

CHRISTMAS CONFUSION

Christmas is considered “a movable feast,” meaning that it can fall on any day of the week (unlike Ash Wednesday, or Easter Sunday). When it falls on a **Monday**, as it does this year, things get a little confusing. Let’s try to spell out how December 23rd through 25th will unfold liturgically:

Saturday, December 23rd is the last full day of Advent. As usual on a Saturday, we will have a 5:00 PM Mass in anticipation of the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Sunday, December 24th is the tricky one! Sunday morning is still the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and Catholics are of course obliged to honor their Sunday obligation by participating in Mass—either the 5 PM on Saturday evening, or the 7:30, 9:00, or 11:00 AM on Sunday.

Later that same day (at 4:00 to be precise), we begin our celebration of the Solemnity of Christmas. Our Christmas Eve Masses will be celebrated at 4:00, 5:30, and 11:00 PM.

Monday, December 25th, is of course Christmas Day, with Masses being celebrated at 8:00, 9:30, and 11:30 AM.

So, is the Church asking us to go to Mass **twice** in 3 days? *Precisely.* Once in celebration of the Fourth Sunday of Advent, and once in celebration of the Lord’s birth on Christmas. Going to one of the Christmas Eve Masses (4:00, 5:30, or 11:00 PM) **does not** fulfill one’s Sunday obligation. We may see a lot of each other between Saturday evening and Monday morning! But that should be glad tidings, indeed.