

PHILIPPINE HIERARCHY

FEASTDAY OF OBLIGATION REDUCED

The following is the official latin text of the rescript:

SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO CLERICIS

Beatissime Pater,

Praeses Conferentiae Episcopalis Nationis Insularum Philippinarum, ea quae sequuntur exponit:

Exc.mi Ordinarii, in coetu coadunati, magno dolore apostolico affecti egerunt de violatione ex parte eiusdem Nationis fidelium dierum festorum sub praecepto, qui infra hebdomadam incidunt, eo quod tantum parva eorundem pars memoratos dies sanctificet quia Status leges civiliter non recognoscunt festivitatem religiosam dierum, de quibus supra.

Qua de causa, Idem Ordinarii, cum pervenerint per maioritatem duarum ex tribus partibus suffragiorum ad decisionem petendi ab Apostolica Sede dispensationem ab obligatione servandi dies festos sub praecepto infra hebdomadam, quod attinet et ad Sacrum audiendum et ad abstinendum ab operibus servilibus, expetunt a Sanctitate Vestra memoratam dispensationem pro dictis diebus, exceptis sollemnitatibus Nativitatis Domini eiusdemque Octavae seu Circumcisionis nec non Inmaulatae Conceptionis Almae Beatae Mariae Virginis.

SACRA CONGREGATIO, attentis expositis, Ex. mis Ordinariis Nationis Insularum Philippinarum benigne tribuit gratiam dispensationis juxta preces.

DATUM ROMAE, die 13 februarii 1968.

J. Card. Villot, Praef.

In virtue of this rescript of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, given in Rome on February 13, 1968 the Holy See has given the dispensation from the obligation to hear Mass and abstain from servile work on holydays that fall during the week, except the Nativity of Our Lord, December 25th; its Octave, January 1st; and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, December 8th.

The dispensation was granted in favor of a joint petition of the Philippine Catholic Hierarchy. The petition was based on the difficulty on the greater part of the faithful to fulfill the aforesaid obligation because the feastdays are not recognized as such by the civil government.

Prior to this dispensation, the holydays of obligation in the Philippines, aside from the three abovementioned were: Feast of the Three Kings (Epiphany, Jan. 6); Feast of St. Joseph (March 19); Ascension Day (Thursday following the 5th Sunday after Easter); Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29); Corpus Christi (Thursday following Pentecost Sunday); Assumption of Our Lady (Aug. 15); and All Saints Day (Nov. 1).

The guiding norms for implementation are as follow:

1. The principles to be observed are: (a) feasts of the Lord have preference, and (b) nothing should interfere with the celebration of the mysteries and the life of Christ, our Redeemer, on Sundays which is preeminently the "Day of the Lord". Following these principles it can be allowed to transfer to the following Sunday the feasts of the Epiphany, of the Ascension and of Corpus Christi, both in their liturgical setting (Office and Mass) and in their external solemnity.

2. The feast of the Holy Family, on the other hand, can be anticipated on the Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity of Our Lord, as will be noted in the new calendar for the universal Church.

3. The liturgical feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother remains fixed on August 15th.

4. The same norm holds for the feast of St. Joseph.

5. In regard to the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, which coincides with the Pope's Day, it is to be celebrated liturgically on June 29th, while the external solemnity (Mass, homily, the traditional ceremonies) can be transferred by the Episcopal Conference to the last Sunday of the same month.

IMPORTANCE OF SUNDAY

By an apostolic tradition which took its origin from the very day of Christ's resurrection, the Church celebrates the paschal mystery every eighth day. For on this day Christ's faithful should come together into one place so that, by hearing the word of God and taking part in the Eucharist, they may call to mind the passion the resurrection, and the glorification of the Lord Jesus, and may thank God who "has begotten us again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3).