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Ascension – Thursday or Sunday?

Q. When is Ascension celebrated this year – Thursday or Sunday?

A. The dioceses that make up the province of Indiana (and the vast majority of the dioceses in the United States) have elected to transfer (using a 1999 indult from the Holy See) the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord from the Thursday of the sixth week of Easter to the following Sunday. This transfer was done in the hopes that, by moving the celebration to the nearest Sunday, it would allow for more of the faithful to participate in such an important feast for the Church. Therefore, Ascension in 2020 will be on Sunday, May 24. It will continue to be celebrated on the seventh Sunday of Easter for the foreseeable future.

Also, the *Roman Missal* contains proper prayers for the Vigil of the Ascension, which should be used for those Masses celebrated on the evening of May 23. The readings, however, remain the same for both the vigil and the Sunday.

As a reminder, the Easter candle remains in its place near the ambo through Pentecost and is lit for all celebrations during this time. After Pentecost it is placed near the baptismal font.

Calendar Notes: Pope Saint Paul VI; Pentecost; Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church; Saints Peter and Paul

While only one of them is a holy days of obligation (Solemnity of precept), there are two Solemnities, one obligatory Memorial, and one optional Memorial in late May and June that deserve some special attention:

May 29—Saint Paul VI

In 2019, Pope Francis ordered the inscription of Saint Paul VI into the General Roman Calendar as an Optional Memorial. Proper prayers and readings for Mass may be taken from the “Common of Pastors: For a Pope” in the *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary for Mass*, respectively. The Liturgy of the Hours uses the psalmody of the day, with other elements from the Psalter of the day or the “Common of Pastors: For a Pope.” As a Memorial, funerals may be celebrated this day if needed.

May 31—Pentecost

Sitting at the conclusion of the Easter season, Pentecost has its own vigil Mass (with an extended form and a simple form) with proper readings and prayers to be used for Saturday evening Masses. The Pentecost Sequence (*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*), while obligatory for Sunday, is optional at the vigil Mass.

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Calendar Notes (continued)

June 1—Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

In 2018 this obligatory Memorial was added to the calendar by Pope Francis. The proper prayers for the Mass are to be taken from the votive Mass “Our Lady, Mother of the Church,” and there are proper readings assigned to this day that take the place of the Ordinary Time readings. For the Liturgy of the Hours, the Common of the Blessed Virgin Mary may be used, with the Prayer taken from the votive Mass. As a Memorial, funerals may be celebrated this day if needed.

June 29—Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul

This Solemnity also has its own vigil Mass with proper readings and prayers distinct from those for the Mass of the feast day. However, the evening before is the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time. In view of previous guidance giving preference to feasts of precept (especially the Sunday liturgy), Masses on Sunday evening, June 28, should be for the Sunday. Evening Prayer on June 28 would preferably be for the Solemnity, but Evening Prayer II for Sunday may be celebrated as well. Since this is not a holy day of obligation, funerals may be celebrated this day if needed.



Prayers for the Springtime: Masses and the *Book of Blessings*

With signs of new life all around us and the planting season for our farmers drawing near, it is right to look at ways to frame this work in prayer and ask for God’s blessings. Here are a few suggestions from the resources of the Church as well as a local resource:

- ✘ *Book of Blessings*—Chapters 24 (“Order for the Blessing of Tools or Other Equipment for Work”), 25 (“Order for the Blessing of Animals”), 26 (“Order for the Blessing of Fields and Flocks”), and 27 (“Order for the Blessing of Seeds at Planting Time”) would be appropriate to celebrate especially if you are in an area with a lot of farming. Perhaps a gathering could be planned (once the need for social distancing has passed) at a convenient farm for a blessing of seeds, tractors and other farm equipment.
- ✘ *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*—Part III: Days and Seasons provides a “Blessing of Fields and Gardens” that could be used for a family or neighborhood garden. In addition, any of the above prayers from the Book of Blessings could be used to celebrate blessings in the home or neighborhood.
- ✘ May 15: Memorial of Saint Isidore—As the patron saint of farmers, it would be most appropriate to celebrate the above blessings this day or to use the proper prayers for this optional Memorial this day, even though planting season will be well under way by this point.
- ✘ *Roman Missal*—Under Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions, II. For Civil Needs, there are proper prayers for seedtime (#27), rain (#35), fine weather (#36), and even an end to storms (#37) which could be used on days when another celebration on the calendar did not take precedent.
- ✘ *Prayers for the Soil and Seed, and Those Who Work the Land*—This booklet is based on many of the prayers noted above, and is intended for anyone who wishes to set their springtime work in the context of prayer. The booklet can be downloaded from the [Office of Worship website](#).

