



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

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November 24, 2024
Feast of Christ the King

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

The feast of the Immaculate Conception is the patronal feast of the United States and is a Holy Day of Obligation. For a period of time, when this feast fell on a Monday or a Saturday, as it does this year, it was not obligatory. However, the Vatican recently clarified that even when a Holy Day of Obligation is transferred to a Saturday or Monday, there remains the obligation to attend Mass on that day. Elsewhere in the United States a few bishops have made an exception for their diocese, lifting the obligation. We have not done that here. In Arkansas the obligation remains. As with any Holy Day of Obligation, individual priests can exempt individual persons from the obligation for a just reason, but there will be no blanket exemption of the diocese or individual parishes here. One reason is that this feast is the patronal feast of the United States, and our painfully divided country is in need of more prayer and more help from the Blessed Mother's intercession than ever before.

One such area where help from heaven is needed is in the area of immigration, about which there is much division and heated rhetoric about massive deportations. This is not just a political matter as some would have it, but also a moral matter, a human rights matter about which our Catholic faith has much to say. Back in 2008 I issued a pastoral letter on the human rights of immigrants, in which I address what our faith has to say 1) about immigration as a basic human right, 2) about the reason for national borders, 3) about the rule of law and its limits, and 4) about the need for comprehensive immigration reform. An electronic version of this pastoral letter can be downloaded from our diocesan website—dolr.org. The original print version is available by simply contacting the diocese.

This is not the only matter about which we need to pray for the intercession of the Blessed Mother on this our patronal feast of the Immaculate Conception, but it is a big issue about which our faith has something to say. It is my hope that by entrusting to the Blessed Mother this and other matters we face as a nation, we will heal divisions and find solutions truly worthy of the Lord.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Anthony B. Taylor
Bishop of Little Rock