



Newsletter

Committee on Divine Worship

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

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). Canonized by Pope Francis in 2019, 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, and the decree observes, “His lively mind has left us enduring monuments of great importance in the fields of theology and ecclesiology, as well as poetic and devotional compositions. His constant search to be led out of shadow and images into the fullness of the truth has become an example for every disciple of the Risen One.”

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.

Liturgical Advisories for 2026

During 2026, one Holyday of Obligation replaces a Sunday in Ordinary Time. Another Holyday of Obligation occurs adjacent to a Sunday, and the obligation to attend Mass is abrogated:

- August 15, 2026, the **Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary** occurs on Saturday. In accord with the complementary norm to canon 1246 §2 confirmed for the dioceses of the United States of America, 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 (cf.

“The Liturgical Celebration of Consecutive Feast Days” May-June 2016 *Newsletter*, *Notitiae* 20 [1984], 603-605). 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 (*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.

Subscription Renewals for 2026 Newsletter

Renewal forms for the 2026 *Newsletter* are being mailed to current subscribers in March. Those who have not received a renewal notice by April 15, or who would like to make changes to their account, can request customer service online at USCCB.org/committees/divine-worship/newsletter, or by contacting David Ringwald at (202) 541-3060 or DWNewsletter@usccb.org.

Subscribers are asked to complete their renewal process with payment by May 15, 2026 to ensure continuing service. The Secretariat accepts electronic payments by credit card or

ACH through the online service Stripe, instructions for which will be found on the renewal form.

New individual subscriptions are available for \$20 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 2021–2025 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.

Understanding the Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care: Offering the Sacraments to a Dying Person (Continuous Rite) and Emergency Rite

With the publication of the revised edition of the *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care* (ASPC), the *Newsletter* continues a 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 article explores Chapter IV, the Order of Offering the Sacraments to a Sick Person Who Is in Imminent Danger of Death, and Appendix IV, the Emergency Rite of Penance, Viaticum, and Anointing.

The circumstances of sick and dying persons vary widely. The ASPC distinguishes four degrees of danger of death—general, imminent, urgent, and immediate, listed here in ascending order of gravity—and provides not only the rites of Chapter II (Anointing of the Sick) but also the indications and rites of Chapter IV. This chapter offers insight regarding celebrations with those who are in imminent, urgent, or immediate danger of death, as well as for those when the person has died or when there is doubt that the person is alive.

Celebrations outside Imminent Danger of Death

In circumstances where danger of death for a baptized person is not imminent, the most appropriate course of action is the separate celebration of entire sacramental rites rather than a continuous celebration of several sacraments. Penance is celebrated whenever necessary using the *Order of Penance*, the Anointing of the Sick whenever a person begins to be in danger of death, and for persons who have not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation, the rite as

described in the *Order of Confirmation*. The norm of separate celebrations when there is no need for a continuous rite is rooted in the fact that individual liturgical celebrations have their own logic, include ritual elements which manifest the meaning of a particular sacrament, and dispose recipients to receive its unique grace. Combining these celebrations could dilute the symbolic power of rites celebrated individually, and, while necessity sometimes demands this dilution, it should not occur otherwise. Even in cases where danger of death is imminent, the ritual still encourages the separate celebration of some sacraments when possible, namely, the sacraments of Penance (no. 115) and Confirmation (no. 117). In the case of Confirmation, a separate celebration is encouraged “lest the different Sacraments be confused, since an anointing takes place in both” (no. 117).

Continuous Rite

Because the condition of a sick person may not permit the celebration of the complete rite, several elements in Chapter

IV are optional: the Sprinkling Rite, the Instruction, the Apostolic Pardon, the Profession of Baptismal Faith, the Litany, and the Thanksgiving over Oil. Their optional nature is indicated by phrases such as “if appropriate,” “if the condition of the sick person permits,” or “may.” The Continuous Rite begins with the same Introductory Rites as the Ordinary Rite of Anointing and Administering Viaticum outside Mass, that is, the Greeting, the Sprinkling Rite, and the Instruction. The option for a sprinkling rite is new to the revised English text; the 1983 edition does not include it. For the Instruction, options A and B of the 1983 edition are omitted. Option C is the first instruction given and is particular to this celebration. The second instruction is an abbreviated version of the instruction found at Chapter II, and its place here is a U.S. adaptation for the sake of the minister’s convenience. The *editio typica* places this text at the end of Chapter IV (no. 134); the 1983 edition did not include it.

An opportunity for sacramental confession or the Penitential Act follows. The Apostolic Pardon is included here—as at Chapter III and Appendix IV—since the sick person’s condition meets the requirements for this plenary indulgence. The Apostolic Pardon may only be given by a priest;¹ nevertheless,

If a priest is unavailable, Holy Mother Church benevolently grants to the Christian faithful, who are duly disposed, a plenary indulgence to be acquired at the point of death, provided they have been in the habit of reciting some prayers during their lifetime; in such a case, the Church supplies for the three conditions ordinarily required for a plenary indulgence.²

There is no reading of Sacred Scripture, and the rite may proceed with the Profession of Baptismal Faith and a brief Litany. The text of the Litany is unique to this celebration.

