



NewsLetter

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Pope Francis Inscribes St. Teresa of Calcutta in General Calendar

On December 24, 2024, the opening of the Jubilee Year on the Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord, Pope Francis ordered the inscription of the celebration of Saint Teresa of Calcutta on the General Roman Calendar as an Optional Memorial on September 5 (Prot. n. 703/24). Canonized by the Holy Father in 2016, the decree underlines her service as a “model of mercy,” “an authentic icon of the Good Samaritan,” and a “source of hope” for all those seeking consolation in the midst of suffering. As the Church celebrates the Jubilee 2025, Pilgrims of Hope, Saint Teresa is a fitting companion, model, and intercessor.

The bishops of the United States had expressed broad support for this addition during their November 2023 plenary meeting. Reflecting upon the news, Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, USCCB President, wrote: “Care for the poor and the suffering is at the heart of the mission that Christ gave the Church. Today, the Holy See announced that Pope Francis has raised up a contemporary witness of that care.” He stressed that the inscription of Mother Teresa is an occasion of joy not only for the Church but also for the U.S., whose elected officials proclaimed her an honorary citizen in 1996.

The Holy See has provided Latin liturgical texts for the *Roman Missal*, *Lectionary for Mass*, *Liturgy of the Hours*, and *Roman Martyrology*, and the current liturgical indications are available at USCCB.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/saint-teresa-of-calcutta. Suggested readings for Mass are Isaiah 58:6-11, Psalm 34, and Matthew 25:31-46. While an English translation of the material for the *Liturgy of the Hours* and *Roman Martyrology* must be prepared, the U.S. bishops previously approved English and Spanish translations of the Collect prayer in November 2021, as a part of their request to inscribe Saint Teresa on the Proper Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America. The translations were resubmitted to the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. Finally, the 2025 and 2026 editions of the *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America* have been amended to include the new Optional Memorial.

Available on the Dicastery’s website at CultoDivino.va/en/attivita.html are the decree in multiple languages (including English and Spanish), Latin liturgical texts, and a reflection by the Prefect, Arthur Cardinal Roche. He writes, “May the insertion of this celebration in the General Roman Calendar help us to contemplate this woman, a beacon of hope, small in stature yet great in love, a witness to the dignity and privilege of humble service in the defense of all human life and of all those who have been abandoned, discarded and despised even in the hiddenness of the womb.”

Holy See Clarifies Mass Obligation on Transferred Holy Days

On January 23, 2025, the Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments – after consultation with the Dicastery for Legislative Texts – issued a Note on the obligation to attend Mass when a holy day of obligation is transferred because of an *occurentia festorum*, the coincidence of two feast days on the same calendar date (Prot. n. 51/25). After examining the question, the Dicastery concluded that “in the event of the occasional transfer of a holyday of obligation, the obligation to attend Mass is not transferred to the day *ad quem*” (no. 7). The Note is available in multiple languages (including English and Spanish) at CultoDivino.va/en/attivita/activities-2025/note-on-the-obligation-to-attend-mass-when-a-holyday-of-obligati.html.

In light of the provisions of universal and liturgical law, there are only two holy days of obligation which are transferred because of an *occurentia festorum* – the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Joseph – since these celebrations fall during Advent and Lent, whose Sundays outrank solemnities on the General Roman Calendar. In the United States, Saint Joseph is not obligatory, so the Dicastery’s response concerns only the Immaculate Conception and no other liturgical day. From the 1969 calendar revision to the present, the Immaculate Conception has fallen on Sunday eight times (1974, 1985, 1991, 1996, 2002, 2013, 2019, 2024). In these instances, the Committee on Divine Worship’s *Newsletter* and/or *Liturgical Calendar* has noted that, while the celebration transfers, the obligation does not. In these cases, the U.S. complementary norm for canon 1246 §2, approved and confirmed by the Holy See in 1992, did not provide any additional clarity. While this norm specifies that December 8 is a holy day of obligation regardless of the day of the week on which it falls, it does not address the case when days of obligation are transferred, a situation the Dicastery’s Note has now resolved.

