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THE OCTAVE DAY OF CHRISTMAS: HISTORICAL
DEVELOPMENT AND MODERN LITURGICAL
PRACTICE

Christopher Labadie

Each year, as the secular calendar turns from the old to the new, the Christian calendar completes an intensive eight-day celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. This octave of Christmas is meant to draw out the importance of the coming of Christ into the world as a human child. While each of the days is celebrated as a “little Christmas,” most of them also celebrate a saint who brings out some particular aspect of the Christmas story. On the eighth and final day, the Church celebrates a feast which has existed almost as long as Christmas itself but which has gone through many transformations. Today this feast is known as “The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord and the Solemnity of Mary, the holy Mother of God.” Our aim here is to look at the history behind this feast and how it has come to be a celebration of both the Nativity and of Mary. We will look at the development of the feast, primarily in the Roman liturgy, and see what the Church is trying to tell us about the relationship of the feast to both Christ and his Mother. Lastly, I will look at some of the liturgical elements of this complicated feast as it is celebrated today, and offer some thoughts on how to celebrate and learn from this rich and varied day on the Church’s calendar.

Dating of Christmas and Development of the Octave

Our discussion of the historical development of the Octave Day of Christmas must begin with a brief overview of the theories regarding the dating of Christmas to December 25th. The long held “history of religions” theory depicts the celebration of Christmas on this date as an attempt to “supplant”¹ or “contrast with”² the pagan festival of *Natalis solis invicti* (Birthday of the Unconquered Sun). This festival, dating from the year 274c.e.,³ celebrated the Invincible Sun as “divine protector of the empire and the emperor.”⁴ The Roman Empire used December 25 as the winter solstice and the cult surrounding the Invincible Sun was meant to show that the Sun would never be conquered by the darkness of winter. The theory is that the date for Christmas was chosen when “the cult of the sun was particularly strong”⁵ and so the winter solstice was chosen to counter the pagan festival. There is evidence that even from the beginning of the third century Christ was referred to using the title “Sun of Justice,”⁶ thus lending credence to the idea that a Christian festival of the “Son” might be juxtaposed with the pagan festival. This theory was generally accepted as the origins of Christmas, even though it had dissenters from the outset, until the twentieth century saw a rise in popularity of a second theory.

Although first published around the same time as the “history of religions” theory, the competing “calculation” theory did not gain many supporters until the latter half of the twentieth century. This theory rests on two important premises: that Christ died on March 25 and that “fractional numbers have no place in symbolical systems.”⁷ Based on these premises, the Incarnation would have been an exact number of

years and so “the annunciation must have... occurred on 25th of March” leading to “the nativity nine months later on 25th of December.”⁸ Whichever of these theories is correct, Christmas came to be celebrated on December 25th in the Roman Church from about the year 336 c.e.⁹ Any celebration of “the birth of the divine Son” is incomplete “without remembering the virginal Mother,”¹⁰ and so the establishment of Christmas would naturally include some celebration of the Blessed Virgin, at first implicitly and later in a more explicit way.

The earliest evidence for the celebration of an official octave day of Christmas is not until the seventh century.¹¹ In the preceding centuries the Church resisted celebrations on January 1st due to pagan idol worship and debauchery, which surrounded the New Year.¹² Instead, the Church observed January 1st as a day of penance so that the faithful might refrain from participating in idolatrous activities. In the fourth century the monk Telemachus was martyred after exhorting a stadium full of revelers to “Cease from the superstition of idols and polluted sacrifices. [For] Today is the octave of the Lord!”¹³ Around the same time the Church in Rome began to celebrate a *Missa ad prohibendum ab idolis* (Mass for prohibition of idols)¹⁴ and Augustine encouraged the faithful to celebrate the New Year with “prayer and penance.”¹⁵ These penitential practices were confirmed by both the Second Council of Tours in 567 c.e. and the Fourth Council of Toledo in 633 c.e., which called for prayer, penance, and fasting during the first days of the new year.¹⁶ This penitential emphasis lasted into the seventh century, when the Roman Church adopted a Constantinopolitan commemoration of Mary and assigned