If necessary, the sacrament of Confirmation is now administered. In the 1983 edition, these rites are found at “Christian Initiation of the Dying” in Chapter 8. Following the arrangement of the *editio typica*, the revised edition includes these rites in Chapter V, “Confirmation in Danger of Death.” This chapter includes only the prayer at the Laying On of Hands and the formula at the Anointing with Chrism, though “other parts of the preparatory and concluding rites found in *The Order of Confirmation* may be added in individual cases, with due consideration for the

circumstances” (no. 136). When Confirmation is conferred as a part of the Continuous Rite, the laying on of hands that precedes the Anointing is omitted (nos. 117 and 124).

The Sacred Anointing then begins with the laying on of hands (if the Confirmation has not occurred). If necessary, oil is blessed with a brief form, a form given only at this place; alternatively, the Prayer of Thanksgiving over the Oil may occur. The sick person is anointed. If the sick person is not to receive Viaticum, a prayer after Anointing occurs. The Lord’s Prayer and a dismissal follow. The choice of the texts for the oration and dismissal and their placement—like the Instruction above—are U.S. adaptations for the sake of the minister’s convenience. If the sick person is to receive Viaticum, the minister moves immediately from the anointing to the Our Father. Viaticum and the Concluding Rites take place as at Administering Viaticum outside Mass.

When Danger of Death Is Urgent or Immediate

The ritual also highlights two further degrees of danger of death—urgent and immediate—at no. 116. While the English translation of *urgente periculo*, “When the danger of death is imminent,” makes it seem equivalent to the chapter title “in imminent danger of death” (*in proximo mortis periculo*), the underlying Latin is different. In cases of “urgent” danger, one confers anointing immediately and then gives Viaticum, omitting all other ritual elements. In cases of “immediate” danger (*instante mortis periculo*), the sequence is reversed (cf. no. 30). In these cases, an opportunity for sacramental confession is offered and Viaticum is given immediately “because each of the faithful in danger of death is bound to receive it” (no. 30). If time allows, Anointing is also conferred.

The *editio typica* does not provide a rite for either of these cases, but the 1983 English edition includes one for immediate danger at a “Rite for Emergencies” in Chapter 8. The revised edition includes something similar at Appendix IV, “The Emergency Rite of Penance, Viaticum, and Anointing.” As the last rite in the ritual book, ministers will be able to access it easily; nevertheless, this position should not become an occasion for its use where there is not an immediate danger of death. No significant changes have been made in the revised edition. While the revised edition no longer includes the expanded *prænotanda* of the 1983 edition, the norm for the minister to offer “every possible

¹ *Manual of Indulgences*, no. 12 §1.

² *Manual of Indulgences*, no. 12 §2.

ministry of the Church as reverently and expeditiously as he can” should be kept in mind (*Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum*, no. 260).

When There Is Doubt Whether the Sick Person Is Still Alive

To this point, the ritual book has given instruction for the pastoral care of four degrees of danger of death—general, imminent, urgent, and immediate. At no. 15 of the Introduction and no. 135 in Chapter IV, directions are provided for cases when there is doubt whether the sick person is truly alive. In these cases, there is no more than an invitation, the formula of anointing, and a prayer. In the 1983 edition, these texts were folded into nos. 263 and 268-269. Following the variations introduced into liturgical books after the promulgation of the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, the Latin text no longer includes the title *De Unctione sub condicione* (“Conditional Anointing”) or the preface to the formula of anointing, *Si vivis, per istam sanctam Unctionem...* (“If you are alive, through this Holy Anointing...”). In cases where it is clear that the person has already died, the Priest should not administer the Anointing but carry out prayers for the person (no. 15), for example, those of Appendix III, “Prayers after Death,” or no. 151 in Chapter VI.

Confirmation in Danger of Death

It also bears noting the importance of the sacrament of Confirmation for those in danger of death. Following the 1983 edition, the revised text includes an important sentence drawn from the *Order of Confirmation*, no. 52: “It is of the greatest importance that the initiation of every baptized Christian be completed by the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist” (no. 136). Over the years, reception of the sacrament of Confirmation by baptized persons has decreased. In this light, when a priest is invited to administer the sacrament of Anointing, it is important that he ask whether the person has received the sacrament of Confirmation. Additionally, when a child is in danger of death, the Church directs the minister to impart the sacrament of Confirmation. For those who have not yet obtained the use of reason, the unbaptized should receive Baptism and Confirmation, while the baptized should receive Confirmation. For those who have obtained the use of reason, the unbaptized should receive Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist (if able to distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and receive it reverently), while the baptized should be offered the opportunity for the sacrament of Penance and receive Confirmation, Anointing, and Holy Communion as Viaticum. In every case above, the child is to be confirmed. Anointing of the Sick is administered only in the case of a baptized child who has obtained the use of reason.

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