PSALMS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

A Workshop of Music and Prayer for All Music Ministers
OVERVIEW

- Morning Prayer
- Advent
  - Biblical commentary
  - Sing!
  - Liturgical commentary
- Christmas
  - Biblical commentary
  - Sing!
  - Liturgical commentary
  - Closing prayer
Advent Sundays

❖ Gospels: Lord’s coming at the end of time (1st Sunday), John the Baptist (2nd and 3rd), events preparing for the Lord’s birth (4th)

❖ OT readings are prophecies about the Messiah, especially from Isaiah

❖ 2nd readings are exhortations and proclamations in keeping with the season
Advent Weekdays

- Starts with a semicontinuous reading of Isaiah - The Gospel is chosen with the first reading in mind
- From Thursday of the second week the Gospels concern John the Baptist - the first reading either continues Isaiah or is inspired by the Gospel
- From December 17 the Gospels are events leading to the birth of Christ from Matthew and Luke - The first reading is a prophecy chosen in light of the day’s gospel
ADVENT I: PSALM 80

“Lord, make us turn to you; let us see your face and we shall be saved.”

Key words: “saved”, “take care of the vine” and “the son of man”

Gradual from 3rd Sunday moved here and expanded

used for votive masses such as earthquakes and congress, Ordinary Time and Advent weekdays and Sundays

Perhaps has more to do with the season than the readings
“Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.”

Key words: “salvation”, “peace”, “dwelling”, “truth shall spring from the earth,” “justice shall prepare the way”

First reading: “Every valley shall be filled in”

With Ps 25, a common psalm for Advent (LM 174) with shorter refrain: “Lord, show us your mercy and love.”
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION: PSALM 98

“Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous deeds.”

Key words: “wondrous deeds,” “salvation”

Often a psalm for the mission to the Gentiles

Pertains more to the solemnity than the readings
ADVENT III: LUKE 1

- “My soul rejoices in my God.”
- Latin: “will rejoice”
- Refrain from Ps 61:10b (first reading), verses from gospel, most of the Magnificat
- *Gaudete*, see inversions in first reading ("to bring glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted")
“For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.”

2 Sam: “The Lord will establish a house for you” - the refrain returns the favor

EP IV: “Time and again you offered them covenants.”

Latin: “For ever I will sing your goodness, Lord.”
Christmas Solemnities & Feasts

❖ Readings of 4 Christmas masses are from the tradition
❖ Holy Family about childhood of Jesus and family life
❖ Mary, Mother of God - about Mary and the Holy Name
❖ Epiphany first reading and gospel are from the tradition, the second reading is about calling nations to salvation
❖ Baptism of the Lord - readings concern the mystery
Christmas Weekdays

❖ The First Letter of John in its entirety
❖ The Gospels relate manifestations of the Lord
❖ December 29-30 childhood of Jesus from Luke
❖ Dec 31 - Jan 5 passages from John 1
❖ January 7-12 manifestations of the Lord from the four Gospels
CHRISTMAS VIGIL: PSALM 89

- “For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.”

- Second verse is different from last Sunday’s: “Blessed the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of your countenance, O Lord, they walk.”

- New to this mass after council

- Perhaps prepares for the gospel: “Joseph, son of David”
“Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord.” (Lk 2:11)

“Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice…. They shall exult before the Lord for he comes.”

Formerly - and presently - the offertory antiphon

A prophecy fulfilled in the gospel

Tense of the verb is important
CHRISTMAS DAWN: PSALM 97

- “A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us.” (refrain is a new composition)
- “Light dawns for the just; and gladness, for the upright of heart.”
- Choice of psalm is new for this mass
- Pertains to event, joy of readings
CHRISTMAS DAY: PSALM 98

- “All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.”
- In the verses: “The Lord has made his salvation known”
- The gradual has been using the same psalm
- Note the sequence of psalm numbers on Christmas Day
“Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.”

“Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine…; your children like olive plants.”

New to this mass after council; even the day was the first Sunday after Epiphany

Fits the first two readings and the theme of the day
“The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.”

“You descendants of Abraham, his servants… He, the Lord, is our God.”

New to this mass in second edition of lectionary

Connects with promise to Abraham in first reading
MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD:  
PSALM 67

- “May God bless us in his mercy.”
- “May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear him”
- New to postconciliar missal
- First reading: “The Lord bless you and keep you.”
- Perhaps pertains to start of the new year
“Lord, every nation on earth will adore you.”

“The kings of Tarshish and the Isles shall offer gifts…. He shall have pity for the lowly and the poor.”

From the offertory antiphon

Foreshadows magi in the gospel

Universal theme of epiphany
BAPTISM OF THE LORD: PSALM 29

- “The Lord will bless his people with peace.”
- “The voice of the Lord is over the waters….The God of glory thunders….The Lord is enthroned above the flood.”
- New to postconciliar missal
- Continues the theme of epiphany, foreshadows gospel Formerly this day was a commemoration on January 13
“You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.”

“among the nations make known his deeds…. great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel!”

New to postconciliar missal

First reading: “Come to the water,” and foreshadows gospel

Key word “salvation”