Holy Days and Solemnities
(Their place in our calendars; impact on wedding celebrations)

Next to Sundays and the celebration of the Easter Triduum, the days ranked as solemnities are the most important in the calendar. They are privileged days — even replacing Sundays in Ordinary Time when they fall on that day of the week. (Sundays of Easter, Lent, and Advent never give way to other celebrations.)

Solemnities deserve special attention from planners in parishes, schools, and religious communities. The celebration of the liturgy for these days should be rich and joyful, with people encouraged to participate.

Part of the privilege of such an observance is that only the Mass of the solemnity may be celebrated on that day. (The one exception is that funeral Masses are permitted, unless it is a Holy Day of Obligation or the Easter Triduum.) According to the Church calendar, “ritual Masses” (e.g., wedding, ordination, confirmation) may not be used on:

- the days of the Easter Triduum;
- solemnities (including the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed);
- Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter season;
- Ash Wednesday, weekdays of Holy Week.

If a sacramental rite is celebrated during Mass on those days (not permitted for the Triduum except for initiation at the Vigil):

- The prayers and readings must be those of the calendar observance (the “solemnity”)
- For weddings, one reading from the wedding Lectionary section may be substituted for one of the solemnity readings.
- Weddings outside Mass may use prayers and readings of the ritual.

(Also recall that in the Diocese of Pittsburgh no weddings are permitted on any Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation).

With this in mind, let us list the solemnities for the coming two years. You may want to make a special notation on your schedule books — especially for weddings.