



Musica Sacra FORUM

CHURCH MUSIC ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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How are the Mass readings prioritized on weekdays?

[General Discussion: Music](#)
Siena1347 March 26

Posts: 7

Hi,

I am wondering how the readings are picked on week days by the usccb.

What has priority? The reading of the day, memorial feasts, feast days?

For example, May 1st is the memorial of St. Joseph the worker. On the usccb calendar for this year, the readings posted are for Thursday of the second week of easter: <http://bit.ly/NVmhg7>

But on May 1st in 2003, they chose the readings for the memorial of St. Joseph: <http://bit.ly/1fkyv9u>


Adam Wood March 26

Posts: 4,679


 Thanked by (1): [ClergetKubisz](#).

Andrew Motyka March 26

Posts: 869

I can't speak for the USCCB, but it is almost always preferred to follow the normal Lectionary cycle on optional memorials, even if you are celebrating that memorial. Unless your parish has a particular devotion to St. Joseph the Worker, I'd use the readings of the day.

 Thanked by (2): [Siena1347](#), [Paul F. Ford](#).

Ignoto March 26

Posts: 113

Perhaps it has something to do with the Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar section of the Roman Missal, #59: "Table of Liturgical Days According to Their Order of Preference."

 Thanked by (1): [Siena1347](#).

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MarkThompson March 26

Posts: 651

For example, May 1st is the memorial of St. Joseph the worker. On the usccb calendar for this year, the readings posted are for Thursday of the second week of easter: <http://bit.ly/NVmhg7>

But on May 1st in 2003, they chose the readings for the memorial of St. Joseph: <http://bit.ly/1fkyv9u>

Sienal, did you even look at the readings listed for those two days? Try examining the specific readings chosen in each of those cases, and then I think you'll be able to come back and explain to us why the USCCB did what it did.

Liam March 26

Posts: 1,348

It's an optional memorial in the US calendar (it ranks higher in other local calendars).

<http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/liturgical-calendar/upload/2014cal.pdf>

Thanked by (1): [Siena1347](#).

Ignoto March 26

Posts: 113

Siena,

Now that I've considered your posting in greater depth and "compared" the readings as Mark suggested, I think you ask a very good question. Based on the info Fr. Krisman gave in [this thread](#), I checked and the Gospel for the Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker [559] on May 1st is Proper: Matthew 13:54-58.

I see that on the [2003 page you sent](#), the Gospel is John 3:31-36 even though the page says "Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker." So you have piqued my curiosity, too. You might need to call the USCCB about that unless someone else can explain the information you found.

Thanked by (1): [Siena1347](#).

ronkrisman March 26

Posts: 651

Yes, Siena, it may be beneficial for you to read what I wrote on Jan. 15, to which Ignoto referred.

The USCCB did not choose the readings in the *Lectionary for Mass*. The Apostolic See did. The only exceptions, few in number, are readings chosen for feasts and memorial not included in the General Roman Calendar but which are included in the particular calendar for the dioceses of the USA, such as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

What the USCCB *did* do was to take some biblical citations from the 1981 *Ordo Lectionum Missae* (the liturgical book in Latin which lists what readings are to be included in lectionaries, without actually supplying the texts themselves, except for responsorial psalm refrains, gospel acclamation verses, and things of that sort) which were suggestions from the commons of saints for certain obligatory memorials and actually provide the texts for those citations in the 1998 *Lectionary for Mass*.

As I indicated on January 15, I think what the USCCB did causes some confusion. Certainly those suggested readings may be used on obligatory memorials, but including citations only from the commons would have been sufficient. Printing the readings in place may lead some to think that they *must* be used. However, the semi-continuous reading of Scripture in the weekday readings may be used even on obligatory memorials, unless there is a proper reading for one of those memorials (and that does not happen often, but does for St. Joseph the Worker). I think the 1998 Lectionary should have followed the lead of the 1970 Lectionary.

Thanked by (3): [Siena1347](#), [Paul F. Ford](#), [Ignoto](#).

Siena1347 March 26

Posts: 7

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Mr. Thompson,

I believe you are referring to how those readings happen to be the same. But it still makes a difference which feast is celebrated. In this case their antiphons are different.

The entrance antiphon for Thursday after the 2nd Sunday of Easter is taken from Ps 68 (67): 8–9, 20:

O God, when you went forth before your people,
marching with them and living among them,
the earth trembled, heavens poured down rain, alleluia.

The entrance chant for St. Joseph the Worker is Ps 128 (127): 1–2:

Blessed are all who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!
By the labor of your hands you shall eat;
blessed are you, and blessed will you be, alleluia.

MarkThompson March 26

Posts: 651

Mr. Thompson,
I believe you are referring to how those readings happen to be the same. But it still makes a difference which feast is celebrated. In this case their antiphons are different.

