

## Chapter X: Days of Prayer, Annual Observances, Special Collections & Appeals

### Special Collections, Appeals, Particular Intentions in the Sunday Liturgy<sup>1</sup>

Sundays are frequently marked by a special intention: World Mission Sunday, Respect Life Sunday, Catechetical Sunday, World Day of Peace, Mothers' / Fathers' Day, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, etc., and sometimes these observances include a special collection. It would not be difficult to multiply a list of special intentions like this such that practically every Sunday in the year had its own 'worthy cause'. Many of the ministries or organizations within the Church or outside it are keen to promote their particular cause, and decide that the best and easiest way to get their message across is at the Sunday Mass when everyone is assembled.

However, Sunday Mass is not just 'an opportunity for education'. The Church assembles for Eucharist on Sunday to celebrate something much more profound and fundamental than any particular theme or intention. To compromise what is essential about our Sunday assembly is to risk depriving ourselves of what is the *source and summit of Christian life* (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 10). On the other hand, the Sunday liturgy must not be divorced from daily life or from the work of the Church in the world. *The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well* (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1).

This theme is taken up in our liturgical prayer: *Keep your Church alert in faith to the signs of the times, and eager to accept the challenge of the gospel...* (*Eucharistic Prayer for Various Needs and Occasions*).

#### **What are we celebrating at Sunday Mass?**

The Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II *Dies Domini* (DD) offers a clear answer to this question from its very first paragraph. *Sunday recalls the day of Christ's resurrection. It is Easter which returns week by week, celebrating Christ's victory over sin and death, the fulfilment in him of the first creation and the dawn of 'the new creation'.* (DD, no. 1)

*The eucharist feeds and forms the Church... The mystery of the Church is savored, proclaimed, and lived supremely in the eucharist. This ecclesial dimension intrinsic to the eucharist is realised in every eucharistic celebration. But it is expressed most especially on the day when the whole community comes together to commemorate the Lord's resurrection.* (DD, no. 32)

**Therefore, at Sunday Mass, we do not so much talk about including the marginalized—we actually do it! We do not merely urge people to shape a more just society—we actually glimpse God's kingdom as we share in the heavenly banquet. We need not *explain* what we *show* in well-celebrated ritual.**

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<sup>1</sup> Liturgy Office, Bishops' Conference of England & Wales. "Appeals and Special Intentions in the Sunday Liturgy" 2006. [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Cycle/CP-Guidance.pdf](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Cycle/CP-Guidance.pdf)

*The Sunday celebration is the privileged place of unity: it is the setting for the celebration of the 'sacramentum unitatis' which profoundly marks the Church as a people gathered 'by' and 'in' the unity of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (DD, no. 36) Sunday after Sunday the Church moves towards the final 'Lord's Day', that Sunday which knows no end... This makes Sunday the day on which the Church... anticipates in some sense the eschatological reality of the heavenly Jerusalem. (DD 37)*

How can we respect the integrity of Sunday eucharist whilst also admitting the need to insert into the liturgy some recognition of various special themes, intentions and appeals? How do we successfully reconcile these differing expectations and ideas of what should happen at Sunday Mass? There follow general principles and practical guidelines on appeals and special intentions in the Sunday liturgy in parishes.

### **Some General Principles**

1. The shape of the liturgy as well as the purpose and meaning of its parts are set out in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* and described in more detail in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. These should not be compromised.
2. Through the unfolding cycle of readings and prayers for the liturgical year, the Church presents to its eucharistic communities an opportunity to reflect on the Scriptures and the mysteries of Jesus' life. The texts provided in the *Lectioary for Mass* and *Roman Missal (Sacramentary)* lead people to an encounter with God's word through the seasons of the Church's prayer. These readings and prayers determine the theme and spirit of the Sunday Mass.
3. The Mass is made up of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. These parts *'are so closely interconnected that they form, but one single act of worship. For in the Mass, the table both of God's word and of Christ's body is prepared, from which the faithful may be instructed and refreshed'*. (GIRM, 28) The Liturgy of the Word cannot be handed over to another purpose.
4. The responsibility of those who minister at the Sunday liturgy is to help unfold the riches which the liturgy offers the assembled people. In particular, the homily is *'a living commentary on the word'*, an integral part of the liturgy which increases the word's effectiveness. (cf. GIRM, 9) *We are informed by God's word to us, rather than informing it with our prior concerns.*
5. Therefore if a particular theme or appeal overshadows the character of the Sunday Mass, or takes precedence over the prayers and scriptural readings for the Mass, **then a disservice is being done both to the liturgy and to the community.**
6. Many of the appeals and special themes which seek a place in the Sunday liturgy concern important aspects of the Church's life of faith, and express the Church's response of faith to the events of our world. The Mass may be an appropriate and realistic time to refer to them.
7. It is appropriate for a parishioners to be able to make an informed decision about which Days of Special Prayer or appeals or collections they support in a year. This will particularly need to be the case when more than one occurs on a given date or within quick succession. Care should be taken that where there are mandatory special collections they are provided for and sent in a timely manner.

