Liturgical Celebrations for November 1-3, 2019

In recent weeks, the Office for Worship has received several inquiries concerning the scheduling of Vigil Masses for November first and second this year, and the proper celebrations for each of those vigils.

Because “the celebration of Sunday and of Solemnities begins already on the evening of the previous day,”¹ both the the Solemnity of All Saints and the Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time begin with the vigil Mass. Because the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed is of a lower rank within number 3 of the Table of Liturgical days, the Mass on Friday evening is for the Solemnity of All Saints.

¹ Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar, no. 3.
It should also be noted that the use of the Ritual Mass for the celebration of Marriage is forbidden on both All Saints’ (because it is a day of obligation,² and All Souls’ Day.³ Likewise, the use of the Funeral Mass is prohibited on All Saints’ Day because it is a Holy Day of obligation.⁴

In summary:

**The Solemnity of All Saints**
This solemnity, which is a Holy Day of Obligation this year, begins with the vigil Mass on Thursday night. Neither the Ritual Mass for the celebration of Marriage nor the Funeral Mass may be celebrated.

**The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day)**
The Commemoration begins with the Mass of the Day (on Saturday morning). The Ritual Mass for the celebration of Marriage may not be used.

**The Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time**
Sunday begins with the vigil Mass on Saturday afternoon.

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² cf. GIRM, no. 380.
³ Cf. GIRM, no. 372. While the use of the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Matrimony is forbidden, either the Mass of the day with the ritual itself and the Nuptial Blessing could be celebrated or the “Order of Celebrating Matrimony Outside Mass” could also be used.
⁴ Cf. GIRM, no. 372.
Praying for the Dead
on All Souls Day

A tension exists in our day in regard to what happens to us when we die. It is reflected in the tendency to see the rites of Christian burial exclusively as a celebration of a person’s life, and thus failing to carry out our duty to ‘commend the dead to God’s merciful love and plead for the forgiveness of their sins.’

This tendency is also manifested in the relative disappearance of the traditional Catholic practices of offering Masses for the dead, the regular visiting of cemeteries and use of the permission for priests to offer three Masses on All Souls day for the faithful departed.

Yet from her first days, the Church, has “honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.”

As Jacques Le Goff so brilliantly observed, the doctrine of Purgatory is an essentially optimistic view, embracing a final merciful cleansing in preparation for admission to the kingdom of light and of love. Our prayers for the deceased are that their sins be more quickly abated by virtue of our prayers, and particularly the Holy Eucharist.

That is why at every Mass we ask God to remember the dead, who now “rest in the sleep of peace,” asking that they be delivered to “a place of refreshment, light and peace,” where God will “wipe away every tear from our eyes.” Having “fallen asleep in the hope of the resurrection,” we ask that God make them “coheirs to eternal life” and “welcome them into the light of [his] face.”

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5 Order of Christian Funerals [OCF], no. 6.
6 Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1032.
8 Eucharistic Prayer I, The Roman Canon.
9 Eucharistic Prayer III.
10 Eucharistic Prayer IV.
11 Eucharistic Prayer II.
The three Mass sets which the Roman Missal provides for the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed on November 2nd continue this theme of intercession for the dead, asking that we be strengthened in “our hope of resurrection for your departed servants”\(^{12}\) and that God “look mercifully”\(^{13}\) on them, “that, with the mortality of this life overcome, they may gaze eternally on you, their Creator and Redeemer.”\(^{14}\)

Especially in the Prayers over the Offerings we find petitions that by means of these sacrificial offerings God might “wash away…in the Blood of Christ, the sins of [his] departed servants,”\(^{15}\) and that, “set free from the bonds of death by this singular sacrifice, they may merit eternal life”\(^{16}\) and “be taken up into glory with [his] Son”\(^{17}\)

Indeed, the very reason we offer the paschal Sacrament is that the departed, “cleansed by the paschal mysteries,”\(^{18}\) might “pass over to a dwelling place of light and peace”\(^{19}\) and know “the fullness of eternal joy.”\(^{20}\)

Let us pray, therefore, for a renewal in our time of the immemorial practice of praying for the dead, believing that “the ties of friendship and affection which knit us as one throughout our lives do not unravel with death”\(^{21}\) and that we can assist those who have gone before us in faith\(^{22}\) by our prayers and especially by the offering of the holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

\(^{12}\) *Roman Missal*, The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed [All Souls], Collect 1.

