

**PASTORAL AND LITURGICAL INFORMATION
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTMAS FEASTS FOR 2023-2024**

**THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE FAITHFUL
FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS 2023**

The faithful are bound to observe the obligation of Holy Mass for a Sunday as usual for the Fourth Sunday of Advent with attendance at the Anticipated Mass or on Sunday morning. The faithful are bound to observe the obligation of Holy Mass for Christmas at the Vigil Mass or on Christmas Day. *Thus, the faithful have two obligations back to back. It would be helpful to the faithful to publish this information all throughout this Advent.*

The current *Code of Canon Law* states that “A person who assists at a Mass celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the feast day itself or in the evening of the preceding day satisfies the obligation of participating in the Mass (canon 1248, 1).” So, it is possible that someone may fulfill their Sunday obligation on Christmas Eve, if they did not go to Mass earlier for the Fourth Sunday of Advent, but would also need to fulfill the obligation for Christmas on Christmas Day.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday, December 24, 2023

All morning Masses on this day are of the Fourth Sunday of Advent without any explicit indication that the Christmas Mystery is also being observed.

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, CHRISTMAS

Monday, December 25, 2023

The Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord is *always* a Holy Day of Obligation, even if it falls on a Monday or Saturday.

The time for Vigil Masses for Christmas in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia is no earlier than 4:00 PM, without exception (see *Christus Dominus*, January 6, 1953).

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Sunday, December 31, 2023

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

Monday, January 1, 2024

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God *is not* observed as a Holy Day of Obligation this year since it falls on a Monday.

The liturgical observance of a Solemnity typically begins the evening before with Evening Prayer I. The celebration of the Eucharist on the evening before would be the proper Vigil Mass of the Solemnity or, if there is no proper Vigil Mass, the Anticipated Mass.

Since the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God is not a day of obligation this year and the day before is a day of obligation, Sunday, the day of obligation takes precedence for the evening Mass. So, the Parish Sunday evening Mass on December 31, 2023 may be of the Sunday and for the Sunday with the Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Evening Prayer would be Evening Prayer I of the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God.