

**JOLIET DIOCESE SIMBANG GABI 2025
SCHEDULE OF MASSES**

Link to Diocese of Joliet website: <https://catechesis.diojoliet.org/ethnic-ministry>

	<u>27TH ANNUAL WESTERN CLUSTER</u>	<u>28TH ANNUAL EASTERN CLUSTER</u>
DECEMBER 14, SUNDAY	ST. MARY IMMACULATE, <u>5:00 PM</u> 15629 S. Route 59 Plainfield, IL 60544, 815.436.2651 <small>Facebook.com/StMaryimmaculate or http://www.YouTube.com/@stmaryimmaculate</small>	CHRIST THE KING, <u>4:00 PM</u> 1501 S. Main Street Lombard, IL 60148, 630.629.1717 <small>No live streaming of mass available</small>
DECEMBER 15, MONDAY	ST. JOAN OF ARC, <u>7:30 PM</u> 820 Division Street Lisle, IL 60532, 630.963.4500 <small>No live streaming of mass available</small>	ST. WALTER, <u>7:00 PM</u> 130 W. Pine Avenue Roselle, IL 60172, 630.894.2461 <small>Live stream link: https://www.stwalterchurch.com/live-stream</small>
DECEMBER 16, TUESDAY	ST. MARY, <u>7:30 PM</u> 19515 115 th Avenue Mokena, IL 60448, 708.326.9300 <small>Live stream link: https://www.youtube.com/c/SaintMaryMokena</small>	HOLY TRINITY, <u>7:00 PM</u> 111 S. Cass Avenue Westmont, IL 60659, 630.968.1366 <small>No live streaming of mass available/</small>
DECEMBER 17, WEDNESDAY	ST. RAPHAEL, <u>7:30 PM</u> 1215 Modaff Road Naperville, IL 60540, 630.355.4545 <small>No live streaming of mass available</small>	OUR LADY OF PEACE, <u>7:00 PM</u> 701 Plainfield Road Darien, IL 60561, 630.323.4333 <small>No live streaming of mass available</small>
DECEMBER 18, THURSDAY	HOLY SPIRIT, <u>7:30 PM</u> 2003 Hassert Boulevard (111 th Street) Naperville, IL 60564, 630.922.0081 <small>No live streaming of mass available</small>	OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL, <u>7:00 PM</u> 8404 S. Cass Avenue Darien, IL 60561, 630.852.3303 <small>No live streaming of mass availabl</small>
DECEMBER 19, FRIDAY	ST. MARGARET MARY, <u>7:30 PM</u> 1450 Green Trails Drive Naperville, IL 60540, 630.369.0777 <small>No live streaming of mass available</small>	ST. MICHAEL, <u>7:00 PM</u> 310 S. Wheaton Avenue, Wheaton, IL 60187 630.665.2250 <small>Live stream link: https://www.stmichaelcommunity.org</small>
DECEMBER 20, SATURDAY	ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, <u>5:00 PM</u> 1501 W. Boughton Road Bolingbrook, IL 60490, 630.759.7588 <small>Live stream link: https://www.stfrancisbb.org</small>	DIVINE SAVIOR, <u>6:30 PM</u> 6700 S. Main Street Downers Grove, IL 60516, 630.969.1532 <small>No live streaming of mass available</small>
DECEMBER 21, SUNDAY	ST. JOSEPH, <u>5:00 PM</u> 4801 Main Street Downers Grove, IL 60515, 630.964.0216 <small>Live stream link: https://www.facebook.com/StFrancisLive</small>	VISITATION, <u>6:00 PM</u> 779 S. York Street Elmhurst, IL 60126, 630.834.6700 <small>Live stream link: https://www.visitationparish.org</small>
DECEMBER 22, MONDAY	<u>Combined Western and Eastern Clusters</u> ST. DOMINIC, <u>6:30 PM</u> 440 E. Briarcliff Road Bolingbrook, IL 60440, 630.739.5703 Presider: Bishop Ronald Hicks	

SIMBANG GABI FAQs

What is *Simbang Gabi*? *Simbang Gabi* literally means “evening or night mass.” As a devotional practice, it refers to the Philippine Catholic tradition of the “novena,” a series of nine evening masses celebrated during the Advent season from Dec. 15-23, in preparation for Christmas Day—in the Philippines, the dates are from Dec. 16-24, since *Simbang Gabi* is held in the early morning. In the U.S., the practice of the *Simbang Gabi* has been adapted to local conditions, with the mass being moved to the evening hours for practical reasons.