In Memoriam: Bishop John S. Cummins, Former Committee Chairman

Bishop John S. Cummins, Bishop Emeritus of Oakland (1977-2003), passed away on December 3, 2024. Cummins served as the ninth Chairman of the then-Committee on the Liturgy from 1981 to 1984. He oversaw during his tenure the publication of *Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum* and the music statement *Liturgical Music Today*, and the confirmation of Navajo and Choctaw as liturgical languages in the United States. Spanish was likewise approved as a liturgical language by the NCCB during his term, though confirmed in early 1985. We pray for the repose of his soul:

*Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that the soul of your departed servant Bishop John,
to whom you committed the care of your family,
may, with the manifold fruit of his labors,
enter into the eternal gladness of his Lord.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

Subscription Renewals for 2025 Newsletter

Renewal forms for the 2025 *Newsletter* are being mailed to current subscribers in March. Subscribers are asked to complete their renewal process with payment by April 30, 2025 to ensure continuing service. The Secretariat now accepts electronic payments by credit card or ACH through the online service Stripe, instructions for which will be found on the renewal form. Those who have not received a renewal notice by March 31, or who would like to make changes to their account, can request customer service through the online form found at USCCB.org/committees/divine-worship/newsletter, or by contacting David Ringwald at (202) 541-3060 or dringwald@usccb.org.

New individual subscriptions are available for \$15 a year (hard-copy or digital formats); requests may be made online through the above website or by mail. Back issues of the *Newsletter* from 2011 to the present are available in PDF format at the above website, and back issues for 2020–2024 in hard-copy are available from the Secretariat at \$1 per issue. Special bulk order prices are available for orders of 20 copies or more.

Implementing the *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults: Combined Rites*

With the publication of the revised edition of the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) in English and Spanish, the Newsletter concludes the series exploring this ritual, in particular, what is new and which aspects are in need of renewal in pastoral practice over the last forty years. This seventh and final article explores Appendix I: Combined Rites.

Each chapter of the OCIA concerns a specific group of people: unbaptized adults (Chapter I), unbaptized children of catechetical age (Chapter II), persons whose circumstances do not require or permit the full Order (Chapters III and IV), Catholics baptized as infants who did not receive catechesis (Chapter V), and validly baptized Christians being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church (Chapter VI). Frequently, communities are celebrating rites for several of these different groups around the same time, and it may be prudent on occasion to combine these celebrations into one. For these circumstances, the U.S. edition of the OCIA provides Appendix I: Combined Rites. In this section, certain rites for unbaptized adults from Chapter I are combined with parallel rites for uncatechized Catholic adults from Chapter V and for those validly baptized Christians from Chapter VI.

Celebration of the Combined Rites

As noted in the previous article of this series (see January 2025 *Newsletter*), the needs and circumstances of each Catholic adult and baptized Christian should guide the celebration of those liturgies in Chapter V (cf. nos. 407, 478). Regarding the celebration of any of the Combined Rites, careful discernment is likewise needed of the circumstances and genuine needs of both unbaptized and baptized persons, especially when the Rite of Reception is joined to the Easter Vigil's Baptismal Liturgy (cf. nos. 563-564). While the celebration of Reception at the Easter Vigil underlines its paschal character and affords a common celebration for different groups who have prepared together, one should not underestimate the inherent complexity of combining these rites and the way that this combination could dilute the symbolic power of the rites celebrated individually. Each rite has its own splendor and is mindful of the specific group taking part in it; this fact should be appreciated.

In every instance, it is important to keep in mind the following:

- For *unbaptized adults*, celebration at the Easter Vigil is normative (cf. nos. 8, 17, 23, 207), although the Diocesan Bishop can permit the use of the Order of Initiation at other times (nos. 26, 34.2, 208).
- For *adult Catholics who did not receive catechesis after Baptism*, the Vigil is normative (no. 409).
- For *children of catechetical age*, celebration at the Vigil or on a Sunday is encouraged (no. 256, 304).
- For *baptized Christians*, Reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church – either within Mass or outside of it – takes place on a Sunday, solemnity, or another day (no. 487).

Emendations to the Combined Rites

During the preparation of the new OCIA, several concerns were expressed regarding the Combined Rites. First, these rites contained minimal introductory material, and many priests used them without reference to important guidelines from other parts of the ritual book. In this light, the introductory material now includes several cross-references, underlining the importance of celebrating these rites in light of indications given elsewhere in the Order. For example, at the combined Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate and of Welcoming the Candidates: “For a theological and liturgical introduction to the Rite for Entrance into the Catechumenate see... nos. 41– 47” (no. 505). The introductory material for the combined Rite of Sending directs the reader to the Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election (nos. 106-109); the combined Rite of Election and of Calling to Continuing Conversion points to both the Rite of Election (nos. 118-127) and the Rite of Calling to Continuing Conversion (nos. 446-449); and the combined Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and of the Rite of Reception references relevant material from Chapters I (nos. 206-217), V (nos. 400-410), and VI (473-486).

