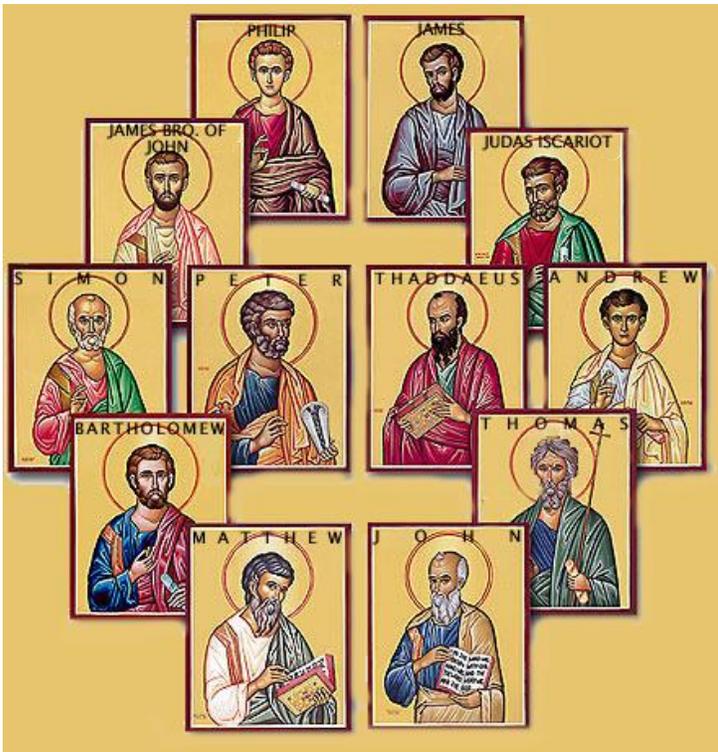


“Year of the Eucharist”—Ranking Church Days (Part 2) Feasts—by Fr. Steve Lape



As we continue to celebrate our diocese’s “Year of the Eucharist,” we’re looking at various aspects of the Mass to help us more greatly appreciate it as being at the heart of who we are and what we do as Catholic Christians. Last week, we began looking at the ranking of the Church’s days on the calendar, with some being weighted by Church authority as being more important than other days. Just as a quick review, I stated in last week’s article the 5 categories of Church days: Solemnities, Feasts, Memorials, Seasonal Weekdays, and Ferial Weekdays. As we looked at the top category of Solemnities last week, we’ll now examine the 2nd category of highest importance: feasts. They are not holy days of obligation, unless certain ones fall on a Sunday. Those days designated as feasts (that also become obligatory days for Mass attendance if on a Sunday) include: the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph (celebrated always on the Sunday after Christmas, unless Christmas falls on a Sunday, which would then move the Holy Family feast day to Friday, December 30th), the Baptism of the Lord (the last day of the Christmas season before Ordinary Time begins, and is usually celebrated on the Sunday after Epiphany, unless Epiphany falls on Jan. 7 or 8, which would then move the Lord’s Baptism feast day to the following Monday), the Presentation of the Lord on Feb. 2, exactly 40 days after Christmas (which celebrates the 1st appearance of Jesus in the Temple, brought there by Mary and Joseph), the Transfiguration of Jesus on August 6 (recalling our Lord’s outward form radiantly

changing in front of Peter, James and John on a mountainside, as recorded in Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, and Luke 9:28-36), the Exaltation of the Cross on Sept. 14 (formerly called Triumph of the Cross), and the Dedication of the St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome on Nov. 9 (celebrating the oldest church in the western Church, consecrated in 324 A.D., and houses the seat of the Pope).

A few saints are honored with feast days. Two of them honor Mary: the Visitation on May 31 (recalling her visiting Elizabeth, recorded in Luke 1:39-56) and Mary’s Birth on Sept. 8. All the Apostles and Gospel writers are revered on feast days: Jan 25—Conversion of St. Paul; Feb. 22—the Chair of St. Peter (celebrating Peter as 1st Pope); April 25—Mark (writer of the 1st Gospel); May 3—Philip & James; May 14—Matthias; Jul 3—Thomas; July 25—James (son of Zebedee); Aug. 24—Bartholomew; Sept. 21—Matthew; Oct. 18—Luke; Oct. 28—Simon & Jude; Nov. 30—Andrew; and Dec. 27—John. The 3 Archangels (Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael) are honored with a special feast day on Sept. 29. Two highly venerated saints who were deacons and martyrs are given feast days: Lawrence on Aug. 10 and Stephen on Dec. 26. On Dec. 28, a special celebration recalls the Holy Innocents (the male boys aged 2 and under in Bethlehem who were ordered to be killed under Herod, as recorded in Matthew 2:16-18).

Always keep in mind that all saints’ days are meant not to merely focus on the saints themselves, but celebrate their wonderful examples of how to live for Jesus Christ, even to the point of being willing to die for Him.

