

Holy Days of Obligation

What are the Holy Days of Obligation in the United States?

At their plenary assembly in November 1991, with follow-up mail balloting by absentees, the members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved two motions which affect the observance of holy days of obligation in the dioceses of the United States. They decided that whenever January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, or August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption, or November 1, the solemnity of All Saints, falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated. The next month, Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk, president of the NCCB, requested confirmation of this decision from the Vatican Congregation of Bishops.

This action was confirmed by the Congregation for Bishops on July 4, 1992 (Prot. N. 296/84), after that dicastery had received the advice of the Congregation for the Clergy and the Pontifical Council for the Interpretation of Legal Texts. The letter of confirmation was signed by Bernardin Cardinal Gantin, Prefect, and Archbishop Justin Rigali, Secretary. Pope John Paul II approved and confirmed the same on the same date.

On November 17, 1992 Archbishop Pilarczyk announced this confirmation to the members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting in executive session. His decree promulgating this decision follows.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops United States of America

Decree of Promulgation

On December 13, 1991 the members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States of America made the following general decree concerning holy days of obligation for Latin rite Catholics:

In addition to Sunday, the days to be observed as holy days of obligation in the Latin Rite dioceses of the United States of America, in conformity with canon 1246, are as follows:

January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God;
Thursday of the Sixth Week of Easter, the solemnity of the Ascension;
August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary;
November 1, the solemnity of All Saints;
December 8, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception;
December 25, the solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whenever January 1, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, or August 15, the solemnity of the Assumption, or November 1, the solemnity of All Saints, falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated.

This decree of the Conference of Bishops was approved and confirmed by the Apostolic See by a decree of the Congregation for Bishops (Prot. N. 296/84), signed by Bernardin Cardinal Gantin, prefect of the Congregation, and dated July 4, 1992.

As President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, I hereby declare that the effective date of this decree for all the Latin rite dioceses of the United States of America will be January 1, 1993, the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God.

Given at the offices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, November 17, 1992.

+ Daniel E. Pilarczyk
Archbishop of Cincinnati
President of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops
Robert N. Lynch
General Secretary