
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
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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
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ADVENT II: PSALM 85

- “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.”
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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
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ADVENT III: LUKE I

- “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”)
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ADVENT IV: PSALM 89

- “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.”
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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 this 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”
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CHRISTMAS DURING THE NIGHT: PSALM 96

- “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
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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
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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
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THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH: PSALM 128

- “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
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B:THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH: PSALM 105

- “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
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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
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EPIPHANY OF THE LORD: PSALM 72

- “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
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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
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B: BAPTISM OF THE LORD: ISAIAH 12

- “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”
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Adrien Nocent
The Liturgical Year



Advent,
Christmas,
Epiphany

Introduced, Emended, and Annotated by Paul Turner



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