

Huge crowds not expected for celebrations

The mid-August heat traditionally drives Marylanders to the beach and other vacation destinations, and the pews at Catholic churches throughout the Archdiocese of Baltimore are not expected to be filled during the Aug. 15 feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

“Our parishioners understand it is a holy day of obligation and we do expect more people than usually show up for a mid-week Mass,” said Monsignor Lloyd E. Aiken, pastor of Sacred Heart, Glyndon. “But, a lot of people are away this time of year.”

Holy days of obligation in November and December bring in much larger congregations, because fewer people are traveling when school is in session, said Deacon Ray Moreau, chief administrative officer of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen, Homeland.

“Attendance goes down here in general during the summer months,” said Deacon Lawrence Teixeira, pastoral life director of St. Francis of Assisi, Brunswick, and St. Mary, Petersville. “But, any feast day that honors the blessed mother will draw more people than normal.”

Catholics worldwide have observed the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Aug. 15 for hundreds of years, but it wasn’t until 1950 that Pope Pius XII proclaimed this teaching a dogma of the Church – one of the essential beliefs of the Catholic faith.

The feast day celebrates Mary being taken bodily to heaven after her death.

Though many parishes in the Archdiocese of Baltimore have not extended their schedules for the feast of the Assumption, the Blessed Mother will be honored.

New All Saints, Liberty Heights, will hold a special procession of children honoring Mary during its 7 p.m. Mass and Sacred Heart, Glyndon, has added a 7 p.m. vigil Aug. 14 and a noon and 7 p.m. Mass Aug. 15 to give more parishioners and opportunity to worship.

“The mid-day Mass will help people who work in the area,” Monsignor Aiken said. “The evening will provide many others with an opportunity to worship.”