

MOVEABLE SUNDAYS in the Traditional Rite

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The time after Epiphany has a total of six Masses possible, however, depending on when Easter falls, there could be fewer Sundays possible before Septuagesima. Septuagesima is the beginning of the pre-Lenten Sundays which prepare us for the great Fast of the Church during the forty days of Lent. The third to the sixth Sundays after Epiphany are called the “moveable Sundays” since the prayers and readings will be used at the end of the Liturgical Year, if they are not used at the beginning. The only change is that the Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, and Communion Antiphon are taken either from the Third Sunday after Epiphany if the Mass is celebrated after Epiphany, or from the Twenty Third Sunday after Pentecost if they are celebrated at the end of the Liturgical Year.

If Easter comes after April 17th, then all six Sundays after Epiphany are used before Septuagesima. When Easter comes early, there are less than six Sundays, however, the Second Sunday after Epiphany will always be celebrated after Epiphany, even if it means the Second Sunday after Epiphany is anticipated on the Saturday before Septuagesima which can happen if Easter is really early. The reason for this is that the Second Sunday after Epiphany recalls the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee, which is intimately tied to the Epiphany or Manifestation of our Lord, whereby He manifests Himself to the Apostles with His first public miracle. The number of weeks in a year is always the same, and Easter is variable since it is determined by the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox which means some adjustment needs to be made in the Liturgical year to allow for the differences. This is accomplished with the moveable Sundays.