### **Some Practical Guidelines**

1. Care should be taken with terminology. 'Home Mission Sunday' or 'Catechetical Sunday' are not on the same level as **Pentecost Sunday** or **Trinity Sunday**. *The former present intentions for our prayer but do not determine the character of the celebration as do the latter.* In referring to these days there is a preference for 'Home Mission Day' or 'Day of Prayer for Catechists'.
2. The Introductory Rites may refer to a special theme or appeal, but should avoid any suggestion that this is the reason for the Sunday assembly. The purpose of these Introductory Rites *'is to ensure that the faithful who come together as one, establish communion and dispose themselves to listen properly to God's word and to celebrate the eucharist worthily'*.(GIRM, 46)
3. A clear distinction needs to be made between the homily and any appeal for money or statement on a special theme. The homily, given by the ordained after the gospel reading, is a time for faith sharing and for comment and reflection upon the Scriptures. Sometimes an appeal or special collection can become a concrete application of the message of the homily and can be mentioned. But the homily is not about the appeal or special collection.
4. If there is to be an appeal it normally takes place after the Communion rite. Information about a special intention should be given at the time of the notices at the beginning of Mass. It may be appropriate that a lay person is the one to speak on a special theme or appeal at some point during the Mass.
5. The Prayer of the Faithful is an opportunity to pray for particular intentions or causes but it is not appropriate that the prayers of intercession are dominated by a single external or added theme.
6. Other avenues for communication in the parish should be used in preference to speaking at Mass: bulletin notices, posters on the notice board, brochures or handouts, other forums and gatherings as appropriate.

### **On including other observances at the Sunday Liturgy** <sup>2</sup>

For the pastoral good of the faithful, it is, however, licit to take up on the Sundays "per annum" those celebrations of the Lord, or in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Saints which occur during the week and which are particularly significant in popular piety, provided that they have precedence over Sundays in the tables published with the Roman calendar. <sup>3</sup>

Given that popular or cultural traditions can sometimes be invasive of the Sunday celebration and deprive it of its Christian character, "There is a need for special pastoral attention to the many situations where there is a risk that the popular and cultural traditions of a region may intrude upon the celebration of Sundays and other liturgical feast-days, mingling the spirit of genuine Christian faith with elements which are foreign to it and may distort it. In such cases, catechesis and well-chosen pastoral initiatives need to clarify these situations, eliminating all that is incompatible with the Gospel of Christ. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that these traditions--and, by analogy, some

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<sup>2</sup> DPPL, no. 95.

<sup>3</sup> This means that the liturgical law of the Church itself prescribes in some cases that Sundays of Ordinary Time are superseded by other celebrations. For example, since All Saints Day (a solemnity) 'outranks' the Twenty-Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time, All Saints is celebrated rather than the Sunday Liturgy.

recent cultural initiatives in civil society--often embody values which are not difficult to integrate with the demands of faith. It rests with the discernment of Pastors to preserve the genuine values found in the culture of a particular social context and especially in popular piety, so that liturgical celebration--above all on Sundays and holy days--does not suffer but rather may actually benefit.”<sup>4</sup>

## National Special Collections in the Diocese of Crookston

Throughout the course of the year, dioceses participate in **national collections coordinated by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for specific needs** of the Church. These collections are taken up in parishes as a second collection after the Sunday offertory.

### LATE JANUARY

**Pastoral Solidarity Fund for the Church in Africa.** was founded on the basic principles of Pope John Paul II’s call to action in *Ecclesia in Africa* and the adoption of the statement *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* from the bishops of the United States. The document *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* was developed by the Committee on International Policy of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved by the full body of U.S. Catholic bishops in General Meeting on November 14 2001.

Africa faces the economic and social hurdles of enormous debt, epidemic, severe poverty, and political unrest. In spite of these challenges, the Church in Africa has almost tripled in size in the past 30 years. However, it is difficult for the church to sustain its growth and maintain essential pastoral outreach. The Fund provides grants to finance pastoral projects including outreach programs, schools, evangelization, and education of clergy and lay ministers. Our solidarity is necessary to help the “salt of the Earth” Church in Africa realize its potential as a “light of the world.” *for more information visit:* <http://www.usccb.org/churchinafrica/> *or for promotional materials visit:* <http://www.usccb.org/churchinafrica/resources.shtml>

### OPTIONAL: ASH WEDNESDAY

**Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe.** The USCCB Subcommittee on the Church in Central and Eastern Europe funds projects in 28 countries to build the pastoral capacity of the Church and to rebuild and restore the faith and the light of Christ in these countries that have dark pasts but bright futures. The funds collected in the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe are used to grant monies to support seminaries, social service programs, youth ministry, pastoral centers, church construction and renovation, and the transmission of the Gospel message through television, radio, and the Catholic press. *For more information, visit please* [click here](#). To learn how you can support this effort, please [click here](#).  
or visit: [www.usccb.org/ae](http://www.usccb.org/ae)

### FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

**Black and Indian Missions.** Mandated by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Council of Catholic Bishops of the United States at Baltimore in 1884, National Collection for Black and Indian people continues as the embodiment of the Church’s concern for evangelizing the Black, Indian and Indigenous peoples of the U.S. The funds are distributed as grants to dioceses throughout the United States, supporting & strengthening evangelization programs among these communities. In 2008, the Black and Indian

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<sup>4</sup> This means that **Bishops, or Conferences of Bishops (“Pastors”)** may prescribe certain celebrations be celebrated on a given Sunday within the bounds of their territory [(e.g. “National Day of Prayer for Catechesis Catechists (Catechetical Sunday)]. This **does not mean that parish priests (“pastors”)** can dictate to the liturgical calendar on the parish level.

