



Office for Divine Worship Newsletter

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Masses for the Neophytes and a Pentecost Celebration during Easter Time

The Order of Christian Initiation of Adults provides helpful guidance for the pastoral care of the newly baptized adults at Easter:

247 Since the distinctive spirit and power of the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy derive from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community, its main setting is the so-called Masses for the neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season. Besides being occasions for the newly baptized to gather with the community and share in the mysteries, these celebrations include particularly suitable readings from the Lectionary, especially the readings for Year A. Even when Christian initiation has been celebrated outside the usual times, the texts for these Sunday Masses of the Easter season may be used.

248 All the neophytes and their godparents should make an effort to take part in the Masses for the neophytes and the entire local community should be invited to participate with them. Special places in the congregation are to be reserved for the neophytes and their godparents.

The homily and, as circumstances suggest, the general intercessions should take into account the presence and needs of the neophytes.

249 To close the period of postbaptismal catechesis, some sort of celebration should be held at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday; festivities in keeping with local custom may accompany the occasion.

Proper Disposal of the Paschal Candle

Old paschal candles, as blessed objects (a sacramental) must be appropriately disposed. This could involve burning the candle in a devotional manner (privately as opposed to publicly and liturgically) or even burying the candle in blessed ground. Candles are made to be burned, however, and it is better to find a way to either recycle or burn the wax.

Catechetical Sunday 2026 Official Image

The Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis has selected the image below to accompany the 2026 theme, in recognition of the Jubilee Year of Saint Francis.



Poster, prayer cards, and certificates will be available for free download at: Catechetical Sunday 2026 | USCCB

Liturgical Advisories for 2026

- August 15, 2026, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** occurs on Saturday. Because it is a Saturday, the obligation to attend Mass on this date is abrogated this year. Evening Prayer I and the “Vigil Mass” of the Assumption are celebrated on Friday evening. The “Mass during the Day” may be celebrated at any time on Saturday; however, Saturday evening Masses that regularly anticipate the Sunday should be for the Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, which is a day of precept.

Evening Prayer II on Saturday evening is of the Assumption (I, 3), as it is higher in rank in the Table of Liturgical Days than the Sunday in Ordinary Time (II, 6) (Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar, no. 61).

Funeral Masses are allowed on Saturday because of the abrogation of the obligation to attend Mass (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, no. 380), but other Masses for the Dead and ritual Masses are not permitted.

Weddings celebrated within Mass must use the prayers for Assumption, and the selection of readings should follow the guidance given in the Order of Celebrating Matrimony, no. 34.
- November 1, 2026, the Solemnity of All Saints** occurs on Sunday. It replaces the Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time. On Saturday and Sunday, Evening Prayer I and II is for All Saints. Saturday evening Masses that regularly anticipate the Sunday Mass should observe the Mass of All Saints.

Pope Leo XIV Inscribes St. John Henry Newman in General Roman Calendar

(From the Newsletter of the Bishop’s Committee on Divine Worship February 2026)

Pope Leo XIV has ordered the inscription of the celebration of Saint John Henry Newman on the General Roman Calendar as an Optional Memorial on October 9 (Prot. n. 760/25, issued November 9, 2025). The decree praises his “service of intellectual inquiry; the service of preaching and teaching; as well as service to the poor and the least.” Pope Leo named St. John Henry a Doctor of the Church on November 1, 2025.

Reflecting on the inscription, Arthur Cardinal Roche, Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, wrote, “The inclusion of Saint John Henry Newman in the General Roman Calendar, which follows upon his proclamation as a Doctor of the Universal Church, is intended to present his figure as an outstanding example of the constant search for the truth that enlightens and saves.”

The Holy See has provided, at [CultoDivino.va/en/attivita.html](https://cultodivino.va/en/attivita.html), the decree in multiple languages (including English and Spanish); Latin liturgical texts for the Roman Missal, Lectionary for Mass, Liturgy of the Hours, and Roman Martyrology; and Cardinal Roche’s reflection. The current liturgical indications are available at USCCB.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/saint-john-henry-newman. Suggested readings for Mass are Sirach 39:6e-10, Psalm 40, and Matthew 13:47-52. The 2026 and 2027 editions of the Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America have also been emended to include the new Optional Memorial.