I'm still not sure what the problem is, or why you think the USCCB has anything to do with it. The 2003 calendar simply listed the optional Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker in the header for reference, while the 2014 calendar of readings does not list optional memorials at all. (Of course, the full ordo that the USCCB provides [does](#).) In neither 2003 or 2014 did the USCCB's lectionary webpage give the proper antiphons, just the readings and responsorial psalm. This website is merely a public service the USCCB provides so that people can see the readings; it doesn't bear any sort of official status.

Siena1347 March 27

Posts: 7

Another question: on that day could I use the entrance antiphon and readings from the St. Joseph feast and the responsorial psalm and communion from the other feast?

MarkThompson March 28

Posts: 651

Yes, that is all possible. (Although there is no "other feast"; if you're not celebrating the optional memorial, then it's just a Thursday in Paschal time.)

Thanked by (1): [Siena1347](#).

hartleymartin March 28

Posts: 1,211

As a general rule for ordinary time:

1. Solemnities
2. Feasts
3. Sundays of Ordinary Time
4. Memorials
- 5a. Optional Memorials
- 5b. Ferias

In the case of Optional Memorials and Ferias, they are generally considered equal and it is up to the celebrant to decide which they will celebrate. Many places in general tend to omit optional memorials unless there is a particular local devotion to a Saint.

This year, we see a number of feasts and Solemnities fall on a Sunday, which include The

Presentation of Our Lord (Candlemas), the Solemnity of Sts Peter and Paul and the Commemoration of All Souls.

It gets a little more complex for the other seasons, but in general:

A.) Absolutely nothing trumps Holy Week and The Easter Octave.

Last year the Solemnity of the Annunciation was moved to the Monday after the Easter Octave as March 25th fell during Holy Week.

B.) Nothing trumps Christmas and its Octave.

It can get a little complicated, as the Sunday after Christmas is The Feast of the Holy Family, which can end up trumping St Stephen's Day, St John the Apostle's Day, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, etc.

C.) Epiphany on January 6th takes precedence, unless in your local calendar it has been moved to the Sunday between the 2nd and 8th of January – ie Epiphany Sunday instead of Epiphany on Jan 6th

D.) All Saint's Day and All Soul's Day take precedence over Sundays of Ordinary Time, although in the 1962 calendar, All Soul's Day is moved to Monday if Nov 2nd is a Sunday.

I am uncertain as to the precedence of the weekdays of Lent and Advent, but I am given to understand that in most places, St Patrick's Day is only an optional memorial and is generally trumped by Lent. (St Patrick's Day is a Solemnity in Australia, so it takes precedence.)

Thanked by (1): [Siena1347](#).

Richard Mix March 28

Posts: 510

1. Solemnities
 2. Feasts
 3. Sundays of Ordinary Time
 4. Memorials
 - 5a. Optional Memorials
 - 5b. Ferias

Isn't "Feast" as distinct from "Solemnity" now understood as a feast ranking lower than Sundays?

Thanked by (1): [CHGiffen](#).

Kathy March 28

Posts: 3,374

Isn't "Feast" as distinct from "Solemnity" now understood as a feast ranking lower than Sundays?

Good question. Not necessarily. Major feasts of the Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary still replace Sundays.

Thanked by (1): [CHGiffen](#).

Andrew Motyka March 28

Posts: 869

Kathy's got it mostly right. Feasts of the Lord (not of the BVM) outrank Sundays in OT. Other Feasts don't.

Thanked by (2): [Kathy](#), [CHGiffen](#).

Richard Mix March 28

Posts: 510

I'm still a little confused at whether the non-solemnity Feast of the Lord is a thing.

Liam March 28

Posts: 1,348

Yes. Feasts of the Lord that are not solemnities (unless they are by virtue of patronal/titular associations) include: Holy Family, Baptism of the Lord, Presentation of the Lord, Exaltation of the Holy Cross and Dedication of the Archbasilica of the Most Holy Redeemer (St John Lateran).

Thanked by (2): [Andrew Motyka](#), [Richard Mix](#).

Andrew Motyka March 28

Posts: 869

^^Transfiguration (August 6)

Also, I'm not sure if the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica is really a Feast of the Lord, or if it just enjoys special place in all the Churches of the world, like the dedication of your more local cathedral. I'll have to look that up.

hartleymartin March 29

Posts: 1,211

As far as I can tell the only real practical difference that it makes is that feasts do not require the creed, but if the feast falls on a Sunday then the creed is said anyway.

Thanked by (2): [Andrew Motyka](#), [Richard Mix](#).

*Here's a routine reminder: Avoid flames: critique principles, not people. Be discriminating but don't nitpick.
Be academic not acerbic. Be principled not polemical.*

Andrew Motyka March 29

Posts: 869

Feasts also typically only have one reading unless they fall on a Sunday, like other weekday Masses.

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