How did *Simbang Gabi* originate? *Simbang Gabi* originated from the *Missa Aurea* (golden mass or Angel’s mass) practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. This tradition was introduced by the Spanish friars at the start of the Catholic evangelization of the Philippine islands. In 1587, Friar Diego Soria petitioned Pope Sixtus V for permission to have the masses outdoors because the churches were too small to accommodate the crowds. The request was granted through a rescript (indult), and in the 17th century, the *Simbang Gabi* or *Misa de Gallo* or *Misa de Aguinaldo*—as it is variously referred to by the Catholic populace in the Philippines—became a permanent practice among Philippine Catholics. Also included in the rescript granted by the Pope was permission during the mass to sing the *Gloria* and to wear white vestments to emphasize the joyful anticipation of the coming of the Infant Savior in Bethlehem.

How is *Simbang Gabi* celebrated? Originally—and the way it is still celebrated in most places in the Philippines—the *Simbang Gabi* masses were held in the early hours of the morning at 4:00 or 5:00 A.M., when roosters crowed to announce the dawning of a new day, hence the name *Misa de Gallo*. This time of the day was chosen because most of the Filipino families were farmers and fishermen who either began or ended their day at daybreak. Farmers began working in their fields early to avoid the intense heat, while the fishermen who spent all night at sea came home in the early morning to sell their catch. At the first sign of dawn, local bands would start playing traditional Christmas carols around the town and church bells would ring to summon everyone to the *Simbang Gabi*. Families walked to mass passing by homes with flickering candles inside *parols* (star-shaped lanterns fashioned out of bamboo and colored paper to form a three-dimensional star in which a light bulb or candle is placed so it may glow as a symbol of the Christmas star of Bethlehem: “And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was” Matthew 2:9b). Main features of the mass were hymns and culturally expressive rituals and symbols, with star-shaped *parols* carried in procession and prominently displayed during mass. After mass, families and friends enjoyed the native delicacies spread out on the grounds around the church, strengthening social and spiritual ties within the community.

What does *Simbang Gabi* celebrate? By the time of the *Simbang Gabi*, the somber waiting at the beginning of Advent turns into an eager and joyful longing for the coming of the Savior during the final nine days of Advent. This is best expressed by a *Simbang Gabi* ritual within the mass when children process to the altar accompanied by an Advent song while bringing an offering of an empty manger, mantle, vigil candles, and flowers. This ritual symbolizes what is at the heart of the Advent season, humbly trusting and joyfully waiting for the arrival of the promised Savior. In the darkness of the night, all sing with joyful longing for the coming of the Savior who is the Light of the world (John 1:2b-3). Renew in all hearts the love of God and neighbor which is the true sign of your kingdom come!

Why is *Simbang Gabi* significant? These are some reasons given by Filipino-Americans and those who are not. First, and foremost, it is a way for people to offer God worship and praise. Second, it is a way to express and develop personal spirituality by preparing the heart for the coming (Advent) of Christ at Christmas. Third, every nationality has developed religious customs and traditions they have brought and shared in America, thus adding another choice among religious practices for personal enrichment. Fourth, it is a way to develop community through a common effort of prayer, work, celebration, fellowship, and charity. Fifth, it helps maintain connections and unity with a country of origin—perhaps nostalgia for some—where the same practices are occurring at the same time in families and communities of origin.

How huge is *Simbang Gabi*? This nine-day celebration symbolizes God’s desire to be human and the Filipino’s joy for that humanness. These are festive celebrations with Christmas carols sung before mass, faith sharing, and, of course, lots of food afterward—a sample of Filipino food and refreshments is usually served at a reception following mass. People dress in their finest Philippine barongs and dresses. *Simbang Gabi* is a religious festival for all, Filipino and non-Filipino. But no matter the language or dress, when you pray and sing during the *Simbang Gabi*, you realize how truly universal the Christmas spirit is. This is one of many cultural activities everyone can participate in and enjoy as a preparation for Christmas.