



2025/2026 Liturgical Calendar

Reminders for the Diocese of Manchester

RCBM Office of Divine Worship

The 2026 liturgical year begins on the First Sunday of Advent, 30 November, 2025. This resource is not meant to replace the use of the *ordo* but is meant as a supplement. The official documents that guide the arrangement of the Church's liturgical year are the [Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar](#), and the [General Instruction of the Roman Missal](#). Below are certain highlights to these documents.

Cycles - Lectionary for Mass

Sunday Cycle	YEAR A (St. Matthew)	30 November 2025 – 22 November 2026
Weekday Cycle	CYCLE II	12 January – 17 February 2026 25 May – 28 November 2026

The Liturgy of the Hours

30 November 2025 – 11 January 2026	Advent, Christmas	Vol. I
12 January – 17 February 2026	Ordinary Time, Weeks 1-6	Vol. III
18 February – 24 May 2026	Lent, Triduum, Easter	Vol. II
25 May – 1 August 2026	Ordinary Time, Weeks 8 -17	Vol. III
2 August – 28 November 2026	Ordinary Time, Weeks 18-34	Vol. IV
29 November – 10 January 2027 [Liturgical Year "B"]	Advent, Christmas	Vol. I

Holy Days of Obligations in the United States

Date	Feast
8 December 2025 (Monday)	Immaculate Conception
25 December 2025 (Thursday)	Nativity of the Lord
1 January 2026 (Thursday)	Mary, the Holy Mother of God
14 May 2026 (Thursday)	Ascension of the Lord
15 August 2026 (Saturday)	Assumption of the B.V.M. <i>(not a day of obligation)</i>
1 November 2026 (Sunday)	All Saints
8 December 2026 (Tuesday)	Immaculate Conception
25 December 2026 (Friday)	Nativity of the Lord

Regulations for Holy Days:

- Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses are not allowed; Ritual Masses are forbidden both for the Holy Day and its Vigil, thus marriages celebrated within Mass must use the Mass of the day with nuptial blessing and the readings may not be changed. The Marriage Rite Outside of Mass may be used with no restrictions.

Calendar Advisories for 2026



Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, the ecclesiastical province of Boston along with others, has retained its celebration on the proper Thursday, 14 May 2026 while other ecclesiastical provinces of the United States of America have transferred this Solemnity to the following Sunday.

Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Outside Advent, Christmas Time, Lent, and Easter Time, on Saturdays which have no commemoration having the rank of Obligatory Memorial or higher, a Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be celebrated.

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church: In a decree dated 11 February, 2018 the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments inscribed the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church in the General Roman Calendar to be observed on the Monday after Pentecost, taking precedence over an obligatory Memorial that coincides with it. In 2026, 24 May is Pentecost and 25 May (Monday) shall be observed as the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church.

Parish Celebrations of Patronal Feasts and Anniversaries of Church Dedications: Parishes are reminded that the Anniversary of Dedication of their church and the patronal feast of their church are celebrated as Solemnities for that community. Because these outrank Sundays in Ordinary Time, those celebrations can be moved to the Sunday of that week, as long as they are in Ordinary Time (*Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars*, § 58).

Principal Celebrations of the Liturgical Year 2026/"A"

First Sunday of Advent	Saturday 29 Nov/Sunday 30 November 2025
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Monday 8 December 2025 - <i>Holy Day of Obligation</i> Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses are not allowed.
The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)	Thursday 25 December 2025 <i>Holy day of Obligation</i> - <i>In the Nicene Creed, at the words "and by the Holy Spirit... became man," all genuflect at all Masses celebrating the Nativity of the Lord.</i>
Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God	Thursday 1 January 2026 <i>Holy Day of Obligation</i> Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses are not allowed.
The Epiphany of the Lord	4 January 2026 – <i>Sunday</i>
The Baptism of the Lord	11 January 2026 – <i>Sunday</i>
Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children	22 January 2026 – <i>Thursday</i> [See GIRM #373] Day of Penance, for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life. The Mass "Giving Thanks to God for the gift of Human Life" (#48/1A or B) from <i>Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions</i> may be celebrated with white vestments or the Mass "for the Preservation of Peace and Justice" (#30) with violet vestments. Mass readings: 2 Sam 5:1-7 / Mk 3:22-30 (no. 317) or for the Day of Prayer, any readings from the <i>Lectionary for Mass Supplement</i> , the Mass "For Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life," nos. 947A-947E, or the <i>Lectionary for Mass</i> (vol. IV), the Mass "For Peace and Justice," nos. 887-891.
Feast of the Presentation of the Lord	2 February 2026 – <i>Monday</i> Blessing of candles and Procession; Gloria used
Ash Wednesday	18 February 2026 <i>Ritual note: There is no Penitential Act in the Mass for today. The distribution of ashes is the "act of penitence."</i>

