

Solemnities & Feasts of the Lord

St. Wenceslaus, Iowa City
Revised by Fr. Lamansky
April 9, 2026

In the Roman Rite of Pope St. Paul VI, each feast day can have one of several ranks. From highest to lowest, these ranks are: (1) Solemnity; (2) Feast of the Lord; (3) Feast; (4) Memorial; and (5) Optional Memorial.

Only a Solemnity or a Feast of the Lord can outrank a Sunday in Ordinary Time. (According to the normal rules, nothing can outrank a Sunday of the other liturgical seasons.) Therefore, Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord may have different characteristics than other feast days or may be treated differently. For example, each Solemnity and Feast of the Lord is given a Second Reading in the Lectionary.

For ease of reference—and because the number of these high-ranking feast days is relatively few in number—all Solemnities and Feasts of the Lord on the U.S. calendar are listed here (except for those which always fall on a Sunday, such as Pentecost Sunday or the Solemnity of Christ the King). **Holydays of Obligation are listed in bold font.** All Sundays are days of obligation as well.

Date	Feast Day	Rank
January 1	Mary, Mother of God	Solemnity
The Sunday after Epiphany or January 8 or 9, if one of these falls on Monday	The Baptism of the Lord	Feast of the Lord
February 2	The Presentation of the Lord	Feast of the Lord
March 19	Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Solemnity
March 25	The Annunciation of the Lord	Solemnity
The 7 th Sunday of Easter*	The Ascension of the Lord	Solemnity
Friday after Corpus Christi Sunday	The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus	Solemnity
June 24	The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist	Solemnity
June 29	Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles	Solemnity
August 6	The Transfiguration of the Lord	Feast of the Lord
August 15	The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Solemnity
September 14	The Exaltation of the Holy Cross	Feast of the Lord
November 1	All Saints	Solemnity
November 9	The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica (the Archbasilica of the Most Holy Savior)	Feast of the Lord
December 8	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Solemnity
December 25	The Nativity of the Lord	Solemnity
The Sunday after Christmas or December 30 when Christmas falls on Sunday	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph	Feast of the Lord

*In the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Omaha, and Philadelphia, The Solemnity of the Ascension takes place on the Thursday after the 6th Sunday of Easter

Vigil Masses

St. Wenceslaus, Iowa City
Revised by Ian Udell
April 9, 2026

In the Roman Rite of Pope St. Paul VI, Sundays and Holydays of Obligation may be anticipated the previous evening, but no earlier than 4pm. In other words, if there is an obligation to attend the Mass the next day, it may be anticipated. This is despite the fact that even though Solemnities celebrate Evening Prayer I on the previous evening, if that solemnity does not have an obligation to attend, Masses of the previous evening are not celebrated as an anticipated Mass. These anticipated Masses are separate from Vigil Masses which have their own set of prayers and, in some cases, their own readings.

All Vigils and anticipated Masses, besides the Easter Vigil, are celebrated at all Masses taking place at or after 4pm on the evening before a day of obligation. The Easter Vigil, in the Diocese of Davenport, may be celebrated starting at 8:15pm, but it is preferred to be at 8:30pm or later; it cannot be celebrated before 8:15pm.

There are 7 Solemnities that get their own Vigil Mass, these are listed below. The 2 or 3 Masses that are not obligatory but still have a Vigil Mass are the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, Sts. Peter and Paul, and if the Assumption is deemed not a Holyday of obligation by the USCCB, it still gets a Vigil Mass should there be a Mass celebrated the evening before after 4pm. **Holydays of Obligation/Sundays are listed in bold font.** The first 4 Vigils listed are for a Sunday and are days of obligation as well. Although, one may always go to the Mass of the day rather than the Vigil.

Date	Vigil	# of Readings	Sep. Readings?
The Evening of the Saturday between Jan. 1 – Jan. 7	Vigil of the Epiphany	3	No
The Night of Holy Saturday	Easter Vigil in the Holy Night	9 – 7 Old, 2 New; Simplified: 5-8	Yes
The Evening before the 7th Sunday of Easter	Vigil of the Ascension	3	No
The Evening before the 8th Sunday of Easter	Pentecost Vigil	6 – 4 Old, 2 New; Simplified: 3-5	Yes
The Evening of June 23	Vigil of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist	3	Yes
The Evening of June 28	Vigil of Sts. Peter and Paul	3	Yes
The Evening of August 14	Vigil of the Assumption of the BVM*	3	Yes
The Evening of December 24	Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord*	3	Yes

*Holydays of Obligation