it to January 1st.¹⁷

Early Marian Devotion

The *Commentary on Romans*, written by the Eastern theologian Origen of Alexandria and dating from the early third century, refers to the Blessed Virgin as *Theotokos* or “God-bearer.”¹⁸ This term is usually interpreted loosely into Latin as *Deigenetrix* or “bearer of God,” and then into English as “Mother of God.”¹⁹ Perhaps the earliest liturgical use of this term comes to us in the prayer generally known as *Sub tuum praesidium*, which is also dated to around the third-century: “To your protection we flee, holy *Mother of God*: do not despise our prayers in [our] needs, but deliver us from all dangers, glorious and blessed Virgin.”²⁰ This prayer is considered the “oldest prayer to the Virgin” and expresses both the liturgical and doctrinal importance of Mary as the Mother of God.²¹ The third, fourth, and fifth centuries saw a gradual increase in Mary being referred to using the title *Theotokos*, in both theological writing and liturgical expression.²² By the time of the Council of Ephesus in 431, *Theotokos* had become not just a technical term but a real expression of the faith that was dear to both theologians and faithful alike.²³

In response to the Nestorian denial that Mary could be titled “Mother of God,”²⁴ the Council of Ephesus defined *Theotokos* as an official title of Mary, based on the divinity of Christ:

If someone does not confess that Emmanuel is God
in the true sense of the word, and that therefore

the holy virgin is the Mother of God because she begot according to the flesh the Word who is God, let him be anathema.²⁵

Following this declaration of the council, “public scenes of excitement” ushered in the “rapid and extensive development of a Marian liturgical cult.”²⁶ For the Roman Church, which had seen the establishment of Christmas less than a century before, this opened the door to a more explicit celebration of the divine motherhood of Mary.²⁷ The dates of these celebrations were not uniform—the Spanish celebrated on December 18 and the French on January 18th—but by the seventh century the Church in Rome had established its celebration of the maternity of Mary on the octave day of Christmas—January 1.²⁸

According to Bernard Botte, there is evidence of a Mass formulary for a new Marian feast following Christmas, which was written between 560 and 590.²⁹ This feast was titled *Natale sanctae Mariae* (translated either as “the anniversary of St. Mary” or more loosely as “the anniversary of the Mother of God”³⁰), and was in many ways influenced by Masses in honor of holy virgins.³¹ Many of the propers for this feast are thought to have been taken directly from the Common of Virgins, including the introit *Vultum tuum*, as well as the gradual, offertory, and communion chants.³² Other texts were evidently composed especially for this new feast, including the collect *Deus, qui salutis aeternae:*

O God, who through the fruitful virginity of Blessed Mary bestowed on the human race the grace of eternal salvation, grant, we pray, that we may experience the intercession of her, through whom we were found worthy to receive the author of life, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.³³

This collect was used until the Second Vatican Council and was restored as the collect for January 1st in the Roman Missal, 3rd edition.³⁴ We see in this prayer both the influence of texts from the Common of Virgins, as well as an emphasis on the motherhood of Mary and thus her intimate relationship with Christ. This feast is generally agreed to be the “the first Marian feast” of the Roman liturgy³⁵ and was celebrated from the latter half of the sixth century until the early decades of the seventh century.

The Feast of the Circumcision

Eventually the Anniversary of the Mother of God was overshadowed by the emergence of an increasing number of Marian feasts, mostly coming from the East, which “made this feast appear redundant.”³⁶ By the middle of the seventh century the feast of the Annunciation, as well as Mary’s Dormition, Nativity, and Purification, became the dominant Marian feasts in the Roman liturgy.³⁷ Because of the specific nature of each of these feasts and the associated processions which were ordered by Pope Sergius,³⁸ the more general feast on January 1 was quietly returned to a simple celebration of the octave of Christmas.³⁹ It is hard to know exactly how long the feast was celebrated on the Roman calendar, but all evidence points to it being no more than fifty years. At the same time, a regional feast from the Spanish and Gallican Churches had begun to grow in popularity, the Feast of the Circumcision.