Mission Office Board made grant distributions in the amount of \$8.7 million to 132 Dioceses and nine organizations; of which, \$.98 cents of every dollar received went for evangelization among the Black and Native American communities. *For more information, visit: [www.secureitgroup.com](http://www.secureitgroup.com)*

#### **FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

**Catholic Relief Services Collection (CRS Collection) (formerly the American Bishops' Overseas Appeal (ABOA)).** This appeal supports agencies that build the international social ministry of the Catholic Church through advocacy on behalf of the powerless and impoverished people and relief and resettlement services to victims of natural disasters, war, and religious and ethnic persecution. The CRS Collection helps to fund the work of Catholic Relief Services, the USCCB Department of Social Development and World Peace, relief work of the Holy Father, USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services, and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. In 2004, U.S. Catholics contributed **\$15.6 million** to the CRS Collection/ ABOA.

*For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/crscollection](http://www.usccb.org/crscollection)*

#### **OPTIONAL: GOOD FRIDAY**

**Holy Land.** This national collection, taken on Good Friday, provides support for the sacred places, and the educational and charitable institutions in the Holy Land, and educates seminarians for the Missions of the Custody of the Holy Land in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Cyprus, Rhodes, Israel, and Egypt. *For more information, visit <http://www.myfranciscan.org/goodfriday.aspx> or [www.myfranciscan.org/](http://www.myfranciscan.org/)*

#### **LAST SUNDAY IN APRIL**

**Catholic Home Missions Appeal.** Launched in 1998, the Appeal strengthens the Catholic Church in the United States and its territories where resources are thin and priests are few. In 2003, the Appeal made over \$11 million in grants. Grantees include 85 Latin and Eastern Catholic dioceses & eparchies in Appalachia, the South, the Southwest, the Rocky Mountain states, Alaska, and the islands of the Pacific and Caribbean. The Appeal also supports about 25 organizations and religious communities engaged in home mission work. The appeal funds a wide range of pastoral services, including evangelization, religious education, the maintenance of mission parishes, the training of seminarians and lay ministers, and ministry with ethnic groups, especially Hispanics.

*For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/hm](http://www.usccb.org/hm)*

#### **THIRD SUNDAY IN MAY Combined as one collection:**

**Catholic Communication Campaign (CCC).** The CCC produces and supports media projects that promote Gospel values and bring the Catholic Church's message to television, radio and other media, and through special projects of the Catholic press. An annual collection is taken up in the dioceses, which remit 50% of the funds collected to the national office. From these funds, grants are made following recommendations by the USCCB Communication Committee. The remaining portion of the collection is retained by the dioceses for use in local communication projects. Between 1983 and 2003, the CCC collection has raised **\$64.2 million** to support diocesan and national media efforts.

*For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/cc](http://www.usccb.org/cc)*

#### **AND**

**The Catholic University of America.** This national collection provides funding for academic scholarships at The Catholic University of America in Washington. The Catholic University of America, founded in 1887, is the only institution of higher education founded by the U.S. bishops. Students are enrolled from all 50 states and almost 100 countries.

*For more information, visit [www.cua.edu](http://www.cua.edu)*

### THIRD SUNDAY IN JUNE

Retired Priests in the Diocese of Crookston.

### SECOND SUNDAY IN JULY

**Peter's Pence (Collection for the Holy Father).** The Peter's Pence Collection enables the Holy Father to respond with emergency financial assistance to requests for aid to the neediest throughout the world – those who suffer as a result of war, oppression, and natural disasters. It likewise provides the faithful with a tangible opportunity not only to empower the weak, defenseless, and voiceless, but also to sustain those who suffer.

For more information, visit <http://www.usccb.org/ppc/>

### SECOND SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER

**Church in Latin America.** Support for various pastoral projects throughout Latin America and the Caribbean is made possible through the Collection for the Church in Latin America. Projects are at the continental, regional, diocesan and local levels, and include the work of evangelization, formation of laity, religious and seminarians, as well as youth ministry and catechesis. Funding is limited to programmatic expenses and excludes building construction. Since it was established by the U.S. bishops in 1965, **\$116.4 million** has been granted to projects throughout Latin America.

For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/latinamerica](http://www.usccb.org/latinamerica)

### NEXT TO LAST SUNDAY IN OCTOBER

**World Mission Sunday.** In 1926, Pope Pius XI instituted Mission Sunday, celebrated on the next to the last Sunday in October, as the feast of catholicity and universal solidarity so Christians the world over will recognize their common responsibility with regard to the evangelization of the world. The majority of this collection goes to support the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

For more information, visit [www.worldmissions-catholicchurch.org/flash.html](http://www.worldmissions-catholicchurch.org/flash.html)

Additionally, the *Ordo* notes that a Mass "For the Spread of the Gospel" (#14 For Various Needs and Occasions may be used.) For the readings, see Lectionary, Volume IV, nos. 872-876, especially Isa. 60:1-6, Rom. 10:9-18, Matt. 28:16-20.

