



# FROM THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP

NOTES FOR MAY-JUNE 2017

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## Assumption of the BVM—Holy Day of Obligation or Not?

### **Q. Is the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary a holy day of obligation this year?**

A. August 15 lands on a Tuesday in 2017. This means that the Assumption is a holy day of obligation in 2017. Only when it lands on a Saturday or a Monday is the obligation lifted. Do not forget to remind your congregations the weekends leading up to August 15 that it is a day of obligation.

Assumption is also one of the few days that does have proper prayers and readings for a vigil Mass the evening of August 14. Masses celebrated after 4 PM on August 14 would use the vigil Mass prayers and readings.

For the Liturgy of the Hours, Evening Prayer I of the Assumption is prayed on Monday evening.

## All Saints/All Souls Reminder

This year, All Saints (November 1) lands on a Wednesday. This means that it will be a holy day of obligation. Masses from 4 PM October 31 through November 1 should be for the Solemnity and would fulfill the obligation to participate in Mass. There are no specific prayers for an All Saints vigil Mass, so any anticipatory Masses the evening of October 31 would use the proper prayers and readings for November 1.

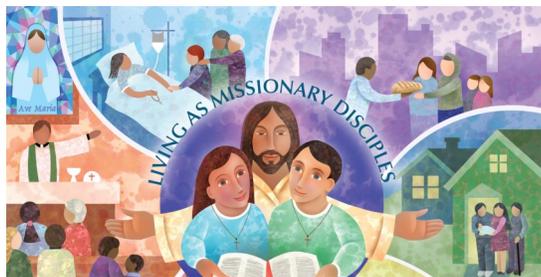
The *ordo* also recommends the exposing of relics this day for veneration by the faithful, placing them in some location of honor this day (but not on the altar itself).

As usual, November 2 brings us the Commemoration of All Souls. Since it holds the special title of “commemoration,” it has its own set of rules:

- ✘ Priests are granted the privilege of celebrating three Masses—one for a particular intention, one for all the faithful departed, and one for the intentions of the Holy Father.
- ✘ Funeral Masses may be celebrated this day, but other ritual Masses may not.
- ✘ Masses the evening of November 1 would still be for All Saints and not anticipating All Souls.

Chapter 57 of the *Book of Blessings* provides an “Order for Visiting a Cemetery on All Souls Day” that can be used right after Mass or apart from the Mass. Remember to pray for the dead!

## Catechetical Sunday 2017



This year, the Church will celebrate Catechetical Sunday on September 17 and will focus on the theme “Living as Missionary Disciples.” This is very timely for us in the diocese as we are in the midst of unpacking 2016’s pastoral letter “Called to Missionary Discipleship and Conversion” (please [visit the diocesan website](#) to read the letter in its entirety).

Those who the Community has designated to serve as catechists will be called forth to be commissioned for their ministry. Catechetical Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the role that each person plays, by virtue of Baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. Catechetical Sunday is an opportunity for all to rededicate themselves to this mission as a community of faith.

As in past years, a variety of materials, free of charge on-line, have been prepared to assist clergy, parish catechists, Catholic school teachers, and the faithful to celebrate Catechetical Sunday, not only in September but throughout 2017-2018. These can be found at the USCCB Catechetical Sunday 2017 website: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/index.cfm>

In addition, chapter four of the *Book of Blessings* provides an “Order for the Blessing of Those Appointed as Catechists” that may be used in or outside of Mass. This could be used at the Masses Catechetical Sunday weekend to publicly recognize those who have made the commitment to serve as catechists, as well as giving the faithful of the community the opportunity to publicly pray for and support those entrusted with this great work.

Lastly, please do not forget to recognize parents as the first teachers of children. The role which they play is essential, and our prayerful support of them is greatly needed and appreciated.

## Back to School, Labor Day, and the *Book of Blessings*

### BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR IN PRAYER

As the beginning of the school year approaches, it is right to look at starting the year in prayer. Here are a few suggestions from the resources of the Church:

- ✘ *Book of Blessings*—Chapter 5 provides an “Order for the Blessing of Students and Teachers,” which may be done both in and out of Mass. This could be done for the entire school or even by individual classes.
- ✘ *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*—Part V: Prayers for Catholic Living provides some simple prayers to start and end the school year, as well as a “Prayer for Students” and a “Prayer for Teachers.” There is also a simple “Blessing Before an Athletic Event” that may be helpful for coaches or parent volunteers.
- ✘ Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit—In many places it is customary to invoke the intercession of the Holy Spirit on the start of the academic year by celebrating a Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit, or “Red Mass,” on a weekday that allows for a Votive Mass to be celebrated (check your *ordo*). Proper prayers for the Mass can be found in the *Roman Missal* under Votive Masses, #9, The Holy Spirit; and readings can be found in the *Lectionary* at #1001.