May 2026 Liturgical Calendar

May is the month dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary

May 1: Saint Joseph the Worker - optional memorial - (white)

- The Prayers are taken from the Proper of Saints.

May 2: Saint Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church - Memorial - white

May 3: Fifth Sunday of Easter

- The Paschal Candle is lit.
- A Sprinkling Rite may take place.
- The *Gloria* is sung or said.
- The Creed is said.
- There is NO double Alleluia in the final dismissal.

May 4-9: Easter Weekdays

May 2026 Liturgical Calendar, cont'd.

May 8: 1st Anniversary of the Election of Robert Francis Cardinal Prevost as Pope Leo XIV

- *For Pope Leo XIV, on the first anniversary of his election, that the Holy Spirit may continue to guide and strengthen him in his ministry as shepherd of the Church, granting him wisdom, courage, and compassion as he leads God's people in faith, unity, and peace, we pray to the Lord.*
- *Por el Papa León XIV, en el primer aniversario de su elección, para que el Espíritu Santo continúe guiándolo y fortaleciéndolo en su ministerio como pastor de la Iglesia, concediéndole sabiduría, valor y compasión mientras guía al pueblo de Dios en la fe, la unidad y la paz, roguemos al Señor.*

May 10: Sixth Sunday of Easter

- The Paschal Candle is lit.
- A Sprinkling Rite may take place.
- The *Gloria* is sung or said.
- The Creed is said.
- There is NO double Alleluia in the final dismissal.

Mother's Day

This secular observance must in no way diminish the primary focus of this Sunday as the celebration of the paschal mystery. However, you may include a special intention for mothers.

The *Book of Blessings*, Ch. 55 has a special blessing to be used, and the following petition may be added to the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

- **English** - *For all mothers, that God may bless them with strength, health, and joy as they continue to nurture their families in love; we pray to the Lord.*
- **Español** - *Por todas las madres, para que Dios las bendiga con fortaleza, salud y alegría mientras continúan cuidando a sus familias con amor, roguemos al Señor.*
- **English** - *For mothers who are ill, lonely, or weary, that Christ the Divine Healer may comfort them and renew their strength, we pray to the Lord.*
- **Español** - *Por las madres que están enfermas, solas o cansadas, para que Cristo, Médico Divino, las consuele y renueve sus fuerzas, roguemos al Señor.*

May 11-12: Easter Weekdays

May 13: Easter Weekday - Our Lady of Fatima - optional memorial - (white)

May 14: Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord

- The weekdays after the Ascension through the Saturday before Pentecost is a time of preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- During these days, the hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus* may be sung at Mass and Liturgy of the Hours.
- The Paschal Candle is lit.
- White vestments are used.
- Two sets of formularies to be used:
 - ◊ At the Vigil Mass (Evening Before)
 - ◊ At the Mass during the day (Day)
- Readings (Vigil Mass and Mass during the day):
 - ◊ 58: Acts 1:1-11;
 - ◊ Ps 47:2-3,6-9;
 - ◊ Ephesians 1:17-23 or Hebrews 9:24-28; 10, 19-23;
 - ◊ Luke 24:46-53
- The *Gloria* is sung or said.
- Use Preface I or II of the Ascension
- Use Solemn Blessing #7.
- There is NO double Alleluia in the final dismissal.

May 2026 Liturgical Calendar, cont'd.

May 15: Saint Isidore the Farmer - optional memorial - (white)

- Prayers from the *Book of Blessings* may be used.
 - ◊ Chapter 26 Blessing of Fields and Flock
 - ◊ Chapter 27 Blessing of Seeds at Planting Time

May 16: Easter Weekday

May 17: Seventh Sunday of Easter

The Anniversary of the Dedication of Saint Peter Cathedral is celebrated on May 17. However, in 2026, May 17 falls on the Seventh Sunday of Easter. Therefore, the celebration of the Cathedral's dedication is transferred to Monday, May 18, and observed only at Saint Peter Cathedral as a Feast.