### SUNDAY BEFORE THANKSGIVING

**Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD).** The Catholic Campaign for Human Development collection was mandated by the U.S. bishops to "address the root causes of poverty in America through promotion and support of community-controlled, self-help organizations and transformative education." Since its establishment in 1970, CCHD has granted **\$270 million** to more than **4,000 community-based, self-help projects** initiated and led by people living in poverty. Twenty-five percent of contributions from U.S. Catholics is retained by dioceses to fund local grants and 75 percent is sent to the national office at the USCCB to fund the projects that demonstrate the greatest need.

For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/cchd](http://www.usccb.org/cchd)

### SECOND SUNDAY IN DECEMBER

**Retirement Fund for Religious (RFR).** The Retirement Fund for Religious has generated an unprecedented response from U.S. Catholics. Since 1988, the RFR has distributed over **\$426 million** through restricted grants to any religious institute in the United States that has an unfunded past service liability and both basic, supplemental and special assistance retirement grants to religious institutes based on a formula and criteria approved by the conferences of major superiors and bishops. Ninety-six percent of the donations are invested for present and future retirement needs of the elderly

members (religious sisters, brothers, and religious order priests) of the over 500 religious institutes in the United States. Today, nearly 60,000 religious men and women are over the age of 60.

For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/nrro](http://www.usccb.org/nrro)

## **Days of Prayer, Fasting, Rogation Days, Vigils, Ember Days**

In the Catholic tradition the human experience of time is used as a way of engaging us with the saving mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. The cycle of days, weeks and the whole year is for this reason of supreme importance in Christian worship.<sup>5</sup>

Each week on the day called *The Lord's Day* [Sunday] the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection. Once a year at Easter the Church honors this resurrection and passion with the utmost solemnity. Through the yearly cycle the Church unfolds the entire mystery of Christ and keeps the anniversary of the saints.<sup>6</sup> All other celebrations need to find their proper place in the Calendar so that the principal mysteries of the redemption do not lose their appropriate prominence.

Amongst these other celebrations, from the earliest times have been the rogation and ember days, days of prayer for particular need or in thanksgiving for particular blessings of the Lord. On rogation and ember days the practice of the Church is to offer prayers to the Lord for the needs of all people, especially for the productivity of the earth and for human labor, and to give him public thanks.

In order to adapt the rogation and ember days to various regions and the different needs of the people, the conferences of bishops should arrange the time and plan for their celebration. Consequently, the competent authority should lay down norms, in view of local conditions, on extending such celebrations over one or several days and on repeating them during the year. On each day of these celebrations the Mass should be one of the votive Masses for Various Needs and Occasions that is best suited for the intentions of the petitioners.<sup>7</sup>

Vigils [of Feasts] and Ember Days, as most now know, no longer oblige to fast and abstinence. However, the liturgical renewal and the deeper appreciation of the joy of the holy days of the Christian year will, we hope, result in a renewed appreciation as to why our forefathers spoke of "a fast before a feast."

We impose no fast before any feast-day, but we suggest that the devout will find greater Christian joy in the feasts of the liturgical calendar if they freely bind themselves, for their own motives and in their own spirit of piety, to prepare for each Church festival by a day of particular self-denial, penitential prayer and fasting.<sup>8</sup>

### **Friday: Fast & Abstinence, Prayer for Peace**

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<sup>5</sup> Pope Paul VI. Apostolic Letter issued *motu proprio: Mysteriorum Paschalis*. Promulgating The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the New General Roman Calendar. 14 February 1969: AAS 61 (1969).

<sup>6</sup> *The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*. no. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar*. nos. 45-47.

<sup>8</sup> *Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence: A Statement Issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops*. November 18, 1966.

In 1966, the United States Bishops wrote to their people on the topic of Friday abstinence and penance.<sup>9</sup>

Catholic peoples from time immemorial have set apart Friday for special penitential observance by which they gladly suffer with Christ that they may one day be glorified with Him. This is the heart of the tradition of abstinence from meat on Friday where that tradition has been observed in the holy Catholic Church.

Friday should be in each week something of what Lent is in the entire year. For this reason we urge all to prepare for that weekly Easter that comes with each Sunday by freely making of every Friday a day of self-denial and mortification in prayerful remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ.

Among the works of voluntary self-denial and personal penance which we especially commend to our people for the future observance of Friday...we give first place to abstinence from flesh meat.

It would bring great glory to God and good to souls if Fridays found our people doing volunteer work in hospitals, visiting the sick, serving the needs of the aged and the lonely, instructing the young in the Faith, participating as Christians in community affairs, and meeting our obligations to our families, our friends, our neighbors, and our community, including our parishes, with a special zeal born of the desire to add the merit of penance to the other virtues exercised in good works born of living faith.