OCIA Rite of Election for Catechumens & Call to Continuing Conversion for Candidates	Sunday 22 February 2026 2:00 p.m. <i>First Sunday of Lent at the Cathedral</i>
Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the B.V.M.	19 March 2026 – <i>Solemnity, Thursday</i> Gloria and Creed are used.
Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord	25 March 2026, <i>Wednesday, Solemnity</i> Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses are not allowed. [Creed: <i>Genuflection at “and by the Holy Spirit.”</i>]
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	29 March 2026
Tuesday of Holy Week Chrism Mass	31 March 2026 – <i>11:00 a.m. at St. Joseph Cathedral</i>
Thursday of Holy Week Holy Thursday [Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper]	2 April 2026 Funeral Masses are not allowed.
Friday of the Passion of the Lord Good Friday	3 April 2026 Funeral Masses are not allowed.
Holy Saturday The Great Vigil of Easter	4 April 2026 Funeral Masses are not allowed. <i>The sun will set at 7:15 p.m. in Manchester on this date.</i> <i>The Easter vigil should begin after sunset.</i>
Easter Sunday Resurrection of the Lord	5 April 2026
Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord	14 May 2026 – <i>Thursday, Holy Day of obligation</i>
Solemnity - Pentecost Sunday	24 May 2026
Solemnity of The Most Holy Trinity	31 May 2026
Solemnity of The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)	7 June 2026
Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus	12 June 2026 – <i>Friday</i> Gloria and Creed are used.
Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles	29 June 2026 – <i>Monday</i> Gloria and Creed are used.
Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	15 August 2026 – <i>Saturday Not a day of obligation</i> Gloria and Creed are used; Funeral Masses are not allowed.
Solemnity of All Saints	1 November 2026 – <i>Sunday</i> Gloria and Creed are used.

Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)	2 November 2026 – <i>Monday</i> 3 Mass options are available.
Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe	22 November 2026
First Sunday of Advent Liturgical Year “B”	29 November 2026

Diocesan Liturgies 2026

Ordination to the Diaconate	Saturday 10 January 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Rite of Election	Sunday 22 February 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Mass for Men	Saturday 21 March 2026, 8:00 a.m.
Chrism Mass	Tuesday 31 March 2026, 11:00 a.m.
Spring Adult Confirmation	Sunday 19 April 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Ordination to the Order of Presbyter	Saturday 6 June 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Wedding Anniversary Mass	Sunday 7 June 2026, 2:00 p.m.

The Season of Advent

“Advent has a two-fold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas, in which the First Coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ’s Second Coming at the end of time. For these two reasons, Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight” (Universal Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Roman Calendar, 39).

- Prior to 17 December, Advent Preface I is used. On Memorials of the BVM and the saints, however, in this or any other season, the corresponding Preface in the *Roman Missal* may be used in place of the weekday or seasonal Preface.
- The use of organ and other musical instruments and the decoration of the altar with flowers should be done in a moderate manner, as is consonant with the character of the season, without anticipating the full joy of Christmas (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 236). The same moderation should be observed in the celebration of Matrimony (*The Order of Marriage*, 32).
- The official color for the season of Advent is violet. The use of blue vestments for Advent is not approved for the United States. Rose is used on *Gaudate Sunday* (Third Sunday of Advent).

Ritual Masses During the Season of Advent

Ritual Masses for Confirmation or Marriage are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, taking due account of the norms given in the ritual books or in the Masses themselves. (GIRM #372)

Advent Penance Service

Every effort should be made to schedule communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance during the season of Advent. Please note that no parish may schedule general absolution (cf. Code of Canon Law c. 961 § 1,2) Additionally, ample time for individual confession outside of a communal liturgy should be provided. **The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions has made available an Advent Penance Service. Please feel free to use this format in parish or vicariate gatherings for the communal celebration of Penance during the Advent Season. Please contact the Office for Worship for this resource.**

The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath may be placed in the narthex/gathering area, or near the ambo. See the Book of Blessings 1509-1540 for the appropriate Blessing of the Advent Wreath.

The Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb

“The Church welcomes with joy and compassion the mothers who, recognizing that all life is a gift from God, come to the Church seeking a blessing for their unborn child. Such a blessing sustains the parents by imparting grace and comfort... and fosters respect for human life within society” (USCCB, Rite of Blessing). The Season of Advent is a season of hope and expectation, and it would be pastorally beneficial to offer expectant parents the opportunity to receive the Church’s blessing and prayerful support as they prepare to welcome new life into their families. Copies of this Rite of Blessing are available in both Spanish and English at: <https://www.respectlife.org/blessing-in-womb>.

The Season of Christmas

“After the annual celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the Church has no more ancient custom than celebrating the memorial of the Nativity of the Lord and of his first manifestations, and this takes place in Christmas Time” (Universal Norms, 32).

- The Christmas season extends from Evening Prayer I of Christmas through the Baptism of the Lord, Sunday 11 January 2026.
- On Christmas itself, priests may (con-) celebrate the three traditional Masses (during the Night, at Dawn, during the Day), provided they are celebrated at the proper times. A priest who celebrates three times may accept three Mass stipends (*Code of Canon Law*, 951, §1).
- In the Nicene Creed, at the words “and by the Holy Spirit... became man,” all genuflect at all Masses celebrating the Nativity of the Lord.

“Christmas Pageants” and “Santa Claus” within Mass

The scheduling of “Christmas pageants” or visits by Santa Claus within Mass are not permitted. “The Mass is not a historical reenactment of the events of salvation history and care should be taken not to give the impression that the Liturgy of the Word is a play. Care should be taken especially at Christmas... not to stage the various liturgies as plays. The Christmas Mass should not be presented as a birthday party for Jesus, nor should secular notions of Santa Claus be introduced into the Christmas liturgy” (*Lectionary for Masses with Children*, 52).

“The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ” from the *Roman Martyrology*

The announcement of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord from the *Roman Martyrology* draws upon Sacred Scripture to declare, in a formal way, the birth of Christ. It begins with the creation and relates the birth of the Lord to the major events and personages of sacred and secular history. The particular events contained in the announcement help pastorally to situate the birth of Jesus in the context of salvation history.

The text, *The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, may be chanted or recited, most appropriately on 24 December, during the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. However, it may also be chanted or recited before the beginning of the Christmas Mass during the Night. It may not replace any part of the Mass. The chant setting is found in Appendix I of the *Roman Missal*.

Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene

From the Book of Blessings:

1541 In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to Saint Francis of Assisi who made the Christmas crèche or Manger for Christmas Eve of 1223. However, as early as the Fourth Century, representations of the nativity of the Lord were painted as wall decorations.

1542 The blessing of the Christmas manger or nativity scene, according to pastoral circumstances, may take place on the Vigil of Christmas or at another more suitable time.

1543 The blessing may be given during a celebration of the Word of God, during Mass, or even during another service, e.g., a carol service.

1544 If the manger is set up in the church, it must not be placed in the presbyterium (sanctuary). A place should be chosen that is suitable for prayer and devotion and is easily accessible by the faithful.

Suggested Order for the Blessing of the Christmas Manger at Christmas Eve Mass

In preparation for the Mass, the image of the Infant Jesus, covered with a small white or gold cloth, is placed near the Ambo on a small decorated table or stand.

Before the Entrance Procession begins, a deacon or server gently uncovers the statue of the Infant, revealing, as it were, the birth of Christ, the Word made Flesh.

Following the proclamation of the Gospel, the open Book of the Gospels is placed behind, or in front of and slightly below the statue of the Infant Jesus. The Infant and the open Book of the Gospels remain together for the entire Mass.

At the conclusion of the Mass, after the Final Blessing and Dismissal, the servers take their places in the center aisle (as they would for the recessional). The deacon, if there is one present, otherwise the priest, takes the statue of the Infant Jesus from its place and, instead of the usual recessional, the priest and ministers move in solemn procession toward the place of the manger scene. This procession may go throughout the church accompanied by instrumental music or in silence.

Arriving at the manger scene, the statue of the **Infant Jesus is placed in the crib** and the priest incenses the manger with three sets of double swings. After a moment of silent adoration, the manger is blessed, the recessional hymn is announced and the priests and ministers process out of the Church.

