

“New Kids on the Block”

Feasts of Saints added to the Roman Missal Third Edition

by Mary Elizabeth Sperry

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When parishes start using the third edition of the Roman Missal, the texts of the prayers won't be the only changes Catholics in the pews see. The new Missal will include 17 additions to the Proper of Saints, the part of the Missal that includes prayers for the observances of saints' days. The Proper of Saints follows a calendar established by the Vatican and modified by the bishops of each country to include saints of local importance. Any changes to a national or diocesan calendar require the consent of the Vatican.

The saints new to the third edition of the Roman Missal include saints, like Saint Augustine Zhao Rong, who were canonized after the second edition of the Roman Missal was published in 1985. Some of these saints, including Saint Lawrence Ruiz and Saint Andrew Dung-Lac, have been on the U.S. calendar for years. However, the new Missal will be the first time their prayer texts have been available in the printed book. Other added saints appeared on the liturgical calendar until 1969, when the calendar was simplified and many saints' observances were removed. Also restored to the calendar are observances for the Most Holy Name of Jesus and the Most Holy Name of Mary. Still others saints and observances added to the Missal highlight important teachings of the Church such as the teaching on Mary (Our Lady of Fatima) and on the Eucharist as the Sacrament of Christ's love (as promoted by Saint Peter Julian Eymard).

By canonizing these holy men and women, the Church presents them as models of Christian living. The added saints come from all eras and areas of the Church's life – from the fourth century (Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Apollinaris) to the twentieth century (Saint Josephine Bakhita, Saint Christopher Magallenes and Saint Pio of Pietrelcina) – and from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. They include priests, religious women, martyrs, a married woman and missionaries.

Whether or not Catholics hear about these saints at their local parishes will depend on the priest. With the exception of the memorials of Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (better known as Edith Stein) and Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (better known as Padre Pio), all of the new observances are optional memorials. That means the decision about whether or not to celebrate them at a particular Mass rests with the celebrating priest. While a priest may not add the observance of a saint or blessed not on the approved calendar, he is free to decide which, if any, optional memorials he will celebrate. In choosing among the possible observances, priests might highlight saints who offer a particular example to their people.

These new additions are not the final word about saints on the calendar. The Church will continue to canonize new saints as models for the faithful. Some of these saints will be celebrated in those parts of the world where they served. Others will be placed on the general calendar, celebrated by the Universal Church to unite the liturgy of heaven with that of earth.
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New saints and observances in the third edition of the Roman Missal

January 3 – Most Holy Name of Jesus -- This is part of the Church's celebration of Christmas, recognizing that God "bestowed on [Jesus] the name that is above every name" (Phil 2:9).

February 8 – St. Josephine Bakhita, virgin – Born in Darfur, Josephine survived kidnapping and slavery to become a nun who embraced and lived hope as a redeemed child of God.

April 23 – St. Adalbert, bishop and martyr – Martyred near the end of the first millennium, Adalbert was a missionary in the countries of central Europe, striving to bring unity to God's people.

April 28 – St. Louis Mary de Montfort, priest – This French priest is best known for his devotion to Mary, encouraging the faithful to approach Jesus through his mother.

May 13 – Our Lady of Fatima – The Virgin Mary appeared to three children in the Portuguese town of Fatima in 1917. During these apparitions, she encouraged penance and praying the rosary.

May 21 – Sts. Christopher Magallanes, priest and martyr, & Companions, martyrs – Martyred in 1927, this Mexican priest was noted for his care of the native peoples of Mexico and for his work to support vocations to the priesthood.

May 22 – St. Rita of Cascia, religious – A wife, mother, widow, and nun, Saint Rita was known for her patience and humility in spite of many hardships. Conforming herself to the crucified Christ, she bore a wound on her forehead similar to one inflicted by a crown of thorns.

July 9 – Sts. Augustine Zhao Rong, priest and martyr, & Companions, martyrs – Canonized with 119 other Chinese martyrs, Augustine began his career as a soldier. Inspired by the martyrs, he was baptized and eventually became a priest and martyr himself.

July 20 – St. Apollinaris, bishop and martyr – Martyred in the second century, Apollinaris was the Bishop of Ravenna in Italy. He was known as a great preacher and miracle worker.

July 24 – St. Sharbel Makhluf, priest – A Maronite priest in Lebanon, Saint Sharbel spent much of his life as a hermit in the desert, living a life of extreme penance.

August 2 – St. Peter Julian Eymard, priest – Founder of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, Saint Peter devoted his life to promoting First Communion and devotion to the Eucharist as the sacrament of Christ's love.

August 9 – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, virgin and martyr – Born of Jewish parents as Edith Stein, she received academic renown as a philosopher. After her conversion to Catholicism, she became a Carmelite nun. She died in Auschwitz in 1942.

September 12 – Most Holy Name of Mary – After beginning in Spain in 1513, this celebration became a universal feast in the seventeenth century. A companion to the Memorial of The Most Holy Name of Jesus, it follows the Feast of the Nativity of Mary.

September 23 – St. Pio of Pietrelcina, priest – Padre Pio was known throughout Italy and the world for his patient hearing of confessions and for his spiritual guidance. In poor health for much of his life, he conformed his sufferings to those of Christ.

September 28 – Sts. Lawrence Ruiz & Companions, martyrs – Saint Lawrence and his companions spread the Gospel in the Philippines, Taiwan, and Japan. Saint Lawrence was born in Manila and was a husband and father,

November 24 – Sts. Andrew Dũng-Lạc, priest and martyr, & Companions, martyrs – Saint Andrew and his 107 companions, both priests and laity, were martyred in Vietnam in the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Through their preaching, lives of faith, and witness unto death, they strengthened the Church in Vietnam.

November 25 – St. Catherine of Alexandria, virgin and martyr – Martyred in the early part of the fourth century, Catherine was known for her intelligence, her deep faith, and the power of her intercession.

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