

ADVENT WREATH BLESSING
Third Sunday in Advent - Gaudete Sunday

All: The Lamb descends from heaven above,
 To pardon sin with freest love;
 For such indulgent mercy shewn,
 With tearful joy our thanks we own.

Priest: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Let your modesty be known to all men; for the Lord is nigh. Be nothing solicitous; but in everything by prayer let your requests be made known to God.

Priest: *℣.* Thou O Lord, that sittest upon the Cherubim, stir up Thy might, and come.

People: *℟.* Give ear, O Thou that ledest Joseph like a sheep.

Priest: *℣.* Glory be to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

People: *℟.* As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Priest: LET US PRAY: Grant us, we beseech Thee, O lord, that the coming solemnity of our redemption may both bring us help for our present life, and bestow on us the rewards of everlasting blessedness. Through Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.
(Priest lights third candle)

The celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is a wondrous thing. Every nation, land, people, and culture has developed a celebration peculiar to its own national sentiment and the religious patrimony of its ancestors. The mentality and culture of the people of each nation is different. The profound meaningfulness of a culture remains meaningful only to the people native to it. French mentality is meaningful to the people who live in France; in Italy the same is true; and in Japan the same; and in every place under the sun. Different though they may be, they yet have (had) one thing in common: a belief in the Divine Infant Birth as a reality. The people of the modern world, for the most part, have lost the sense of the REALITY OF ANYTHING DIVINE. Consequently, the very idea of the divine dimension of Christmas has faded away almost completely - not only in consumeristic America, but also in consumeristic France, Italy, Japan, and all the rest. Besides, the mere mention of the Nativity of Jesus is politically incorrect! Since Christmas, therefore, has been given the dimension of unreality by modern man, it becomes ever more unreal (especially to our children), when we add to it an imported observance understood by peoples of some foreign land and culture. It then becomes a kind of stage play in which we act out the customs of far away peoples, and, being staged, it becomes an artificial performance. Our American observance, like most others, is far from the traditional intention, and the reality of Jesus is quite vague and obscure and even quite distorted. The importation of a foreign practice or custom will not correct the scene. Therefore, let us make use of our own customs - both religious and fanciful - and then do our best, for the sake of our children, to glean the best there is from our present day formless disorder. We are American, and therefore we should work with "Made in America"! The old dictum is quite apropos: "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." We might say it in this way: "When in America, do as the Americans do." AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE, WHATEVER RELIGIOUS STRENGTH WE HAVE IN US WILL DIRECT OUR CORRECT CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS HERITAGE, AND WITH GOD'S HELP WILL KEEP OUR CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS (BOTH RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL) IN THEIR PROPER ORDER. Only then will our children be able to keep the flickering light of our beautiful Christmas Season lit for generations yet to come.

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1. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday of this week are Ember days, and are therefore days of Fast and Abstinence. Meat may be eaten once (at the main meal) on Wednesday and Saturday.
2. There will be Catechism class this morning after the 10:00 Mass.
3. This Christmas at the Midnight Mass Andrew Winland will carry the Baby Jesus and place Him in the crib.
4. Christmas Masses in the Abbey Church are at Midnight on Christmas Eve (the church will be opened about 11:30 PM), and at 10:00 AM Christmas morning. **THERE WILL BE NO 6:00 AM MASS IN THE ABBEY CHURCH ON CHRISTMAS DAY.**
5. Christmas Day Mass at St. Pius V Chapel in Birmingham is at 9:00 AM.
6. Christmas Eve is a day of COMPLETE ABSTINENCE and fast. It is understood that the fast is difficult to keep because of the great festivity of the day. A little "short cutting" in fasting on this day is certainly permissible.
7. Please pray for all the Sick and Shut-Ins of our Chapels, especially remembering Manny Gomez. Pray, also, for all the sick and needy, the suffering and hungry, the oppressed of the world. Pray for all the children of the world. Pray earnestly for all Priests! Pray for sinners! Pray for all who have called upon us for prayer and help.
8. MASSES FOR THE WEEK: (Father Abbot Leonard's schedule only)

SUNDAY:	For the people of our Chapels
MONDAY:	Special intention Paulita Dudley
TUESDAY:	Special intention Alice Deussen
WEDNESDAY:	Special intention Sister Laurene, O.P.
THURSDAY:	Special intention Vinita Kelley
FRIDAY:	Special intention Mary Conlon
SATURDAY:	For Jean and Micheline Barrere