

# Tridentine Community News

December 5, 2010

## *How To Determine a Saint's Feast Day*

A reader asked a question that deserves a detailed answer: How can one determine the day on which a particular saint's feast falls?

The first point to be mentioned is that there can be differences between the Ordinary and Extraordinary Form calendars. The Feast of St. Stephen, for example, falls on December 26 in both calendars. However, the Feast of St. John I, Pope & Martyr falls on May 18 in the Novus Ordo and on May 27 in the Tridentine.

While it may seem desirable at first glance to unify the two calendars, a more thorough analysis shows that this is not quite so simple. The Tridentine Calendar places an emphasis on unified Propers: Readings, Antiphons, and Orations (prayers) are all built around the theme of the Feast. They sometimes share content; for example the Communion Antiphon might be a portion of the Gospel reading. The Ordinary Form Calendar, in contrast, places priority on getting through the three-year Sunday reading cycle and the two-year weekday reading cycle. The varying readings are less intertwined with the unvarying Orations and Antiphons, which become the primary means of conveying the Feast's theme. Because of this difference in philosophy, we expect the two calendars to persist for the foreseeable future.

From this point forward, we will confine ourselves to the Extraordinary Form. The Roman Missal is divided into three sections, found in Altar Missals as well as in the Hand Missals used by the faithful:

1. The main body of the missal contains the Feasts of the Liturgical Year as celebrated throughout the universal Church.
2. The second section contains Feasts Celebrated In Particular Places (*pro Aliqibus Locis*) and Certain Religious Congregations. Here we find, for example, that April 8 is celebrated by the Sisters of Notre Dame as the Feast of St. Julie Billiart, the foundress of the Institute of the Sisters of Notre Dame.
3. The third section contains the saints whose feasts are regularly celebrated only in certain countries. There is a section for the United States, and another for England & Wales. (We have not yet seen a section for, or a missal specifically for, Canada; has any reader seen one?) Of course, no one missal could contain the regional feasts of all countries.

Certain saints are listed as secondary saints on a day primarily dedicated to another Feast. Such secondary saints are assigned "Commemorations", a second Collect, Secret, and Postcommunion prayer to be said at Holy Mass after the primary Feast's Orations. You may have noticed that Hand Missals and Altar Missals list the Propers for a Mass of the secondary saint immediately after the Mass of the primary saint with Commemorations of the secondary saint. This is because it is possible to celebrate the Mass of a secondary saint as the primary Feast of the day: In a church dedicated to such a saint, the Feast Day of the patron of the parish is a First Class Feast; the secondary saint's Mass would override the primary saint's. In

addition, on Fourth Class Ferias, a celebrant may choose to celebrate the Mass of any saint as a Votive Mass, so definitive Mass Propers are needed.

Thousands of saints have been canonized throughout the years, and many have been assigned a Feast Day. Likewise, many titles of our Blessed Mother have been given Feast Days. Not all of these are popular enough to warrant listing in every Hand Missal. One example that pertains to us locally is Our Lady of Czestochowa, the name of a famous icon in Poland. St. Josaphat Church possesses a painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa above its high altar, one that has been touched to the original painting and is thus a Third Class Relic. Fittingly, on August 26 St. Josaphat Church celebrates the Feast of Our Lady of Czestochowa as the second patron of the parish. This particular Feast of our Blessed Mother is not contained in most missals, as it is considered a Feast of local interest in Poland. When putting together the first Tridentine Mass to celebrate this Feast, we had to consult a Polish Hand Missal to obtain the Propers for this Mass.

As far as we have been able to determine, the most comprehensive source to determine the Feast Day of a saint not locatable in a 1962 missal is the unabridged edition of Fr. Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*. The complete 1866 12-volume Butler is now available on-line at: <http://www.bartleby.com/210/>. Because of its age, Butler's listing does not reflect the correct dates for the handful of Feasts whose dates were changed between 1866 and 1962, nor does it include new saints canonized during those years.

## *Questions For Our Readers*

Is anyone aware of an authoritative, comprehensive listing of Feast Days that were in force in 1962? Perhaps an updated edition of the complete Butler? Such a listing would be a definitive and convenient single-source answer to our reader's question. It is not the entire answer one needs, however, because in order to celebrate a Mass for that saint, a set of Propers is required. If the saint was assigned specific Propers, where are they? Without specific Propers, one must default to using the Propers from the Common of the Saints, e.g. the "Mass of a Holy Woman Not a Martyr."

By the way, the saint whose feast our reader was seeking was St. Arnold of Soissons, the patron saint of brewers. His Feast day in the Tridentine Calendar is listed in Butler as August 15, but in later publications as August 14. Perhaps the Feast was advanced one day so as not to be obscured by the Feast of the Assumption on August 15. This is a perfect example of why a central, 1962 reference would be beneficial.

## *Tridentine Masses This Coming Week*

Mon. 12/06 7:00 PM: Low Mass at St. Josaphat (St. Nicholas, Bishop & Confessor)

Tue. 12/07 7:00 PM: Low Mass at Assumption-Windsor (St. Ambrose, Bishop, Confessor, & Doctor)

Wed. 12/08 7:00 PM: **High** Mass at St. Josaphat (Immaculate Conception – a Holy Day of Obligation in the U.S.)

Comments? Ideas for a future column? Please e-mail [info@windsorlatinmass.org](mailto:info@windsorlatinmass.org). Previous columns are available at [www.windsorlatinmass.org](http://www.windsorlatinmass.org)