In 1983 the U.S. Bishops returned to this topic within a renewed context:

“As a tangible sign of our need and desire to do penance we [the bishops], for the cause of peace, commit ourselves to fast and abstinence on each Friday of the year. We call upon our people voluntarily to do penance on Friday by eating less food and by abstaining from meat.

This return to a traditional practice of penance, once well observed in the U.S. Church, should be accompanied by works of charity and service toward our neighbors. Every Friday should be a day significantly devoted to prayer, penance, and almsgiving for peace.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Sacred Paschal Fast - *Sacrum Ieiunium Paschale***

The Easter [Paschal] fast, from Holy Thursday evening [after the Mass of the Lord’s Supper] through Holy Saturday [Easter Vigil], is sacred. According to ancient tradition, the Church fasts “because the Bridegroom has been taken away.”<sup>11</sup> Good Friday is a day of fasting *and* abstinence from

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<sup>9</sup> *Pastoral Statement on Penance and Abstinence: A Statement Issued by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.* November 18, 1966.

<sup>10</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops. *The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace.* May 3, 1983, no. 298.

<sup>11</sup> *PS*, no. 39, quoting Mk 2:19-20; Tertullian, *De ieiunio* 2 et 13.

flesh meat;<sup>12</sup> it is also recommended, if possible, that the fast be continued on Holy Saturday until the Easter Vigil; so that the Church, with uplifted and welcoming heart, be ready to celebrate the joys of the Sunday of the Resurrection.<sup>13</sup> The Elect [for baptism] are to be advised that on Holy Saturday they should refrain from their usual activities, spend their time in prayer and reflection, and, as far as they can, observe a fast.<sup>14</sup>

### **Saturday: Celebrating Mary**

“On Saturdays in Ordinary Time when there is no obligatory memorial, an optional memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary is allowed.”<sup>15</sup> The custom of dedicating Saturday to the Blessed Virgin Mary arose in Carolingian monasteries at the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and soon spread throughout Europe. The custom was incorporated into liturgical books of the particular churches and became part of the heritage of the religious orders of evangelical and apostolic life that were founded early in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. In the liturgical reform following the Council of Trent, the custom of celebrating a memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday was incorporated into the Calendar and *Missale Romanum* [Roman Missal / Sacramentary].

The liturgical reform initiated by the Second Vatican Council clarified the meaning of the memorial of the Blessed Virgin on Saturday and gave it new vigor by making possible a more frequent celebration of this memorial, increasing the number of formularies and biblical readings, and revising the eucharistical texts.<sup>16</sup>

Today the memorial rightly emphasizes certain values to which contemporary spirituality is more sensitive: it is a remembrance of the maternal example and discipleship of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, strengthened by faith and hope, on that great Saturday on which Our Lord lay in the tomb, was the only one of the disciples to hold vigil in expectation of the Lord’s resurrection; it is a prelude and introduction to the celebration of Sunday, the weekly memorial of the Resurrection of Christ; it is a sign that the “Virgin Mary is continuously present and operative in the life of the Church”.<sup>17</sup>

### **Months Dedicated to Our Lady**

In the West, the practice of observing months dedicated to the Blessed Virgin emerged from a context in which the Liturgy was not always regarded as the normative form of Christian worship. This caused, and continues to cause, some difficulties at a liturgico-pastoral level that should be carefully examined.

In relation to the western custom of observing a “Marian month” during the month of May (or

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<sup>13</sup> Pope Paul VI. Apostolic Constitution *Paenitemini*, Feb. 17, 1966, II, 3; Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 110; *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar* [hereafter GNLY], no. 20; *PS*, no. 39.

<sup>14</sup> *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* [hereafter RCIA], nos. 22, 185.

<sup>15</sup> *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, no. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. *The Collection of Masses in Honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, (Rome: 1986) General Introduction, no. 35.

<sup>17</sup> *DPPL*, no. 188.

in November in some parts of the Southern hemisphere), it would seem opportune to take into account the demands of the Liturgy, the expectations of the faithful, their maturity in the faith, in an eventual study of the problems deriving from the “Marian months” in the overall pastoral activity of the local Church, as might happen, for example, with any suggestion of abolishing the Marian observances during the month of May.

In many cases, the solution for such problems would seem to lay in harmonizing the content of the “Marian months” with the concomitant season of the Liturgical Year. For example, since the month of May largely corresponds with the fifty days of Easter, the pious exercises practised at this time could emphasize Our Lady’s participation in the Paschal mystery (cf. Jn. 19, 25-27), and the Pentecost event (cf. Acts 1, 14) with which the Church begins. Our Lady journeys with the Church having shared in the Resurrection, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The fifty days are also a time for the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation and of the mystagogy. The pious exercises connected with the month of May could easily highlight the earthly role played by the glorified Queen of Heaven, here and now, in the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

The directives of *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the need to orient the “minds of the faithful...firstly to the feasts of the Lord, in which, the mysteries of salvation are celebrated during the year”, and with which the Blessed Virgin Mary is certainly associated, should be closely followed.

