



LITURGICAL NOTES: PROPER LAST GOSPELS

Ordinarily, the beginning of the Holy Gospel according to St. John is read as the Last Gospel at Mass. There are many occasions, however, on which the Last Gospel is a proper (i.e., the excerpt of the Gospel which would be read at the Mass of the feast which is being commemorated).

There is a proper Last Gospel in every Mass at which a commemoration is made of:

i) a Sunday, (e.g. when the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist or the Feast of the Most Precious Blood falls on Sunday).

ii) a week-day which has a proper Mass and therefore a proper Gospel. This would include the ferial days of Lent and Passiontide, the Ember days and the Monday of the Rogations.

iii) a vigil;

iv) the octave day of the Feast of the Epiphany which has a special Gospel.

v) a day within the octaves of Easter and Pentecost in which the Last Gospel will be the Gospel of that day.

vi) a Gospel is considered strictly proper to a feast when mention is made (historically or in prophecy) of the mystery (event) or person that feast celebrates, e.g. the Gospel in the Mass of the feast of the Holy Innocents, that of St. Mary Magdalene, that of St. Martha. Accordingly, the Masses of the feasts of the following persons have a strictly proper Gospel:

—Our Lord, Our Lady, the holy Angels, St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, the holy Apostles.

Exceptions to the above rules are:

i) If the Gospel of the feast commemorated be the same — even in the opening words — as the Gospel of the Mass, then the Last Gospel will be that of St. John.

ii) The Gospel of St. John is said when the Vigil of Christmas falls on the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

iii) The Gospel of St. John is said when the feast of January 2nd, 3rd or 4th falls on a Sunday.