### LITURGIES FOR LABOR DAY

We give thanks to God for the gift of work, and we ask that he “give success to the work of our hands” (Psalm 90:17). Since there is no other feast day on September 4 that would take precedent, parishes may wish to consider celebrating Masses on Labor Day using the following texts:

- ✘ *Roman Missal*: Masses and Prayer for Various Needs and Occasions, II. For Civil Needs, #26 A or B, For the Sanctification of Human Labor
- ✘ *Lectionary*: #907-911, For the Blessing of Human Labor

## Christmas 2017 Reminder

“Christmas Creep” for 2017—in 2017, December 25 will land on a Monday. This leads to a very busy few days in the parish for those responsible for the various ministries and liturgical preparation. Even though we are six months away, here are a few things to keep in mind in preparing:

- ✘ With Sunday morning (and Saturday evening) Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent leading into the slate of Masses for Christmas that evening, it may be necessary to “pull back” a bit for the Advent Sunday in order to not overburden the various ministries those days.
- ✘ On Sunday, December 24, Masses after 4 PM would be for the Vigil of the Nativity rather than for Sunday.
- ✘ December 25 is always a holy day of obligation. Please let your people know in the weeks leading up to Christmas 2017 of that fact, and of the need for them to participate in Masses both for the Sunday and for Christmas. Participating in Mass the evening of December 24 only fulfills one obligation—no “double dipping” for Christmas!
- ✘ Mass intentions—As is the case with any holy day of obligation, one of the Masses for Christmas must be said *pro populo* (“for the people”).

Much of this can also be said for the following New Year’s Day Masses for Mary, Mother of God. However, in 2018 January 1 is a Monday, so it would not be a holy day of obligation.

## World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation September 1

In 2015, inspired by his recent encyclical *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis requested the celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation on September 1, in union with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. In his letter establishing the celebration, the Holy Father laid out his reasoning for the establishment: “The annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation will offer individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation...”

To help celebrate and honor God’s gift of creation and the Church’s teaching on the environment, the USSCB provides several resources in their Environment/Environmental Justice section of the website:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/index.cfm>

The USSCB project *We are Salt and Light* also provides resources on how to respond to *Laudato Si’* at the local level: <https://www.wearesaltandlight.org/>

*We are Salt and Light* offers five simple ways to respond to the Holy Father’s call:

- ✘ Pray with Pope Francis.
- ✘ Learn. Read *Laudato Si’*.
- ✘ Spread the word to others.
- ✘ Take action with Catholics Confront Global Poverty to ask our elected officials to support policies that protect the planet, including persons in poverty.
- ✘ Make changes to your lifestyle to better care for creation. Live simply and make purchasing choices that support ethical and sustainable business practices.

At the very least, it would be helpful to include an intercession at Mass and/or Liturgy of the Hours this day or during the weekend for the grace to be good stewards of creation, asking for God’s help in our efforts to care for our common home. May our prayer be joined to “simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness” and “makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world” (*Laudato Si’*, 230-31).

## Feast of Mary Magdalene

In June of 2016 the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a decree by which it was established that the liturgical memory of St. Mary Magdalene, celebrated on July 22, was elevated from an obligatory Memorial to the rank of Feast. The timing of this change meant that the new status was not reflected in the current *Roman Missal*, the full *Lectionary*, the new *Lectionary for Mass Supplement*, the *Liturgy of the Hours*, or in the *ordo* for 2017.

Because her liturgical celebration was already enriched with many proper texts in both the *Roman Missal* and *Liturgy of the Hours*, there are only minor additions that are to be made that come with the celebration of any proper Feast:

- ✠ The *Gloria* is sung or said at Mass (as it is for any Feast).
- ✠ The proper readings for Saint Mary Magdalene in the *Lectionary for Mass* (no. 603) are proclaimed instead of the readings of the Ordinary Time weekday.
- ✠ In the Office of Readings of the *Liturgy of the Hours*, the psalmody, verse, and First Reading with its Responsory are taken from the Common of Holy Women instead of the usual day; the *Te Deum* is also sung or said after the Second Reading with its Responsory.

A resource with all of the necessary changes noted in one place can be found in the “Worship” area of the diocesan website: <http://www.evdio.org/mass.html>. Saint Mary Magdalene, pray for us!

## Book of the Gospels at Mass

**Q.: If a church does not have or does not use a *Book of the Gospels*, should the Lectionary be carried in procession instead?**

**A.:** Since the fifth century the Church has used a special book set apart for the Gospels in her celebrations. The proclamation of the Gospel is seen as the high point of the Liturgy of the Word (see *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 13), and the *Book of the Gospels* has long been seen as a sign of the presence of Christ. Therefore, it is treated with greater respect than the rest of the Lectionary when it is used for the celebration of the Mass (use of incense, candles, procession, kissing, etc.).

While the Church holds that Christ is present in the entire proclamation of the word, the Gospels which tell the stories of Christ in the flesh have long held pride of place. Because of this longstanding tradition and because of the role it plays in the climax of the Liturgy of the Word, only the *Book of the Gospels* is ever carried in procession (see *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 120d).

If a parish did not have the resources for a *Book of the Gospels*, it seems reasonable that a different book could be designated as a temporary *Book*, but this would still need to be distinct from the Lectionary that is used for the readings, and should not be seen as a long-term solution.

The *Book of the Gospels* may be used anytime, but is especially appropriate for Sundays, Solemnities, Feasts, ritual Masses, and other special days.

## Prayer for the Election of a Bishop

**O God, eternal shepherd,  
who govern your flock with unfailing care,  
grant in your boundless fatherly love  
a pastor for your Church  
who will please you by his holiness  
and to us show watchful care.  
Through 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.**

(*Roman Missal: Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions*, #4)