Opportune catechesis should remind the faithful that the weekly Sunday memorial of the Paschal Mystery is “the primordial feast day”. Bearing in mind that the four weeks of Advent are an example of a Marian time that has been incorporated harmoniously into the Liturgical Year, the faithful should be assisted in coming to a full appreciation of the numerous references to the Mother of our Savior during this particular period.<sup>18</sup>

## **World & National Days of Prayer & Annual Observances**

(The following are dates proclaimed by national or international Church authorities, pastors and local leaders should discern how to observe them on the local level).

### **World Day of Prayer for Peace - January 1 (Mary the Mother of God)**

The Holy See shares the profound aspirations for peace. Since 1967, 1 January has been designated “World Day for Peace”.<sup>19</sup> Each year the Holy Father issues a message for this day. They can be found here: <http://uscgb.org/sdwp/internationalworlddayofpeacewebsite.shtml>

In the light of the new-born Prince of Peace, it reserves this day for intense prayer for peace, education towards peace and those value inextricably linked with it, such as liberty, fraternal solidarity, the dignity of the human person, respect for nature, the right to work, the sacredness of human life, and the denunciation of injustices which trouble the conscience of man and threaten peace.

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<sup>18</sup> DPPL, nos. 190-191

<sup>19</sup> DPPL, no. 117.

In response to the tragedies of September 11, 2001, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have designated January 1 a Day of Prayer for Peace. The bishops' declaration urges Catholics to pray the rosary on January 1, seeking the intercession of the Virgin Mary under her title "Queen of Peace."

### **National Migration Week - First [full] week of January**

Since 1980, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has set aside the first [full] week of January each year as National Migration Week (NMW). The goal of NMW is to educate the native-born U.S. population about the similarities between them, immigrants in their community, and refugees around the world. The week provides an opportunity to reflect on the positive aspects and contributions of immigrants and refugees in this country.

For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/mrs/nmw.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/mrs/nmw.shtml)

### **National Vocation Awareness Week - Second week of January**

The National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV) sponsors and provides materials for three observances throughout the year: National Vocation Awareness Week, World Day for Consecrated Life, and World Day of Prayer for Vocations. Vocations Awareness week happens in the second week of January. In upcoming years the dates are: January 11-16, 2009; January 10-15, 2010.

For more information, visit [www.nccv-vocations.org](http://www.nccv-vocations.org)

### **World Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - January 18-25**

The Week was originally begun in 1908 by the American Episcopalian clergyman Paul Wattson; who later became a Catholic and founded the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement in Graymoor, NY.

The Week begins on 18 January and ends on 25 January—the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul. Material for the Week of Prayer is prepared in collaboration by Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches.

The theme and text for each year's observance of the Week of Prayer are chosen and prepared by representatives of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and representatives of the World Council of Churches. The international texts are developed, adapted and published for use in the USA by the Graymoor Ecumenical & Interreligious Institute.

For more information, visit [www.atonementfriars.org/week\\_of\\_prayer.htm](http://www.atonementfriars.org/week_of_prayer.htm)

### **National Day of Prayer and Penance for violations against Human Dignity-January 22 or 23**

"In all the dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life. The Mass "For Peace and Justice" (no. 22 of the "Masses for Various Needs") should be celebrated with violet vestments as an appropriate liturgical observance for this day." <sup>20</sup>

### **National Day of Prayer for the African American Family - First Sunday in February**

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Secretariat for African American Catholics asks each parish, family, convent; religious house, etc. to pray for the Black family. The National Day

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<sup>20</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal (USA edition)*, no. 373.

of Prayer for the African American Family is celebrated the first Sunday of February – what a fitting opening to Black History Month activities.

The National Day of Prayer for the African American Family, was created by Fr. James E. Goode, OFM in 1989 during a gathering of African American Catholics in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. Father Goode addressed the assembly on the power of prayer and called the nation to especially pray on the first Sunday of Black History Month. “This day is set aside to gather in prayer to celebrate African-American faith, families and respect for the value of life. Individuals are asked to attend church, worship as a family, gather at meal time, share family history and make a resolution that the entire family will strive to fulfill throughout the year.”

For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/saac/nationaldayofprayer.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/saac/nationaldayofprayer.shtml)

### **World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life - February 2nd Feast of the Presentation of the Lord**

**\*The US Bishops observe this on February 2 when that date falls on a Sunday; if not, it is observed on the Sunday after February 2.**

In *Vita Consecrata*, the 1996 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Pope John Paul II wrote of the different forms of consecrated life as “the many branches which sink its roots into the Gospel and bring forth abundant fruit in every season of the Church’s life.” These diverse forms include: Monastic Life, the Orders of Virgins, Hermits, and Widows, Institutes completely devoted to contemplation, Apostolic Religious Life, Secular Institutes, Societies of Apostolic Life, and new or renewed forms of the consecrated life (cf. *Vita Consecrata*, 6-12).

Then, in 1997 Pope John Paul II established the World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life, to be observed on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (February 2). World Day for Prayer for Consecrated Life, “...is intended to help the entire Church to esteem ever more greatly the witness of those persons who have chosen to follow Christ by means of the practice of the evangelical counsels and, at the same time, is intended to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment and rekindle the fervor which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord.”

