

WHY DO WE HAVE HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION?

The first precept (“You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor”) requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord as well as the principal liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints; in the first place, by participating in the Eucharistic celebration, in which the Christian community is gathered, and by resting from those works and activities which could impede such a sanctification of these days. *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2042*

WHAT IS A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION?

In the Roman Catholic Church, Holy Days of Obligation are the days on which, as canon 1247 states:

“On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Mass. Moreover, they are to abstain from those works and affairs which hinder the worship to be rendered to God, the joy proper to the Lord’s day, or the suitable relaxation of mind and body.”

HOLY DAY OBSERVANCE

A person who assists at a Mass celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the Holy Day of Obligation itself or after 4:00 PM of the evening of the preceding day satisfies the obligation of participating in the Mass. Canon Law #1248-§1.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

The 1983 Code of Canon Law identifies every Sunday as “the primordial holy day of obligation” in the universal Church: “Remember, keep holy the Sabbath.” In addition to every Sunday, there are 6 other Holy Days of Mass attendance obligation observed in the United States.

1

The Nativity of the Lord Jesus Christ (Christmas, Dec. 25) - always of obligation, even falling on Saturday and Monday.



“. . . And on entering the house they saw the child with Mary His mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.” Mt 2:11



2

The Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God (Octave of Christmas, Jan. 1) - not of obligation only when falling on Saturday and Monday, otherwise always of obligation.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION



3

The Ascension of the Lord (40 days after Easter) but transferred now from Thursday to Sunday in South Carolina.

"So then the Lord Jesus, after He spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took His seat at the right hand of God."
Mk 16:19



4

The Assumption of Mary (August 15) - not of obligation only when falling on Saturday and Monday, otherwise always of obligation.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us. . ."
Heb 12:1



5

The Solemnity of All Saints (Nov. 1) - not of obligation only when falling on Saturday and Monday, otherwise always of obligation.

"A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars."
Rev 12:1



6

The Immaculate Conception of Mary (Dec. 8) - always of obligation, even falling on Saturday and Monday.