Lectionary for Masses with Children

Q. Is it still permissible to use the *Lectionary for Masses with Children*?

A. Yes, the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* may be used in the liturgy (with a couple of caveats), though its status is a little out of the ordinary. The Lectionary was first approved in November 1991, as a response to the provisions in the *Directory for Masses with Children* (1973) calling for the inclusion of children in the Liturgy of the Word and allowing for adaptations to facilitate their participation. The Holy See gave its provisional confirmation in 1992 for a three-year experimental period and mandated a study of its effectiveness afterward; that confirmation was extended in 1997 and in 2000 to allow the then-NCCB to complete the study and make further recommendations.

A second edition of the *Lectionary for Masses with Children* was prepared and approved by the USCCB in November 2005, but it was never been confirmed by the Holy See. Since the current edition has not been explicitly forbidden, the general interpretation is that it may continue to be used.

It should be noted that the instructions within that Lectionary are still effective, and that it may only be used when the clear majority of people attending Mass are children, such as a weekday Mass at a school. This would preclude its use at Sunday Masses, except during a separate Liturgy of the Word for children in an adjacent space.

In addition, there may be other books available with the title of “children’s lectionary” or the like. Only the approved *Lectionary for Masses with Children* may be used. The letters of approval from the Holy See and the USCCB (then the NCCB) are located in the front of the book. When shopping online, look for the following: “Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See. Prepared by the Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops.” The proper text is available from Catholic Book Publishing.

Care for the Reserved Eucharist

In these days where our church buildings are getting very limited use, the proper care for and reverence towards the reserved Eucharist should not be overlooked. What follows speaks to our current situation, but the items for attention are applicable at all times.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the pastor for care of the reserved Eucharist in the church. Consecrated hosts in a quantity sufficient for the needs of the faithful are to be kept in a ciborium or pyx within a tabernacle. Mass is to be celebrated there at least twice a month (CIC, can. 934 §2), hosts are to be renewed frequently, and the older hosts should be consumed properly (CIC, can. 939). So, with the current suspension of the distribution of Communion, it is important to make sure that what is reserved is being consumed in a timely manner, especially in those parishes with multiple church buildings where Mass may not be celebrated on a regular basis.

The tabernacle is to be immovable, be made of solid and inviolable material that is not transparent, and be locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is prevented as much as possible (GIRM 314; CIC, can. 938 §3). The pastor is to take care that the tabernacle key is safeguarded most diligently (CIC, can. 938 §5). No one may carry the Eucharist to his or her home, or to any other place contrary to the norm of law (such as those bringing Communion to the homebound) (*Redemptionis Sacramentum* [RS], 132). These are a reminder that the pastor (or others) should never leave the tabernacle unlocked or the Eucharist out for the people to “self-communicate,” pandemic or otherwise. In addition, the Eucharist must not be left out of the tabernacle in pyxes or the like for Communion ministers to pick up for home visits. It should remain safely kept in the tabernacle.

Pope Saint John Paul II wrote that “The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate ambiguity and depreciation” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 10). Many thanks for your loving care of this incredible gift!

Liturgical Books Currently in Use

For your reference (and maybe updating your sacristy library), below is a list of current ritual books approved for liturgical use in the United States of America. The years in *italics* refer to the current Latin *editiones typicae* (or reprint). Years in (parenthesis) refer to past English editions, and the years in **bold** refer to the current English edition. An underlined year indicates a Spanish edition approved for use in the U.S.