The Blessing of Families on the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

The Feast of the Holy Family falls on Sunday, 28 December 2025. A priest may wish to make use of the **Blessing of a Family** as found in the Book of Blessings, numbers 62-67, making the necessary adjustments or additions as needed. The Prayer of Blessing (n. 65) normally takes place at the conclusion of the Prayers of the Faithful, which may be found in the Book of Blessings (n. 64).

The Epiphany Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts

While a day like Christmas is fixed on the calendars on December 25th, many of the important feasts of the Church year move, based upon the date that Easter is set. Easter changes each year moving to the Sunday after the "Paschal Full Moon," and can fall between March 28 and April 26. In ancient times before calendars were common, most people did not know the dates for the upcoming Liturgical year. On Epiphany Sunday, the upcoming dates were "proclaimed". After the singing of the Gospel, a Deacon or cantor, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year according to the formula: "The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts" which can be found in musical notation in the Roman Missal: Appendix I, Various Chants for the Order of Mass. Please feel free to contact the Diocesan and Cathedral Director of Music, Dr. Eric Bermani, for a copy. (EBermani@stjosephcathedralnh.org).

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord falls on Sunday, 11 January 2026. It would be appropriate to use the sprinkling rite found in the *Roman Missal* (Appendix II: Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water). If this rite is celebrated, it takes the place of the usual Penitential Act at the beginning of Mass.

Ordinary Time and General Liturgical Considerations

Liturgical Formularies for Civil Holidays

Please consult the Ordo to see the liturgical options and Mass texts for civil holidays such as Thanksgiving Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, etc.

Sundays and Solemnities

- The liturgical day runs from midnight to midnight, except for Sundays and Solemnities which begin with the evening of the preceding day (or the Vigil). (GNLYC #2)
- Because of its importance Sunday gives way only to solemnities and feasts of the Lord inscribed in the General Calendar, except that the Sundays of the Advent, Lent, and Easter seasons take precedence over all feasts of the Lord and over all solemnities. (GNLYC #5)
- Solemnities are counted as the principal days in the calendar and their observance begins with the Evening Prayer I of the preceding day. (GNLYC # 11)

Ordinary Time

- On weekdays in Ordinary Time when there is an optional memorial or the Office is of the weekday, it is permissible to use any Mass or oration for various circumstances, though not from the Ritual Masses. (GIRM # 377)
- Votive Masses of the mysteries of the Lord or in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of the Angels or of any given Saint or of all the Saints may be said for the sake of the faithful's devotion on weekdays in Ordinary Time, even if an optional memorial occurs. (GIRM # 375)
- On memorials of Saints, the Collect proper to the day is used or, if none is available, one from an appropriate Common. The prayer over the offerings, however, and the prayer after Communion unless they are proper, may be taken either from the Common or from the weekdays of the current Season. (GIRM # 363)
- On the weekdays in Ordinary Time, however, besides the orations from the previous Sunday, orations from another Sunday in Ordinary Time may be used, or one of the prayers for various needs provided in the Missal. It is always permissible, however, to use the collect alone from these Masses (GIRM #263)

Lent and Easter

Guidelines for Lent and Easter will be provided as a separate resource as in years past.

Ritual Masses

- Ritual Masses are connected to the celebration of certain Sacraments or Sacramentals, i.e., Confirmation or Marriage. They are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, on solemnities, on days within the octave of Easter, on the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Soul's Day), on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week, taking due account of the norms given in the ritual books or in the Masses themselves. (GIRM #372). Note: the use of the Gloria is prescribed for Ritual Masses even during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

Masses on Saturdays in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Outside Advent, Christmas Time, Lent and Easter Time, on Saturdays which have no commemoration having the rank of Obligatory Memorial or higher, a Mass in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be celebrated. The readings and prayers may be selected from the Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Roman Missal and in the Lectionary.

A “note” about the use of the Sequence

The *sequence* is a type of hymn which is sung before the *Alleluia* on certain select feasts. There are **four** days in the liturgical year that have a sequence: Easter Sunday (“Victimae Paschali Laudes”), Pentecost (“Veni, Sancte Spiritus”), Corpus Christi (“Lauda Sion Salvatorem”) and Our Lady of Sorrows [15 September] (“Stabat mater Dolorosa”). On Easter Sunday and Pentecost, it must be sung, whereas on Corpus Christi and Our Lady of Sorrows, the sequence is optional. (GIRM, #64)