The earliest recorded mention of a feast connected to the circumcision of Jesus came from a lectionary used in the city of Capua, near Naples, dating from the year 546 c.e.⁴⁰ Little is known about this feast, other than that by the seventh century it had spread to Gaul and Spain where it took

hold. The Spanish liturgy united the Feast of the Circumcision with the penitential festival *In caput anni* (“At the head of the year”), echoing both this feast of the Lord as well as the early Roman practice of penance at the beginning of the new year.⁴¹ In Gaul, where the feast had more of a stronghold, both the Bobbio Missal (seventh century) and the *Missale Gothicum* (end of the seventh century) include prayers and readings for the Circumcision of the Lord.⁴² The theology behind the feast, as well as the choice of date, is based on Luke 2:21: “After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.”⁴³ In addition to mirroring the Lucan Gospel account of the Lord’s circumcision on the eighth day after his birth, the feast served as a reminder of the Lord’s and the Holy Family’s compliance with the Jewish custom by which male infants are welcomed into the “eternal covenant between God and the Jewish people.”⁴⁴

When exactly the Feast of the Circumcision entered the Roman calendar remains unclear. There is the possibility that it happened as early as the seventh century, when the specific Marian feasts began to overshadow *Natale sanctae Mariae* and the focus shifted back to a celebration of the “Octave of the Birth of Our Lord.”⁴⁵ The Gallican liturgy may have then influenced the Roman calendar and brought about the incorporation of the Circumcision of the Lord.⁴⁶ This would seem to be contradicted by the Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries, both from the latter half of the eighth century, which include a Mass *In octabas Domini* (“At the octave of the Lord”) with no mention of the Circumcision in the propers.⁴⁷ The first evidence of a commemoration of the Circumcision in the Eastern Churches is

also not until the eighth century.⁴⁷ The most widely accepted date for the feast's entrance, at least initially, into the Roman calendar seems to be some time in the ninth century.⁴⁸ At the time it would have been tacked onto the celebration of the octave day of Christmas.⁴⁹ If the commemoration of the Circumcision did enter the calendar in the ninth century, the biggest substantive change in the liturgy would have been the substitution of the circumcision pericope at the Gospel. The balance of the liturgy, including most of the propers, would have maintained their Marian character.⁵⁰

As we have seen, there is an argument for the Feast of the Circumcision entering the Roman calendar in the ninth century. There are still some who believe that the acceptance of this new feast was not so quick, and that the Roman celebration would have remained focused on the octave day as the completion of the Christmas celebrations. Those who believe the Circumcision entered the calendar later argue that it may not have been until the thirteenth century,⁵¹ or even as late as the fifteenth century.⁵² The fifteenth century is generally considered to be the latest that the feast could have entered the calendar due to the feast's inclusion in many liturgical books under the title "Feast of the Circumcision."⁵³ In the late Middle Ages, with some of the uncertainty surrounding the nature of the January 1 feast, the Church once again faced challenges from "riotous displays" centered on the New Year festivities. These "Feasts of Fools" celebrated by the lower clergy (e.g. subdeacons) took place throughout the continent and were a cause of scandal for Church authorities and faithful alike due to their impious displays.⁵⁴ While most of these "celebrations" had been curtailed by the end of the sixteenth century due to the focus on the

Circumcision, some regions of France held “Feasts of Fools” into the eighteenth century.⁵⁵ By the time of the Council of Trent, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the commemoration of the Circumcision had taken hold throughout the Roman Church, becoming the double celebration which would be retained until the Second Vatican Council. When the Tridentine Missal was promulgated in 1570, it gave to January 1 the title *In circumcissione Domini et octava Nativitatis* (The Circumcision of the Lord and the Octave of Christmas).⁵⁶

Vatican II Era Reforms

Like many established feasts on the liturgical calendar, the Feast of the Circumcision and the Octave of Christmas did not see much change in the four hundred years after Trent. In 1960, anticipating the work of the Second Vatican Council and desiring to complete the work of his predecessor, Pope John XXIII issued new rubrics for the Roman Missal.⁵⁷ The rubrics suppressed many of the octaves celebrated throughout the Church, but retained that of Christmas as an Octave of the Second Class and made the octave day itself a Feast of the First Class.⁵⁸ After at least four hundred years as a commemoration of the Circumcision, the name of the feast was changed by the new rubrics with little explanation. From January 1, 1961 the feast returned to the simple title “Octave Day of Christmas.”⁵⁹ Despite the change in title, the actual celebration of the feast saw very little change – the collect of the Mass was still the Marian themed *Deus, qui salutis aeternae* dating from the sixth century, and the Gospel pericope remained the Lucan account of the circumcision and naming of Jesus.⁶⁰ With the lack

of changes in the actual liturgical celebration of the day, one can conclude that the change in title was merely for the sake of simplicity or perhaps so as not to show preference to one aspect of the celebration over another.