\(^{13}\) All Souls, Collect 2.

\(^{14}\) All Souls, Collect 3.

\(^{15}\) All Souls, Prayer Over the Offerings 2.

\(^{16}\) All Souls, Prayer Over the Offerings 3.

\(^{17}\) All Souls, Prayer Over the Offerings 1.

\(^{18}\) All Souls, Prayer After Communion 2.

\(^{19}\) All Souls, Prayer After Communion 1.

\(^{20}\) All Souls, Prayer After Communion 3.

\(^{21}\) OCF, Vigil for the Deceased: Invitation to Prayer, no. 71.

\(^{22}\) OCF, Rite of Committal, Invitation, no. 216.
Prayer for Deceased Bishops of Worcester

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that the soul of your departed servant Bishop N., to whom you committed the care of your family, may, with the manifold fruit of his labors, enter into the eternal gladness of his Lord. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Cardinal John Joseph Wright
died August 10, 1979

Bernard Joseph Flanagan
died January 28, 1998

Bishop Timothy Joseph Harrington
died March 23, 1997

George Edward Rueger
died April 6, 2019

Abbey Psalms and Canticles

The USCCB Committee on Divine Worship has announced the Holy See’s confirmation of a new translation of Psalms and biblical Canticles prepared for liturgical use in the United States of America. The work will be published under the title Abbey Psalms and Canticles and will be incorporated in all future liturgical books, including the Liturgy of the Hours.

While these new translations are not prescribed for liturgical use until the publication of the new liturgical books, we provide a copy of the translation of the Canticles for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer for the information of our readers. Additional information on these translations can be found in the Newsletter of the Committee on Divine Worship, July-August 2019 edition.

23 Roman Missal, Prayers for the Dead.
Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79)

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel:
for he has visited his people and redeemed them;
He has raised up for us a horn of salvation
in the House of David his servant,
As he spoke through the mouth of his holy ones,
his prophets from ages past:

To grant salvation from our foes,
and from the hand of all who hate us,
Showing mercy to our fathers,
remembering his holy covenant;

The oath he swore to Abraham our father,
to grant that freed from the hand of our foes,
We may serve him without fear
in holiness and righteousness
all the days of our life.

And you, little child,
will be called the Prophet of the Most High,
For you will go before the Lord
to make ready his ways:
To grant knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins;

Through the tender mercy of our God,
the Dawn from on high will visit us,
To shine on those who sit in darkness,
and those in the shadow of death;
to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Canticle of Mary (Luke 1:46-55)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
For he has looked upon his handmaid in her lowliness;
for behold, from this day forward, all generations will call me blessed.

For the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is from age to age for those who fear him.

He has made known the strength of his arm, and has scattered the proud in their conceit of heart.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted those who are lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, and has sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, mindful of his mercy,
Even as he promised to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever.
Some Final Thoughts…

I am amazed each year by the overwhelming beauty of the autumn leaves, their vibrancy and deep beauty. It’s as if I forget in each twelve month cycle the gifts that God sends each year.

It’s the same with Advent and Christmas: the light in our darkness, the coming of the Child in a manger and the Lord on a cloud. And then there’s the snow and the cold and the ice, each made tolerable or even beautiful by the Advent and Christmas seasons which they bring us.

That is why we begin even now to prepare for Advent and Christmas, not just with gifts and trees and lights, but with liturgical celebrations which open even hearts grown cold to the warmth of his mid-winter Epiphany.

We’ve been slowly adding to the Office for Worship website, where you will find some Advent and Christmas resources to assist you in your preparations.

We are also approaching that time of year when we give thanks and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has made these first few months at the Office for Worship such a joy. Bishop McManus, first of all, has the patience of a saint, while Monsignor Johnson has been an invaluable source of encouragement as I seek to build a little on the great foundation he has created. ‘Liz Marcil’s extraordinary experience has been invaluable as has been the generous work of Jane Ford and all the hard working assistant masters of ceremony who have made it possible for this aging cleric to do his work. And to all the rest of you, thank you for your kind support.

Finally, I would be grateful for prayers, and let me know if there is any way in which we can be more supportive of your good work in praising God and serving his holy people.

In the Lord,

Monsignor James P. Moroney
Director