May 18: First Anniversary of the Installation of Pope Leo XIV, Supreme Pastor of the Universal Church

- *For Pope Leo XIV, on this first anniversary of his installation, that the Lord may continue to strengthen him with wisdom, health, and courage as he shepherds the Church, leading with a servant's heart and guiding all toward unity in God, we pray to the Lord.*
- *Por el Papa León XIV, en este primer aniversario de su instalación: para que el Señor continúe fortaleciéndolo con sabiduría, salud y valentía mientras pastorea la Iglesia, liderando con un corazón servicial y guiando a todos hacia la unidad en Dios, roguemos al Señor.*

May 18-23: Easter Weekdays

- The weekdays after the Ascension through the Saturday before Pentecost is a time of preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- During these days, the hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, may be sung at Mass and Liturgy of the Hours.

May 23: The Solemnity of Pentecost - red

- Two sets of formularies to be used:
 - ◊ At the Vigil Mass (extended or simple forms may be used):
 - * Extended Form - please see details below.
 - * Simple Form follows the regular form of Mass.
 - ◊ At the Mass during the day
- The Creed is said.
- The Preface of Pentecost is used.
- Solemn Blessing #8 and double Alleluia is added to the final blessing.

Vigil of Pentecost (Extended Form)

- Parishes are invited to celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost on Saturday, May 23. It is a prolonged celebration of Mass in the form of a Vigil, whose character is not Baptismal as in the Easter Vigil, but is one of urgent prayer, after the example of the apostles and disciples, who persevered together in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as they awaited the Holy Spirit.
 - ◊ The Roman Missal, Third Edition provides the order, the rubrics, the additional psalms, and the prayers after the readings (in the style of the Easter Vigil). In lieu of each responsorial psalm, a period of Sacred Silence may be observed.
 - ◊ The Mass begins as usual, after the Kyrie, the priest sings or says the Alternative Opening Prayer for the Pentecost Vigil. Afterward, he may briefly instruct the people prior to the Liturgy of the Word. This instruction should exhort the faithful to listen attentively to the Word of God, reflect on God's great deeds for his people, and, like the apostles and Mary, pray that the Holy Spirit will be made manifest in the world and in their Christian lives.
 - ◊ The four Old Testament readings (Genesis 11:1-9, Exodus 19:3-8, 16-20b, Ezekiel 37:1-14, and Joel 3:1-5) found in the Lectionary for Mass for the Pentecost Vigil, with their responsorial psalms (Psalm 33:10-15, Daniel 3:52-56, Psalm 107:2-9, and Psalm 104:1-2a and 35c, 27-28, 29bc-30) follow. (In lieu of each responsorial psalm, a period of Sacred Silence may be observed.) After each psalm, or period of silence, all rise and the priest sings or prays a prayer.

Pentecost, cont'd.

- ◇ [Musicians and cantors may find the first three responsorial psalms at the following places in the Lectionary:
 - *Psalm 33:10-15 - volume II, no. 339
 - *Daniel 32:52-55 - volume I, no. 164A
 - *Psalm 107:2-9 - volume III, no. 423. The fourth psalm (Ps. 104) is found immediately after the fourth reading (Joel 3:1-5) in volume I, no. 62.]
- ◇ After the fourth reading, psalm, and prayer, the priest (or cantor) begins the Gloria. After the priest says the Opening Prayer for the Pentecost Vigil, the Epistle (Romans 8:22-27) is then read, followed by the Alleluia and Gospel (John 7:37-39), and the Mass continues as usual.

Pentecost Sunday

- The Pentecost Sequence, “Veni Sancte Spiritus,” is obligatory on Pentecost Sunday and may be omitted at the Vigil. It is fitting to use the Sprinkling Rite on this day and the Paschal Candle is moved to the baptistry after the last Mass or Vespers, which concludes the Easter Season.
- Sacraments of Initiation can take place on any Sunday during Easter. However, due to the nature of its celebration, Pentecost Sunday is recommended for the Celebration of Confirmation for Adults (when faculties by the Bishop have been obtained.)
- The double Alleluia is added to the final blessing.
- Ordinary Time begins after Evening Prayer tonight.
- The Paschal Candle should be relocated, after the last Mass of Pentecost, to its permanent location at the baptismal font. Light it for sacramental celebrations including baptisms, and of course, funerals.