Just nine years after John XXIII issued new rubrics and seven years after the promulgation of the new Missal, the work of the Second Vatican Council changed the calendar yet again. The Council sought to include celebrations of Mary in the liturgical calendar because the “holy Church honors with especial love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son.”⁶¹ Any celebration of Mary in the calendar was to be in the context of “the role she played in the mysteries of her son”⁶² so as not to “separate devotion to the Blessed Virgin from its necessary point of reference—Christ.”⁶³ With this principle in mind and because of the ancient January 1 celebration of *Natale sanctae Mariae*,⁶⁴ the 1969 reform of the calendar saw the restoration of the Marian character of the day⁶⁵ in the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Unlike the ancient feast which was more a general celebration of Mary and easily overshadowed by other Marian feasts, this new celebration was deliberately a feast of the *Theotokos*⁶⁶ and as a solemnity of the Blessed Virgin was given the highest rank for a Marian feast.⁶⁷ In recognition of the long and varied liturgical history of January 1, the General Norms of 1969 also give official recognition to the day as the “octave day of Christmas” and “recalls the conferral of the Holy Name of Jesus” which would have occurred at his circumcision.⁶⁸ This recognition of the Holy Name was in lieu of the separate Feast of the Holy Name which had followed the Circumcision on January 2 from the fifteenth century.⁶⁹

The Octave Day as Celebrated Now

The 1969 revision of the calendar is the current rubric in place for the liturgical celebrations of the Roman Church, and January 1 is the culmination of roughly thirteen hundred years of changing titles and shifting foci. Even though the question has been settled for the time being, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God still must hold various celebrations in mind. First, it continues to bear the label “The Octave Day of the Nativity,” an important designation since an octave day in the post-Vatican II Church is shared by only the two most important solemnities on the calendar, the other being Easter Sunday.⁷⁰ The second, and perhaps the most obvious of the celebrations is that which serves as the title of the day—Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. This celebration of the “divine and virginal motherhood of the Blessed Virgin”⁷¹ sets Mary as the example of faithfulness to which all people should strive. Because of this example and because of the important doctrinal statement of Mary as *Theotokos*, perhaps the most important Marian doctrine, January 1 is not only a solemnity but is also maintained as a holy day of obligation in the Roman Church.⁷² By obliging Catholics to attend Mass on this day, the Church hopes to again draw the attention of the faithful to the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation and the role of Mary in bringing the “Author of life” into the world.⁷³

January 1 also holds the memory of the secular observance of the civil new year, yet the Church seems to hesitate at drawing any significant interaction between the liturgical and secular calendars. In the “Masses for Civil Needs” section of the Missal, a Mass formulary is provided for

“The Beginning of the Civil Year” but the rubric clearly states that it is not to be used on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.⁷⁴ Some theologians, such as Rudolf Schwarzenberger, argue that this ignores the deep-seated cultural significance placed on New Year’s Day and the tug that has on the hearts of the faithful. He argues that Vatican II made it “the Church’s duty to offer [the faithful], in a liturgy ... direction and help that will enable them to cope, in faith, with past, present, and future,”⁷⁵ a duty which he believes makes it important to recognize New Year’s Day in some liturgical fashion.

In December 2001, Pope John Paul II promulgated the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*, which exhorted the faithful to observe traditional New Year’s greetings and practices in a way which lent “a Christian understanding to this custom, making of these greetings an expression of popular piety.”⁷⁶ In doing this, the Church hopes that people recognize that the new year must be “placed under the patronage of the Lord, and ... new year greetings ... implicitly and explicitly place the New Year under the Lord’s dominion, since to him belongs all time.”⁷⁷ Interestingly, the *Directory* also implicitly places the new year under the patronage of Mary, Queen of Peace by recognizing another celebration on January 1 – the World Day of Peace.⁷⁸ This commemoration was established by Pope Paul VI in 1967 and first celebrated on January 1, 1968 as a day of “Intense prayer for peace, education towards peace and those values... such as liberty, fraternal solidarity, the dignity of the human person, respect for nature, the right to work, the sacredness of human life, and the denunciation of injustices which trouble the conscience of man and threaten peace.”⁷⁹ In 1974 Paul VI issued an exhortation,

Marialis cultus, in which the commemorations of January 1 – the Octave Day of the Nativity, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, New Year’s Day, and the World Day of Peace – are all summarized as one great amalgamated feast in which:

... we should all turn with one mind to the restored solemnity of the Mother of God ... The purpose of [which] is to honor the role of Mary in the mystery of salvation ... This same solemnity also offers an excellent opportunity to renew the adoration rightfully to be shown to the newborn Prince of Peace ... and [because of] the fact that the octave of Christmas coincides with a day of hope, New Year’s Day, we have assigned to it the observance of the World Day of Peace.⁸⁰

This serves as the starting point from which our modern celebrations of this ancient and yet new festival of the Roman calendar should spring.

