



KNOW & GROW TOPIC OF THE WEEK: SOLEMNITIES AND HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION

The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. Sunday is the day on which the Paschal Mystery is celebrated and is to be observed as the center of Christian life. The Eucharist, which we receive in Word and Sacrament, is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation unless excused for a serious reason. In addition to Sundays, there are six holy days of obligation celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church, and one of these holy days—the Solemnity of All Saints—happens to be this Friday. The complete list of these holy days is:

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God: Celebrated on January 1. Note: Whenever January 1 falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated (canceled).

Solemnity of the Ascension of our Lord: Traditionally celebrated on a Thursday, the fortieth day of Easter.

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Celebrated on August 15. Note: Whenever August 15 falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated (canceled).

Solemnity of All Saints: Celebrated November 1. Note: Whenever November 1 falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated (canceled).

Solemnity of Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary: Normally celebrated on December 8, exactly nine months before the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8). Note: If December 8 is a Sunday (as it is in 2019), the feast is transferred to December 9 and the obligation is abrogated [canceled]. If December 8 falls on a Saturday or Monday, the obligation is NOT abrogated (unlike the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God; the Solemnity of the Assumption; or the Solemnity of All Saints).

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord: Celebrated on December 25.

This Friday, November 1, all are invited to join us at any of our scheduled Holy Day Masses: 6:45am at St. Mary's Church, 11am at St. Mary's Church, or 6pm at St. Bridget's Church.

In the West, November 1 became the date on which all the saints are commemorated because Pope Gregory III (731-741) dedicated a chapel in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome to all the saints and fixed its anniversary as November 1. Later, Pope Gregory IV (827-844) extended this celebration to the whole of the Western Church. This led to the commemoration of the evening before as All Hallows Eve, and it led to the celebration of All Souls Day, when we pray for all the souls who are still being purified on their way to heaven.

Though we disagree about various matters, both Catholics and Protestants say the Apostles' Creed, and when we do so, we profess belief in "the communion of saints." The celebration of All Saints Day is one of the ways Catholics live out this profession.

All Saints Day came to be a very important liturgical day, and today it is a holy day of obligation, meaning that Catholics must observe it by going to Mass, as they do on Sundays. This makes All Saints different than the commemorations of individual saints. None of the saints living after biblical times are commemorated with holy days of obligation, but the *whole body of the saints in heaven* are. The Catholic Church thus not only remembers individual saints; it takes seriously its profession of the *entire communion of saints*, those known and unknown.