May 25: The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church - Obligatory Memorial - white

- Mass Propers are taken from the Votive Mass for the Blessed Virgin Mary, #10/B. “Our Lady, Mother of the Church.”
- A set of proper (i.e., mandatory) readings has been assigned for this memorial (no. 572 A).
- The readings for this memorial and proper text for Liturgy of the Hours can be found at: [Mother of the Church](#).

Memorial Day (USA)

- The Mass for the Preservation of Peace and Justice #30A or B may be used.
- Order for Visiting a Cemetery may be used, which is found in the *Book of Blessings*, Chapter 57.
- You may incorporate the intentions of those who have died in service to their country in today’s Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful).

May 26: Saint Philip Neri, Priest - Memorial - white

May 27-30: Weekdays of the Eighth Week in Ordinary Time

May 31 Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

- The Mass texts and preface are proper.
- The *Gloria* is sung or said.
- The Creed is said.
- Solemn Blessing #9 may be used.

Bishop Persico Publishes Prayer for a New Bishop

With the celebration of his 75th birthday, Bishop Persico published a prayer for a new bishop for the Diocese of Erie and directs its use beginning the First Sunday of Advent, November 30, 2025.

O Almighty God,
Pour forth the Holy Spirit upon the Holy Father
and those who assist him
in the discernment of our new bishop.
May the one chosen have the strength
to be a compassionate leader,
who models humility and joy.
Grant him the wisdom of Solomon,
the courage of the apostles,
and the tenderness of your Son, the Good Shepherd.
We also pray for the Diocese of Erie
that he is called to serve.
May we welcome him with open hearts
and work with him in a spirit of synodality,
called to listen, collaborate, and build unity.
Through the intercession of the
Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church,
St. Joseph, the protector of the Church,
and St. Patrick, the patron of our diocese,
may we journey the path of life
with an unwavering focus
on the hope we have in Christ.
For he lives and reigns forever and ever.
Amen.

Catechetical Sunday 2026 Theme Announced

At its November meeting, the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis chose the theme as: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to bring good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18). In his homily for the Jubilee of Migrants on October 5, Pope Leo XIV reminded us that our salvation provided by God “is fulfilled when we take responsibility and, with the compassion of the Gospel, care for the suffering of others.”

Eucharistic Congress 2029

Courtesy of Catholic News Service:

The National Eucharistic Congress, Inc. is thrilled to share that initial steps preparing for the 11th National Eucharistic Congress in 2029 have begun. The location for the event has not been shared but organizers of the event will provide more details in the near future.

Recurring Information:

Colds and Flu

People feeling ill should avoid receiving Communion from the chalice. Priests are encouraged to use good pastoral common sense to calm the fears of the faithful during cold and flu season. An example of this might include reminding the faithful not to receive the Precious Blood, if they are ill.

Workshops for Liturgical Ministers

If any parish or institution would like a workshop for liturgical ministers, especially Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion or lectors, please contact the Office for Divine Worship. If a parish or institution conducts its own workshop for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, please remember to present candidates for this ministry to the Bishop when they are deemed prepared by the pastor or chaplain of said institution.

Time for Vigil Masses and Anticipated Masses

The time for Vigil Masses and Anticipated Masses in the Diocese of Erie is no earlier than 4:00 pm. This applies to Holy Days of Obligation as well, including Christmas.

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In worship aids:

- To license the readings for a worship aid, parishes can contact: Mary Elizabeth Sperry at mosperry@usccb.org. If you need any other clarification, please call the Office for Divine Worship at 814-824-1271.
- For reprinting excerpts of the Roman Missal in a worship aid, credit is given to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL).

On screens:

- The Committee on Divine Worship does not permit projecting readings and liturgical texts on screens during the liturgy. The bishops believe that since people spend much time on screens, the Sacred Liturgy should be a prayerful break from that. They also think screens distract from the liturgy itself.