

The Paulus Institute

Vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Mass to have been said according to the Classical Roman Rite on August 14, 2021, at the High Altar of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is that of The Vigil of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The liturgy of the vigil Mass is typically a preparation for the feast the next day. However, the Vigil of the Assumption has its own auspicious history.

Observance of the Vigil of the Assumption of Our Lady rests upon ancient origins. The image here is the parchment of the Gellone Sacramentary, 780 AD, showing the Mass of the Vigil of the Assumption beginning with the decorative “S” (as per Gregory DiPippo, the New Liturgical Movement blog, August 14, 2020, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Latin 12048).

Vigils are known from the earliest Christian days, and were commended by St. Augustine and St. Jerome. From the Latin “vigilia,” a vigil traditionally is a penitential day of preparation for a major feast, on which the faithful disposed themselves for the coming feast day.

The Vigil of the Assumption is one of seventeen vigils before feast days in the traditional Roman Rite calendar, besides Holy Saturday before Easter (not including those of dioceses and orders), and is one of only four that are fast days in the United States under the Classical Rite, along with the vigils of Christmas, Pentecost, and All Saints.

The Pontifical Vigil Mass is celebrated in violet vestments, but with deacon and subdeacon wearing the dalmatic and tunicle (which does not occur in (penitential) Lent). There is no *Gloria* or *Credo*. The *Alleluia* is omitted before the Gospel, and at the end of Mass, the *Benedicamus Domino* is said instead of *Ite, missa est*. As August 14 is also the feast day of St. Eusebius, commemorations of him are said at the *Collect, Secret, and Postcommunion*.

Ecce Nunc Tempus Acceptabile