



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP  
DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS  
5825 SHELBY OAKS DRIVE  
MEMPHIS, TN 38134 901-373-1200

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is usually celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup>. This solemnity is also a holy day of obligation in the United States because the Blessed Virgin Mary, under her title of the Immaculate Conception, is the designated patroness of the United States of America. She is also the patroness of the Diocese of Memphis.

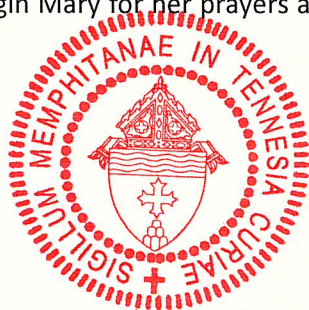
Because the Sundays of Advent are very important days in the Church's yearly preparation for Christmas, they take precedence even over a solemnity and holy day of obligation. For this reason, whenever the Immaculate Conception falls on a Sunday, it is transferred to the following Monday. It has been the practice in the U.S.A. that, whenever the Immaculate Conception is observed on Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, it is not a holy day of obligation.

In a recent letter from the Holy See, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was informed that the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception should always be a holy day of obligation in the U.S.A. even if it is transferred to Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. This requires a change in the current practice in our country.


I welcome this new directive from the Holy See and encourage all to attend Mass on December 9<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary, our patroness. I am aware, however, that many people are unaware of the requirement to attend Mass on December 9<sup>th</sup> of this year. In fact, many people have already received calendars from their parishes or other Catholic organizations that state "Not a Holy Day of Obligation This Year," or similar words, on December 9<sup>th</sup>.

In light of the likelihood of confusion among the faithful and the short notice given by the Holy See, I dispense all Catholics living in the Diocese of Memphis and all those present in the Diocese on that day from the obligation of attending Mass on December 9, 2024. I encourage pastors to offer extra Masses on that day for the sake of the devotion of our people; however, the faithful are not obligated to attend Mass on that day. In future years, we will observe the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on whichever day it is observed.

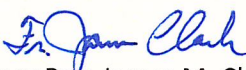
With gratitude to the Blessed Virgin Mary for her prayers and maternal protection for our diocese and our nation, I am yours



In the light and the love of the Lord,

  
Most Rev. David P. Talley, M.S.W., J.C.D.  
Bishop of Memphis in Tennessee

Given at the Chancery in Memphis on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2024

  
Very Rev. James M. Clark, J.C.L., J.V.  
Chancellor