



---

Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Office for  
Divine Worship  
(213) 637-7262

3424  
Wilshire  
Boulevard

Los Angeles  
California  
90010-2241

---

Dear Brothers in Christ,

As we look forward to celebrating the mystery of the Incarnation at Christmas, this year, the Fourth Sunday of Advent falls on December 24, Christmas Eve.

Canon Law reminds us that “Sunday, on which by apostolic tradition the Paschal Mystery is celebrated must be observed in the Universal Church as the primordial Holy Day of Obligation” (Can. 1246, 1). Additionally, Christmas is always observed as a Holy Day of Obligation regardless of which day of the week it falls on. Since the faithful are bound by each obligation, please make appropriate adaptations to your parish Mass schedule for that weekend to accommodate those who will fulfill both obligations.

While the US Bishops legislated in December 1991 for the United States that, “Whenever January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, or August 15, the Solemnity of the Assumption, or November 1, the Solemnity of All Saints falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated,”<sup>1</sup> the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ is *not* included in this provision.

Therefore, for this year:

- **Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent** start at 4PM on Saturday, December 23.
- **Masses for the Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ** start at 4PM at the earliest on Sunday, December 24.

The faithful need to be reminded that the obligation to attend Mass applies to both celebrations. In other words, each obligation must be fulfilled with a separate Mass.

Each parish should determine its own Mass schedule based on what is best for its circumstances.

Please communicate this information to your parishioners in advance.

As pastors and stewards of the Sacred Liturgy, we should do all we can to foster a love for it and a desire to celebrate both the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent and Christmas as fully and as reasonably as possible.

God bless,

Fr. Juan J. Ochoa

Director of the Office for Divine Worship

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/canon-law/complementary-norms/canon-1246>