

*De titulo ecclesiae**

(Notitiae 35 [1999] 158-159)

1. Every church must be assigned a title during the liturgical celebration of its dedication or blessing (cf. *Pontificale Romanum*, Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae et altaris, editio typica 1987, cap. II: Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae, n. 4).
2. Churches can have as a title the Most Holy Trinity; or our Lord Jesus Christ invoked according to a mystery of his life or a title already introduced into the Sacred Liturgy; or the Holy Spirit; or the Blessed Virgin Mary, likewise invoked according to some appellation already accepted into the Sacred Liturgy; or the Holy Angels; or a Saint or Blessed inscribed in the Roman Martyrology (cf. *Pontificale Romanum*, Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae, *ibidem*).
3. A church should have one title only, except in the case of Saints who are inscribed together in the Proper Calendar.
4. A Blessed whose celebration is not yet entered in the legitimate diocesan calendar cannot be chosen as the title of a church without an indult of the Apostolic See (cf. *Pontificale Romanum*, Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae, *ibidem*; Congregatio de Cultu Divino et Disciplina Sacramentorum, *Notificatio de dedicatione ecclesiae in honorem alicuius Beati*, diei 29 novembris 1998).
5. Once the dedication has taken place, the title cannot be changed (can. 1218), except when, for serious reasons, this is expressly granted by the Apostolic See.
6. If the title is assigned during the blessing of the church, according to *The Order of Blessing a Church* (cf. *Pontificale Romanum*, Ordo dedicationis ecclesiae et altaris, editio typica 1987, cap. V: Ordo benedictionis ecclesiae), then it can be changed by the diocesan bishop (cf. can. 381 § 1), after considering all the circumstances and for some serious reason.
7. The name of the parish generally corresponds to the title of the parish church.
8. The patron, as intercessor or advocate before God, is a created being, i.e. the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Angels, a Saint or a Blessed. The Most Holy Trinity and the Divine Persons are therefore always excluded (Cf. Sacra Congregatio de Cultu Divino, *De Patronis constituendis*, diei 19 martii 1973: Acta Apostolicae Sedis 65 [1973] 276-279, nn. 4, 6).
9. The patron must be chosen by the clergy and the faithful and this choice must be approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority. In order for the choice and approval to have liturgical effect, they require the confirmation of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, which the Dicastery grants by its own decree (cf. *De Patronis constituendis*, nn. 3, 7-8).
10. The patron of a place is distinct from the title of a church: they can be the same, but not necessarily so.
11. If a new parish is erected in the place of several suppressed parishes, it shall have its own parish church, which shall retain its former title if there is no new building. Churches of suppressed parishes, which are sometimes considered as “co-parish churches”, shall also retain their own titles (cf. *De Patronis constituendis*, nn. 5-6).

12. If several parishes are united so that a new one is formed from them, it is permissible, for pastoral reasons, to adopt a new name for the parish different from the title of the parish church.

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