Liturgical Analysis

From this understanding of the January 1 celebration, we turn now to how the Church implements this understanding through the prayers and readings of the day, which are the same in each year of the three-year lectionary cycle.⁸¹ For those who begin Mass with a proper antiphon rather than a locally-chosen hymn, two entrance antiphons are prescribed in the Missal: the first is *Hail, Holy Mother, who gave birth to the King* and centers the feast in the memory of the *Theotokos*; the second is *Today a light will shine upon us* which centers us in the octave, as it is also used for the Mass at Dawn on Christmas. The collect for the day, which we looked at earlier, ties us to the earliest Marian feast as it

comes directly from the ancient Roman *Natale sanctae Mariae*. In the Liturgy of the Word we find an amazing summation of the major commemorations of the day, beginning with the reading from Numbers. In this reading the Lord instructs Moses on how Aaron is to bless the people and closes by saying “So shall they invoke my name upon the Israelites, and I will bless them.”⁸² While not a direct connection to the Holy Name, it would be easy for a homilist to draw the connection if he desired to focus the attention of the faithful on this aspect of the celebration.

The second reading, from Paul’s letter to the Galatians, shifts the focus to God’s “Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law”⁸³—drawing out both the Christmas and *Theotokos* themes. This message reaches its climax in the Gospel pericope, a continuation of Luke’s Christmas account in which the shepherds come to worship the newborn Christ and related the message of the angels to Mary and Joseph: “And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.”⁸⁴ The Gospel even commemorates the Tridentine feast of the Circumcision as well as the Holy Name: “When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus...”⁸⁵ The prayer over the offering suggests the briefest of connections to the fact that Mass is being celebrated on New Year’s Day, “O God, who in your kindness begin all good things” and “just as we glory in the beginnings of your grace.”⁸⁶ The readings and prayers thus give the opportunity to draw out any of the commemorations of the day, with special emphasis placed on the role of Mary, the divine Mother, and her role in the Nativity.⁸⁷

Conclusion

On January 1, the Roman Church offers the faithful a wide array of commemorations, perhaps more than in any other single feast day. The emphasis which has been placed on each of these commemorations has changed throughout the centuries, leading to changes in the title of the feast and how important it was on the Church calendar. One thing which has remained, although in various ways to various degrees, throughout the centuries is the Marian character of this day—from the earliest celebrations of *Natale sanctae Mariae* in Rome to the latest revisions of the calendar and Missal. Each of the readings and prayers of the day are applicable in some way to the different commemorations, but at the heart of the liturgical celebration is the Marian character. As with any Marian feast the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God shows us Christ through the lens of his mother and invites us deeper into his mystery. No matter what emphasis the Church chooses to highlight in a certain era of history, the true heart of our celebration remains Christ and so the liturgy of the day should always draw us to he who is “Wondrous God, Prince of peace, Father of future ages.”⁸⁸

Notes:

¹Paul F. Bradshaw and Maxwell E Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts and Seasons in Early Christianity* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2011), 124.

²Ignazio M. Calabuig OSM, “The Liturgical Cult of Mary in the East and West,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: Liturgical Time and Space*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 238.

³Peter G. Cobb, “The History of the Christian Year,” in *The Study of Liturgy*, Revised Edition, eds. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright, Edward Yarnold SJ, and Paul Bradshaw (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 466.

⁴Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 124.

⁵The Catholic University of America, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3 (Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1967), 656.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 125.

⁹Calabuig, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 238.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Pierre Jounel, “The Year: The Christmas Season,” in *The Church at Prayer, Volume IV: The Liturgy and Time*, ed. A.G. Martimort (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 84.

¹²Adolf Adam, *The Liturgical Year* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 139.

¹³Tanya Gulevich, *Encyclopedia of Christmas* (Detroit: Omnigraphics, 2000), 209.

¹⁴Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 139.

¹⁵Catholic University, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 658.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 139.

¹⁸Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 198.