A second concern was to preserve better the important distinction between unbaptized persons, Catholics who did not receive catechesis after Baptism, and baptized Christians being received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Especially at the Easter Vigil, the distinct nature of each group may not be apparent. Therefore, the new edition includes sample introductions at nos. 567, 584, and 588. For example, at the beginning of the Baptismal Liturgy (no. 567):

Dear friends,
 this evening the Church welcomes diverse groups
 of people
 to the Sacraments of Initiation.
 For each of these, we give thanks and praise to
 God
 who has led them by various paths to unity in
 faith.
 First, we welcome our elect:
 they will be initiated into the Christian faith
 tonight
 through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation,
 and the Eucharist.
 We will pray for them and they will profess our
 faith,
 and they will receive the gift of new life in Christ.

Queridos amigos,
 esta tarde la Iglesia da la bienvenida a diversos
 grupos de personas
 que van a recibir los sacramentos de Iniciación.
 Alabamos y damos gracias a Dios por cada uno de
 ellos,
 ya que Dios los ha traído por diversos caminos a
 la unidad en la fe.
 En primer lugar, damos la bienvenida a nuestros
 elegidos:
 serán iniciados a la fe cristiana
 por los sacramentos del Bautismo, la
 Confirmación y la Eucaristía.
 Oraremos por ellos y ellos profesarán su fe
 y recibirán el don de una nueva vida en Cristo.

This introduction begins in a general way and concludes with a specific reference to the elect. Subsequently, no. 584 makes a specific reference to the candidates for Reception and no. 588 to previously baptized Catholics.

Baptism of Children at the Easter Vigil

In addition to addressing those concerns noted above, the Combined Rites now also provide for the Baptism of infants at the Easter Vigil since the liturgical books foresee their possible inclusion. According to the *Order of Baptism of Children* (OBC): “To illustrate the paschal character of Baptism, it is recommended that the Sacrament be celebrated at the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday, when the Church commemorates the Resurrection of the Lord” (no. 9). In addition, the *Roman Missal* refers to the presence of children to be baptized multiple times in the rubrics of the Mass of the Easter Vigil (cf. nos. 38, 48-52, 60, 65, and 68).

The introductory material of the Combined Rite now includes a reference to the Introduction of the OBC, especially no. 28, which describes the manner in which the baptism of infants is celebrated during the Vigil (no. 562). It is important to keep in mind that, whenever infants are to be baptized at the Vigil, the rite of receiving the children (OBC, nos. 32-43) and the prayer of exorcism and the anointing (OBC, nos. 49-51) take place at a convenient time beforehand. At the beginning of the Baptismal Liturgy (no. 567), a sample introduction is provided, drawing from OBC nos. 9 and 36. Several rubrics from the *Roman Missal* are incorporated into the Presentation of Those to Be Baptized, as well as an optional instruction before the Litany (no. 569; cf. OBC, no. 47). At the Renunciation of Sin and the Profession of Faith, the rubrics clarify that the parents and godparents respond on behalf of the infant (nos. 573 and 574), and the Rite of Baptism provides the questioning of the parents and godparents before immersion or pouring, slightly modified for its new context, as well as some necessary rubrics (no. 575; cf. OBC, nos. 28.3 and 60).

Following the baptisms, the prayer for the Anointing with Chrism differs slightly in the OBC and the OCIA, and here the prayer for children is given, since it will most frequently be used in this instance. Additionally, in the OCIA, the responses to the Explanatory Rites are all made by the baptized adult, while the entire assembly makes these responses in the OBC. For the sake of simplicity, “All:” is given in each instance. At the clothing with a white garment, the prayers of the two Orders differ again, and the prayer from the OCIA is given as more appropriate for the mixed group. While the OBC directs that the handing on of the lighted candle is omitted at the Baptism of infants at the Easter Vigil (no. 28.3), the *Roman Missal* notes that “the candles of the newly baptized are lighted” (no. 51); in this circumstance, the handing on of a lighted candle is maintained for the infants, and the prayer comes from the OCIA rather than the OBC, as more appropriate to the mixed group. Following the assembly’s renewal of baptismal promises, a rubric is inserted that directs the children and their parents and godparents to return to their places (no. 584), and the rubric concerning the presentation of the offerings is expanded to include the parents or godparents of the children (no. 592).