For the Eucharist

- ✘ Roman Missal 2008 (1974; 1985) **2011, 2018**
 - ✘ Roman Calendar (included in the Missal)
- ✘ General Instruction of the Roman Missal 2008 (1970/74/85; 2003) **2011, 2018**
- ✘ Lectionary for Mass 1981 (1970) **1998/2002**
- ✘ Rite of Concelebration 2009 (1974; 1985) **2011**
- ✘ Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary 1987 (1992) **2012**
- ✘ Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (1988; 2006) **2012; 2007**
- ✘ Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children 1974/2002 (1985) **2011**
- ✘ Lectionary for Masses with Children **1993**
- ✘ Ceremonial of Bishops 2008; **1989**

Music for the Eucharist

- ✘ *Graduale Romanum* (Gregorian chants for all parts of the Mass except the Eucharistic Prayers) 1979
- ✘ *Liber usualis* (companion book for the *Graduale Romanum*, containing rules for proper use) 1997
- ✘ *Kyriale Simplex* (music for the ordinary parts of the Mass) 1997
- ✘ The Simple Gradual for Sundays and Holy Days (proper parts of the Mass in simpler melodies than found in the *Graduale Romanum*; includes commons for the seasons and responsorial psalms) 2007; **1969**
- ✘ *Ordo cantus Missae* (chants for the Mass) 1987
- ✘ *Liber Cantualis* (selection of Mass parts and hymns with simpler Gregorian melodies) 1983
- ✘ *Iubilate Deo/Psalms Ecclesia* (simpler Gregorian chants) 1999/2002
- ✘ *Ordo Missae in Cantu* (complete *Ordo Missae* in chant notation) 2012
- ✘ Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ (1971) **1998**

For the other Sacraments/Sacramentals

- ✘ Roman Pontifical (1978) **2012**
 - Rites of Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons 2011 (1978; 2003) **2012**
 - The Institution of Lectors and Acolytes 1972 (1978) **2012**
 - The Blessing of Abbots and Abbesses 2010 (1978) **2012**
 - The Consecration of Virgins 1970 (1978) **2012**
 - The Order of Confirmation 2003 (1978; 2012) **2016**
 - The Order for Blessing the Oil of Catechumens and of the Sick and of Consecrating the Chrism 1971 (1985, 2012) **2018**
 - The Order of the Dedication of a Church and an Altar 1977 (1989) **2018**
- ✘ Roman Ritual 1973 (1970); **2019; 2009**
 - Order of Baptism of Children 2008 (1970) **2016; 2010**
 - Order of Celebrating Matrimony 1974 (1975) **2010**
 - Rite of Penance

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Liturgical Books Currently in Use (cont.)

- Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass 1974; 1976
- Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum 1975; 1983
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults 1972; 1988; 1993
- Book of Blessings 1994; 1989
- Order of Christian Funerals 1969; 1989; 2002
- Rite of Religious Profession 1970; 1989
- Exorcisms and Related Supplications 2005; 2017

Other Liturgical Books

- ✘ Liturgy of the Hours 2000; 1975/1976
- ✘ *Ordo cantus officii* (chants for the Liturgy of the Hours) 1983
- ✘ *Liber hymnarius* (hymns with invitatories and responsories for the LoH) 1983
- ✘ *Antiphonale Romanum II* (music for Vespers for Sundays, Solemnities, and Feasts) 2009
- ✘ *Martyrologium Romanum* 2004
- ✘ Manual of Indulgences: Norms and Grants 1999; 2006
- ✘ Order of Crowning an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary 1981; 2005

Excerpts of Ritual Books published in fascicle format

- ✘ Order for the Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist 1993
- ✘ Pastoral Care of the Dying 2002
- ✘ Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers (1988) 2007
- ✘ *Bendición al Cumplir Quince Años* (Quinceañera) 2008
- ✘ Rite for the Blessing of a Child in the Womb 2012
- ✘ Communion of the Sick 2012
- ✘ Administration of Communion and Viaticum by an Extraordinary Minister 2013
- ✘ Prayers Against the Powers of Darkness 2017

Remembering the Sick in Prayer

“He who prays does not waste his time, even if the situation has all the markings of being an emergency and seems to push us towards action alone.” These words of Pope Benedict XVI from 2007 remain timely today. Here are a few suggestions on keeping all those impacted by this pandemic in prayer.

Celebrate a Mass for the sick on an appropriate weekday

- ✘ *Roman Missal*, Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions, III. For Various Occasions, 45. For the Sick
- ✘ *Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, no. 44, The Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick
- ✘ Newly issued Mass “In Time of Pandemic,” available on the [diocesan Office of Worship website](#)

[Prayer of Archbishop José Gomez of Los Angeles asking intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe](#)

Sample Intercessions for Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, Personal Prayer

- ✘ For scientists, health professionals, public officials, and all who are serving the common good in this difficult and uncertain time, that they will be filled with wisdom and understanding.
- ✘ That in times of illness our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in his goodness and divine providence.
- ✘ That our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace.