

No liturgical transfer for St. Patrick's Day 2008 foreseen in U.S.

WASHINGTON - In contrast to the decision of the Irish bishops' conference to request Vatican permission to move the liturgical celebration of St. Patrick's Day in 2008 to avoid a conflict with Holy Week, the feast day "will not be commemorated liturgically" in most U.S. dioceses next year, according to the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for the Liturgy.

Because March 17 falls on the Monday of Holy Week next year, the Irish bishops' conference requested and received permission from the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments to move the solemnity of St. Patrick, Ireland's patron saint, to the nearest Saturday, March 15.

But an earlier decision by the Vatican congregation to transfer the feast of St. Joseph in 2008 from March 19, the Wednesday of Holy Week, to March 15 "impedes the transfer of the solemnity of St. Patrick to March 15" in the United States, said an article in the liturgy secretariat's newsletter for April.

The feast day may be moved to Friday, May 14, 2008, in dioceses "where St. Patrick is the principal patron of a particular church" and where "it is customarily commemorated as a solemnity," the newsletter said.

The U.S. bishops have not requested such a transfer as a conference, however.

"In the vast majority of the dioceses of the United States of America, where the feast of St. Patrick is commemorated as a nonobligatory memorial, the feast will not be commemorated liturgically in the year 2008," the newsletter said.