The late Holy Father wrote: “I trust that this World Day of prayer and reflection will help the *particular Churches* to treasure ever more the gift of consecrated life and to be measured by its message, to find the proper and fruitful balance between action and contemplation, between prayer and charity, and between commitment in the present time and eschatological hope.”

To read John Paul II’s first message for this day, visit [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_06011997\\_i-consecrated-life-day\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_06011997_i-consecrated-life-day_en.html)

The National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV) sponsors and provides materials for World Day for Consecrated Life. For more information, visit [www.nccv-vocations.org](http://www.nccv-vocations.org)

### **World Day of Prayer for the Sick - February 11th Our Lady of Lourdes**

Pope John Paul II instituted World Day of the Sick on May 13, 1992, setting aside World Day of the Sick as a *special occasion for growth, with an attitude of listening, reflection, and effective commitment* in the face of the great mystery of pain and illness. This day, has been celebrated every year since February 1993 on the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes.

For more information and promotional materials, visit [www.nacc.org/resources/wds/default.asp](http://www.nacc.org/resources/wds/default.asp)

### **World Day of Prayer for Vocations - Fourth Sunday of Easter**

The World Day of Prayer for Vocations is held each year on the Fourth Sunday of Easter. In the

Gospel of John read on this Sunday, in each of the three years, Jesus speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd who has come so that people may have life to the full, the one who lays down his life for his sheep, the one who knows his sheep — they recognize his voice.

Special prayers are to be offered today for those discerning their vocation/state in life. Particular prayers are offered for an increase in vocations to the ministerial priesthood and consecrated religious life in the diocese of Crookston. The National Coalition for Church Vocations (NCCV) sponsors and provides materials for World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

For more information, visit [www.nccv-vocations.org](http://www.nccv-vocations.org)

### **National Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom ha Shoah) - April**

While bearing their unique witness to the Holy One of Israel and to the *Torah*, the Jewish people have suffered much at different times and in many places. But the *Shoah* was certainly the worst suffering of all. The inhumanity with which the Jews were persecuted and massacred during this century is beyond the capacity of words to convey. All this was done to them for the sole reason that they were Jews.<sup>21</sup>

“On the Sunday closest to *Yom ha Shoah*, Catholics should pray for the victims of the Holocaust and their survivors.” The following serve as examples of petitions for the general intercessions at Mass.<sup>22</sup> [Dates for Yom ha Shoah in upcoming years; Sat 10 April 2010; Sat 30 April 2011.]

- For the victims of the Holocaust, their families, and all our Jewish brothers and sisters, that the violence and hatred they experienced may never again be repeated, we pray to the Lord.
- For the Church, that the Holocaust may be a reminder to us that we can never be indifferent to the sufferings of others, we pray to the Lord.
- For our Jewish brothers and sisters, that their confidence in the face of long-suffering may spur us on to a greater faith and trust in God, we pray to the Lord.

### **National Day Of Prayer And Remembrance For Mariners And People Of The Sea- May 22nd**

May 22nd is National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea. This day was established by the U. S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in November 2005 to encourage Catholics in the country to support, pray and remember those who work in the maritime world. The day of prayer and remembrance is celebrated in conjunction with the National Maritime Day observance by the U.S. government, which also commemorates the first transatlantic crossing by the steamship *Savannah* in 1819.

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS) is a worldwide Catholic ministry for spiritual and practical assistance to seafarers, their families and all people of the sea. In the USA, AOS chaplains and their team are present in 49 dioceses in 61 maritime ports. For more information please visit <http://www.usccb.org/pcmrt/> or the Apostleship of the Sea in the United States. <http://www.aos-usa.org/>.

<sup>21</sup> Pontifical Commission For Religious Relations With the Jews, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. March 16, 1998. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_16031998\\_shoah\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_16031998_shoah_en.html)

<sup>22</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Bishop’s Committee on the Liturgy, *God’s Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching*. September, 1988; no. 29. <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/godsmercy.shtml>

**National Day of Prayer for Catechists (Catechetical Sunday) - Third Sunday in September**

The idea of establishing a catechetical day in each parish was presented by Pope Pius XI in his instruction entitled, "On Better Care for Catechetical Teaching," (*Provido sane consilio*) published in 1935. The third Sunday of September in the United States is celebrated as a Day of Prayer for Catechists in order to acknowledge, appreciate and commission those who are catechists. The USCCB Office for Education publishes a resource kit and several other resources.

For more information, visit [www.usccbpublishing.org/client/client\\_pages/catsun.cfm](http://www.usccbpublishing.org/client/client_pages/catsun.cfm)

**National Day of Prayer for Respect of Human Life (Respect Life Sunday) - First Sunday in October**

The Respect Life Program begins anew each year on Respect Life Sunday, the first Sunday in October. The program is highlighted in liturgies and marked by special events. The USCCB Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities publishes a program packet each year to call attention to numerous human life issues. For more information, visit [www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/index.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/index.shtml)

**World Day of Prayer for Missions (Mission Sunday) - Next to last Sunday in October**

In 1926, Pope Pius XI instituted Mission Sunday, celebrated on the next to the last Sunday in October, as the feast of catholicity and universal solidarity so *Christians* [i.e. not Catholics only] the world over will recognize their common responsibility with regard to the evangelization of the world. There is a special collection today, the majority of which goes to support the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. For more information, visit [www.worldmissions-catholicchurch.org/flash.html](http://www.worldmissions-catholicchurch.org/flash.html)

Additionally, the *Ordo* notes that a Mass "For the Spread of the Gospel" (#14 For Various Needs and Occasions) may be used. For the readings, see *Lectionary, Volume IV*, nos. 872-876, especially Isa. 60:1-6, Rom. 10:9-18, Matt. 28:16-20.

