

What Church Law Really Says About The Sunday Obligation

Can. 1247 On Sundays and other holydays of obligation, the faithful are obliged to assist at Mass. They are also to abstain from such work or business that would inhibit the worship to be given to God, the joy proper to the Lord's Day, or the due relaxation of mind and body.

Can. 1248 §1 The obligation of assisting at Mass is satisfied wherever Mass is celebrated in a catholic rite either on a holyday itself or on the evening of the previous day.

§2 If it is impossible to assist at a eucharistic celebration, either because no sacred minister is available or for some other grave reason, the faithful are strongly recommended to take part in a liturgy of the Word, if there be such in the parish church or some other sacred place, which is celebrated in accordance with the provisions laid down by the diocesan Bishop; or to spend an appropriate time in prayer, whether personally or as a family or, as occasion presents, in a group of families.

What is a Grave Reason that would be sufficient to excuse the Sunday Obligation?

- Grave or contagious illness, or Doctor's ordered quarantine. Influenza and Pneumonia, would be sufficient.
- The need to care for a critically ill person, one who is a danger to one's self, or one who is unable to care for him or herself.
- Hospitalization or institutionalization
- Travellers, who despite planning an obligatory Mass into their schedule, are impeded by some external inhibition from fulfilling the obligation would fall under 1248.2 of the code.



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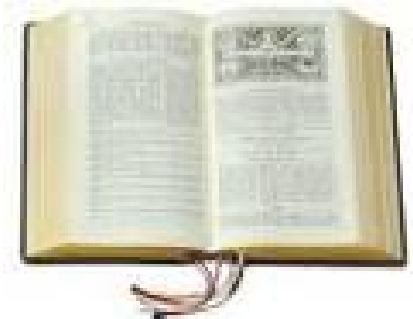
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Saint Peter's
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Fulfilling the Sunday Obligation



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Serving the People of God

Fulfilling the Sunday Obligation

The Sunday Obligation has long been established in the Church, dating from the first century. However, in recent years (the last 50 or so) it seems as though there is some confusion as to what this means. The basic rule is this:

All Catholics are obligated to attend Mass on Sundays (or at anticipated Sunday Masses on Saturday evening, as well as on all holydays of obligation or their anticipated Mass.

(see Canons 1247 & 1248.1&.2 in the Code of Canon Law).

What this means:

Let us define what is a Mass: A Mass is celebrated when there is a priest, who consecrates the bread and wine at that service for the distribution of communion. If there is no consecration, IT IS NOT A MASS. If there is no priest (Protestant Ministers of any kind ARE NOT PRIESTS), there cannot be a Mass. The Bishop is a priest, a deacon is not a priest. Therefore at

any celebration where there is a deacon presiding, that celebration IS NOT A MASS.

How does one satisfy the obligation?

Sunday masses, by Diocesan Law are Masses which celebrate the celebration appointed for that Sunday, and begin after 4 pm on Saturday evening. If you attend a Mass after 4pm, and it uses the Sunday Liturgy, you have fulfilled the Sunday Obligation.

To satisfy the Holyday of Obligation, one must attend a liturgy that celebrates that feast. They are held on their appointed day according to the Bishop's instruction which comes out each year and is proclaimed on Epiphany.

What Are Holy Days of Obligation

Easter Sunday,

The Feast of the Ascension (now regularly celebrated on the sixth Sunday of Easter.,

The Feast of the Assumption (August 15th),

All Saints Day (November 1),

The Immaculate Conception

(December 8th),

Christmas Day (December 25th),

and the Feast of Mary the Mother of God, January).

What Does This All Mean?

Therefore, it follows that if you attend a wedding, quinceañera or other Mass, EVEN IF IT FALLS ON SATURDAY, it is an EXTRA CELEBRATION and CAN NOT satisfy the Sunday Obligation.

Note Well:

All Catholics who skip or miss attending the Holy Day Masses or fail to satisfy the Sunday Mass Obligation are obliged to confess this as soon as is possible, and to refrain from receiving Communion until they have confessed to a priest and received absolution.



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