



Archdiocese of Regina

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November 20, 2017

Liturgy Commission

Dear Fathers/Liturgy Chairpersons;

This year presents a challenge to all of us regarding the schedule of Christmas and New Year's Masses with these solemnities falling on a Monday. Certainly the number of Masses required, with an immediate preceding Sunday, makes this year particularly onerous. Thankfully, this doesn't happen every year!

In the face of this year's reality there seems to be some confusion about the distinction between the Sundays and the Solemnities. The liturgical calendar and its principles are very clear, so I ask us to note:

- **Sunday, December 24 (morning) is the 4th Sunday of Advent** and is its own proper liturgical day. By evening, First Vespers and the Evening Masses follow the Solemnity of Christmas. Then, of course, Monday, December 25 is the Solemnity Day of Christmas.
- **Sunday within the octave of Christmas is the Feast of the Holy Family** and is its own proper liturgical day. This year, Sunday, December 31 (morning) is the Feast of the Holy Family. By evening, First Vespers and the Evening Mass if there is one, follows the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Then, of course, Monday, January 1 is the Solemnity Day.
- **Sunday is the ordinary feast day**, a celebration of the Lord's resurrection, a "little Easter" that returns weekly and therefore is not dispensable. While this year's Christmas season solemnities are immediately preceded by a Sunday that does not make these Sundays arbitrary even though Christmas and New Year's are of higher liturgical rank.

To deal with the multiple Masses required for the fulfilment of the Sunday and Solemnity observances, I would suggest the following as it might pertain to your local circumstances:

- Invite your faithful to gather for fewer Saturday (anticipated)/Sunday Masses this year, given that Christmas is on a Monday. If you can accommodate the numbers, perhaps having only one Saturday evening and one Sunday morning Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent and doing the same for the following weekend's Feast of the Holy Family.
- For the Solemnities of Christmas and Mary, Mother of God, perhaps this year accentuating the Solemnity Day, i.e. the morning, by adding a Mass then and reducing the number of evening ones.

I encourage you to once again take note of the "**Guidelines for the Scheduling of Christmas Masses**" which are also on the archdiocesan website along with numerous other resources which are meant to assist your pastoral ministry. They may be found at archregina.sk.ca/pastoral_services/liturgy.

Peace in Christ,

Fr. Ronald Andree