**Other Annual Observances**

(The following are given for the purposes of information, not as an endorsement.

These observances are sponsored by Catholic entities.

It is left to pastors and local leaders to determine how they are observed and the scope of any observances.)

*This list is not meant to be exhaustive.*

**Catholic Schools Week - last week in January (January 25-31, 2009)**

Catholic Schools Week (CSW) is a joint project of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Individual dioceses and local Catholic elementary and secondary schools develop and promote their own CSW activities each year. Catholic Schools Week celebration became an annual event in 1974. Catholic Schools Week celebrates education that goes beyond preparation for a secular life -- it is education that prepares students for a Christian life. CSW also celebrates the high standards of excellence and the quality of the education available to all students in Catholic elementary and secondary schools across the U.S.

For more information visit: [www.ncea.org/news/CatholicSchoolsWeek.asp](http://www.ncea.org/news/CatholicSchoolsWeek.asp)

**Boy Scout Sunday - Sunday preceding February 8**

For Catholics, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) is the sponsoring organization of Scout Sunday. NCCS is a church committee of concerned Catholic lay people and clergy who see as their mission the constructive use of the program of the Boy Scouts of America as a viable form of youth ministry with the Catholic youth of our nation.

The committee, which is advisory to the Boy Scouts of America, seeks to sustain and strengthen the relationship between BSA and the Catholic Church in the United States. Through interaction and dialogue with the Secretariat on the Laity and Family Life (the formal connection between youth ministry in the United States and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops), NCCS works cooperatively with various other groups involved in youth ministry in the United States.

The Boy Scouts of America celebrate annually in the month of February the Anniversary of the founding of the Boy Scout program by Lord Baden Powell in England. Scout Sunday was added to the scout celebration around the middle 1940s. Scouting's anniversary is celebrated on February 8. Scout Sunday is always the Sunday preceding the 8th, unless the 8th is a Sunday, in which case the 8th would be Scout Sunday.

Scout Sunday tradition was started to make people in church aware of Scouting, and to allow Scouts to live out parts of what is pledged each week. The Scout Law says that a "Scout is Reverent" and the Scouts of all ages promise to do their "Duty to God". These values strengthen youth character in their family, community and faith.

*For more information, visit [www.nccs-bsa.org/activities/ScoutSunday.php](http://www.nccs-bsa.org/activities/ScoutSunday.php)*

### **Girl Scout Sunday - Sunday preceding March 12**

The National Catholic Committee for Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (NCCGSCF), is a constitutive member of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and are the sponsors of Girl Scout Sunday. Girl Scout Birthday, March 12, commemorates the day in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization's first 18 girl members in Savannah, Georgia.

Girl Scout Week is celebrated each March, starting with Girl Scout Sunday and ending with Girl Scout Sabbath on a Saturday, and it always includes the Girl Scout Birthday, March 12. Girl Scout Sunday and Girl Scout Sabbath give girls an opportunity to attend their place of worship and be recognized as a Girl Scout.

*For more information, visit [www.girlscouts.org/program/gs\\_centralgs\\_days](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_centralgs_days)  
and [www.nfcym.org/gscf/index.htm](http://www.nfcym.org/gscf/index.htm)*

### **Pastoral Care Week - Third [full] week in October**

Pastoral Care Week started in 1983 when the National Association of Catholic Chaplains (NACC) passed a resolution to establish a Pastoral Care Week. It was not until October of 1985 that the first Pastoral Care Week was held by NACC. It is meant to highlight the contribution of chaplains to pastoral care in hospital settings.

*For more information, visit [www.pastoralcareweek.org/index.html](http://www.pastoralcareweek.org/index.html)*

### **Priesthood Sunday - last Sunday in October**

The National Federation of Priests' Councils (NFPC) established "Priesthood Sunday" in 2003 as a day for Catholics to honor the contributions of their parish priests. This nationwide event is now coordinated and sponsored by the USA Council of Serra International. Serra International is an organization of lay men and women whose mission is to foster and affirm vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life in the USA. More than 12,500 Serrans in over 300 clubs nationwide collaborate with their bishops, parishes and vocation directors to fulfill this mission.

The reason for proposing a “Priesthood Sunday” is to affirm the priesthood in the life of the Church. With the phenomenon of fewer priests, people see fewer priests therefore young people are not offered the opportunity learn about the vocation of priesthood and the life of their pastors. Priesthood Sunday seeks to reaffirm the priesthood of Jesus Christ and its central place in the life of the Church. *For more information, visit [www.priestsunday.org](http://www.priestsunday.org)*