guidelines for Use of Mactachines in Catholic Celebrations](#).

DEC 14

Third Sunday of Advent

- **GAUDETE SUNDAY:** Rose vestments may be worn. No Gloria.

DEC 16

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

DEC 24-25

The (Vigil of the) Nativity of The Lord

- Holy Day of Obligation.
- **MASS TIMES:** Mass for the Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord may not be celebrated before 4PM on Dec. 24.
- **GENUFLCTION 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 beautiful option to be chanted or

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THE APOSTOLIC PARDON

Q: It was always said that a priest could impart an apostolic blessing on behalf of the pope to one who is on the point of death, thus granting the plenary indulgence. Is this correct? — T.T., Galway, Ireland.

A. Yes. This is explained in the ritual for the pastoral care of the sick and in the Handbook of Indulgences. First of all, let us say a word on indulgences themselves.

According to the Catechism, No. 1471: “The doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church are closely linked to the effects of the sacrament of penance.

“An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints’ [Indulgentiarum Doctrina, Norm 1].

“An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin’ [ibid., Norm 2, see Norm 3]. Indulgences may be applied to the living or the dead.”

The ritual for the pastoral care of the sick, in Nos. 195 and 201, indicates the rite followed for those approaching death.

No. 201 touches on viaticum outside of Mass, which would be the usual circumstance for this blessing. The rubric states:

“At the conclusion of the sacrament of penance or the penitential rite, the priest may give the apostolic pardon for the dying, using one of the following:

“Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.”

Or the following:

“By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me I grant you a full pardon and the remission of all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. R. Amen.”

Should a priest be unavailable to impart the papal blessing, the Handbook of Indulgences, No. 28, offers another path. To wit:

“Priests who minister the sacraments to the Christian faithful who are in a life-and-death situation should not neglect to impart to them the apostolic blessing, with its attached indulgence. But if a priest cannot be present, holy mother Church lovingly grants such persons who are rightly disposed a plenary indulgence to be obtained in articulo mortis, at the approach of death, provided they regularly prayed in some way during their lifetime. The use of a crucifix or a cross is recommended in obtaining this plenary indulgence.

“In such a situation the three usual conditions required in order to gain a plenary indulgence are substituted for by the condition ‘provided they regularly prayed in some way.’

“The Christian faithful can obtain the plenary indulgence mentioned here as death approaches (in articulo mortis) even if they had already obtained another plenary indulgence that same day.”

This grant, in No. 28, is taken from the apostolic constitution Indulgentiarum Doctrina, Norm 18, issued by Pope Paul VI on Jan. 1, 1967.

Unlike the sacrament of the sick, the papal blessing at the

CALENDAR NOTES, CONT'D

recited (by priest, deacon, cantor, or lector) at the beginning of the Christmas Mass in the Night. This text with its proper chant can be found last in the Roman Missal, "Appendix I."

- **ORDER FOR THE BLESSING OF A MANGER OR NATIVITY SCENE:** (cf. Book of Blessings ch. 48) NB: Within Mass, prayer of blessing (n. 1564) concludes the intercessions after the Creed.

DEC 26-JAN 1

The Octave of Christmas

- **GLORIA, NO CREED:** Within the Octave of Christmas, the Gloria is said at each Mass, but the Creed is still omitted (except on Sunday).

DEC 28

Anniversary of Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop Paul S. Coakley (as bishop of Salina)

DEC 28

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

- Note, there are several options for the readings.

LOOKING AHEAD

- **Mary, Mother of God (Jan 1)** - Holy Day of Obligation.
- **EPIPHANY:** Prepare blessed chalk/water for house blessings. Consider using the Epiphany Proclamation found [here](#). Search online later for fully pointed chant version. (usually on ccwatershed.org)
- Ordinary time begins Jan 12.
- Ash Wednesday is February 18.

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approach of death along with its attendant indulgence may be imparted only once during the same illness. Should a person recover it may be imparted again at a new threat of imminent death.

These papal blessings and indulgences were first granted to the Crusaders or to pilgrims who died while traveling to obtain the Holy Year Indulgence. Pope Clement IV (1265-1268) and Gregory XI (1370-1378) extended it to victims of the plague. The grants became ever more frequent but were still limited in time or reserved to bishops, so that relatively few people were favored by this grace. This led Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758) to issue the constitution "Pia Mater" in 1747 in which he granted the faculty to all bishops, along with the possibility to subdelegate the faculty to priests.

- "Indulgences at the Point of Death" by Father Edward McNamara, LC. [ZENIT](#)

The apostolic pardon is oftentimes another misunderstood dimension of the ritual for Viaticum. The apostolic pardon is a formula of plenary indulgence. Indulgences themselves are "the remission in the eyes of God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose culpable element has already been taken away." The sins of the faithful, alongside the culpable quality, are ordinarily remedied by Sacramental Penance (or Confession). Even after sacramental absolution, however, a disordered attachment to sin and its consequences, what is called "temporal punishment," may remain. This "temporal punishment" can be remitted after death in Purgatory, or it can be satisfied by indulgences in this life.

Indulgences are, therefore, acts of mercy that aid the facilitation of our reclaiming holiness. The Church makes a further distinction in its understanding of indulgences: partial and plenary. Partial indulgences free a person from some of the temporal punishment due to sin, while plenary indulgences free a person from all punishment due to sin. The administration of indulgences, and by extension the apostolic pardon, are governed by the norms and laws surrounding the Church's ordinary dispensation of indulgences. The Code of Canon law reminds the faithful that the efficacy of an indulgence hinges on that person being in a state of grace.

In the ritual of Viaticum, the apostolic pardon follows a penitential rite that can take the form of individual, sacramental Confession. In this context, the apostolic pardon avoids any semblance of being a one-way ticket to heaven. Many well-intentioned priests have admitted to using the apostolic pardon in their administration of the Anointing of the Sick, not Viaticum. It should be seen, rather, in its proper context: a gift of mercy from God that remits the temporal punishment due to sin. If a priest cannot be present, the Church grants the indulgence, in artitulo mortis, as individuals approach death, provided that they regularly prayed in some way.

-Excerpt from "Last but not Least: A Liturgical Look at Holy Communion as The Sacrament of the Dying" By Fr. Ryan Rojo. [Adoremus.org](#).

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