¹⁹Gerald O’Collins S.J. and Edward G Farrugia S.J., *A Concise Dictionary of Theology* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991), 242.

²⁰Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 199.

²¹Calabuig, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 232.

²²Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 200-205.

²³Kilian McDonnell O.S.B., “The Marian Liturgical Tradition,” in *Between Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville: Liturgical Press [Pueblo], 2000), 389.

²⁴Nestorius argued that referring to Mary as “Theotokos” was a denial of the full humanity of Christ. He preferred the term “Christotokos,” which placed more emphasis on the human nature of Jesus.

²⁵Calabuig, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 244. He is quoting Canon 1 of the Council of Ephesus.

²⁶McDonnell, *Between Memory and Hope*, 388.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Catholic University, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, 210.

²⁹Calabuig, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 243.

³⁰Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 139.

³¹McDonnell, *Between Memory and Hope*, 389.

³²Calabuig, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 243.

³³*Roman Missal, Third Typical Edition* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2011).

³⁴Calabuig, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 244.

³⁵Jounel, *The Church at Prayer, Volume IV*, 133.

³⁶McDonnell, *Between Memory and Hope*, 389.

³⁷Bradshaw and Johnson, *The Origins of Feasts*, 210-212.

³⁸McDonnell, *Between Memory and Hope*, 390.

³⁹Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 140.

⁴⁰Cobb, *The Study of Liturgy*, Revised ed., 469.

⁴¹Gabriel Ramis, “The Liturgical Year in the Non-Roman West,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies, Volume V: Liturgical Time and Space*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 216.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 213.

⁴³Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 140.

⁴⁴Gulevich, *Encyclopedia of Christmas*, 209.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 210.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Ramis, “The Liturgical Year,” 244.

⁴⁸Catholic University, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, 658.

⁴⁹*Ibid.* See also, Cobb, *The Study of Liturgy*, 469

⁵⁰Calabuig, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 244.

⁵¹Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 140.

⁵²Catholic University, *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, 658.

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴Gulevich, *Encyclopedia of Christmas*, 210.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶Matias Auge, “The Liturgical Year in the Roman Rite,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies, Volume V: Liturgical Time and Space*, ed. Anscar J. Chupungco (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 198.

⁵⁷Pope John XXIII, *The New Rubrics of the Roman Breviary and Missal: Translation and Commentary*, ed. Patrick L. Murphy (Sydney: The Catholic Press Newspaper Co., 1960), xii. This document was meant to simplify the myriad of rubrics which had grown into the liturgy and then codify them for the use of the whole Church.

⁵⁸Ibid., 11.

⁵⁹Ibid., 118.

⁶⁰*The Daily Missal and Liturgical Manual from the Editio Typica of The Roman Missal and Breviary*, 1962 (London: Baronius Press, 2009), 225-226.

⁶¹Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy), (Vatican City: December 4, 1963), §103.

⁶²McDonnell, *Between Memory and Hope*, 394.

⁶³Pope Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus* (Vatican City: February 2, 1974), §4.

⁶⁴Jounel, *The Church at Prayer*, 148.

⁶⁵Auge, *Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, 198.

⁶⁶McDonnell, *Between Memory and Hope*, 390.

⁶⁷Congregation for Divine Worship, “General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (GNLYC),” (Vatican City: February 14, 1969), Table of Liturgical Days.

⁶⁸Ibid., §35-f.

⁶⁹Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 140.

⁷⁰GNLYC, §11.

⁷¹Congregation for Divine Worship, “Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines (DPPL),” (Vatican City: December 2001), 115.

⁷²McDonnell, *Between Memory and Hope*, 399.

⁷³DPPL, 115.

⁷⁴Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 141.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶DPPL, 116.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Joyce Ann Zimmerman, CPPS, “Veneration of the Holy Mother of God,” in *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy: Principles and Guidelines - A Commentary*, ed. Peter C Phan (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 107.

⁷⁹DPPL, 117.

⁸⁰*Marialis cultus*, §5.

⁸¹Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 140.

⁸²Numbers 6:27. Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible references in this paper are to *The New American Bible, Revised Edition* (NABRE), <http://www.usccb.org/bible/>, United State Conference of Catholic Bishops, (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2011).

⁸³Galatians 4:4-5.

⁸⁴Luke 2:19.

⁸⁵Luke 2:21..

⁸⁶*Roman Missal, Third Typical Edition*.

⁸⁷Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 140.

⁸⁸Entrance antiphon for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

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