



MEMORANDUM

To: Priests, Deacons, Pastoral Leaders, Parishes, and Religious Houses

From: Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas

Re: Observance of Holy Week 2021

Date: 4 February 2021

*We should glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
in whom is our salvation, life and resurrection,
through whom we are saved and delivered.*

-Entrance Antiphon: Thursday of the Lord's Supper at the Evening Mass

As we prepare to observe once again the most sacred days of the Church's liturgical year, marking the saving mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord, this guidance is offered to assist you, in this time of pandemic, in the worthy celebration of these mysteries.

The 2020 decree of the Holy See regarding the celebration of the liturgies of Holy Week during time of pandemic is to be followed this year; details of which, are provided, once again, for each of the liturgies.

Please understand that information may be received at any time by the Diocese of Toledo, from ecclesial and government authorities, causing us to revise the updates we send. It is difficult to establish set standards overseeing liturgical celebrations and parish life while, at the same time, honoring ecclesial/local/state/national regulations affecting how we conduct our worship of God. This memo presents the most current information we can provide to you at this time. We continue to monitor the situation and will do our best to send you the most current information in a timely manner. Thank you so much for your patience and perseverance as together we address these matters with renewed hope.

Observance of Holy Week 2021

The celebrations of these most holy days of the church year require a pastoral attentiveness so that the saving events commemorated are carried out with faith and devotion and the faithful have access to them. For those unable to attend liturgical celebrations during this week, all possible electronic and spiritual resources are to be made available to the faithful so that they may more fully enter into these days which commemorate the greatest mysteries of our redemption.

We all need to be aware that ecclesial or governmental restrictions may be altered at any moment and prudent judgement will need to prevail when celebrating these most sacred liturgies with the utmost reverence and decorum.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

- Per the 2020 decree from the Holy See, in the Cathedral church the second form [Solemn Entrance] of the entrance is to be used. In parish churches and in other designated places the third form [Simple Entrance] is to be used as indicated in the *Roman Missal* (nos. 16-18) with all due practical and logistical considerations. The first form, the Procession, is not to be used.
- If blessed palms are to be made available to the faithful and, if the church is to be open on Palm Sunday afternoon, these palms can be placed in various locations of the church for the faithful to retrieve. Prudence would dictate that the individual palm fronds could be separated, in so far as possible, placed on tables thus lessening the possibility of people touching multiple palms. Individual palm fronds are not to be distributed as a “drive through” service or be left outdoors for individual retrieval.

The livestreamed Mass for Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, from Rosary Cathedral, will be available for viewing/listening at 10:00am on Sunday, March 28 via the Diocese of Toledo Facebook page as well as on my Facebook page. The links to these sites are listed below:

Diocese of Toledo Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/diocesetoledo>

Bishop Thomas' Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/bishopdethomas>

Chrism Mass

While a Bishop has the faculty to postpone the Chrism Mass to a later date, since it is appropriate that this Mass be celebrated near Easter (*Rubrics for Chrism Mass*, no. 3) I will celebrate the Chrism Mass, as customary, on Tuesday of Holy Week in Rosary Cathedral, with an invitation only congregation, blessing the oils and consecrating the Chrism. While this year the Chrism Mass will be celebrated with limited attendance, the whole diocese will be represented by the priests as well as by a select group of deacons, consecrated religious and lay faithful who will be invited to attend. *Each parish may invite representatives, not to exceed two people, to attend the Chrism Mass.*

The livestreamed Chrism Mass, from Rosary Cathedral, will be available for viewing/listening at 11:00am on Tuesday, March 30 via the Diocese of Toledo Facebook page as well as my Facebook page. These links are noted above under Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.

All are warmly encouraged to spiritually unite themselves by viewing/listening to the Chrism Mass.

Blessed Oil of the Sick, Oil of Catechumens and consecrated Chrism will be made available, immediately after Mass, for one parish representative to take back to the parish. Oils, this year, will be available in Msgr. Bernard Smith Auditorium, located across the parking lot from the Cathedral. A station for each Deanery will be located inside the auditorium. The assigned parish representative submits the parish ticket (to be mailed to each parish in the near future) and will be given a bag containing the parish Oils. If a representative is responsible for picking up multiple sets of Oils, a separate ticket for each parish will need to be presented at the time of distribution. Deans are kindly asked to go to their designated Deanery stations and to take any remaining Oils back to their parishes and arrange for their pick up by the appropriate parishes.

Masks/facial coverings are to be worn inside the auditorium.

Kindly note that the luncheon that traditionally follows the Chrism Mass is cancelled for this year.

Tenebrae with Evening Prayer

Given the usual number of people that attend and the ministers necessary for this liturgy, the *Tenebrae* celebration scheduled for Wednesday, March 31 at 7:30pm at Rosary Cathedral is cancelled and therefore will not be livestreamed/broadcast. Parishes may decide to livestream/broadcast or cancel their own previously scheduled *Tenebrae* celebrations.

Thursday of the Lord's Supper at the Evening Mass (Holy Thursday)

- Pastors/administrators/pastoral leaders should see to it that reserved Hosts in the tabernacle are consumed prior to the beginning of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. **A sufficient number of Hosts need to be consecrated at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper for the liturgy of Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday).**
- Because the Washing of Feet is already an option provided for in the *Roman Missal* (see rubrics for the Mass of the Lord's Supper, no.10) it is to be omitted, as stated in the Holy See's 2020 decree. It is never permitted to substitute other actions (i.e. washing of hands, etc.) to replace the symbolic ritual act of washing feet, as such actions are not rooted in the specific scriptural gesture of Jesus at the Last Supper.
- Following the Prayer after Communion, per the 2020 decree from the Holy See, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved in the tabernacle.
- The altar is stripped at a convenient time following the Mass.
- Priests who are unable to celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper should instead pray Vespers of the day.

The livestreamed Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, from Rosary Cathedral, will be available for viewing/listening at 7:30pm on Thursday, April 1 via the Diocese of Toledo Facebook page as well my Facebook page. These links are noted above under Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.

Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord

First Part: Liturgy of the Word

- In accord with the rubrics for Good Friday (no. 13) and the expressed 2020 desire of the Holy See, the following is to be added as the 11th Solemn Intercession as suggested by the USCCB.

XI. For an end to the pandemic

**Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end
to the coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world,
that our God and Father will heal the sick,
strengthen those who care for them,
and help us all to persevere in faith.**

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

**Almighty and merciful God,
source of all life, health and healing,
look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease;
protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us
and in your fatherly providence
grant recovery to the stricken,
strength to those who care for them,
and success to those working to eradicate this scourge.
Through Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

Second Part: Adoration of the Holy Cross

- Due to the extraordinary circumstances of the current health crisis, the priest celebrant should make the prudent decision on how best to bring the Cross forward for the *Showing of the Holy Cross* (using either Form One, or Form Two, nos. 15-16 in *Roman Missal*) with all due practical and logistical considerations.
- The Cross should be brought to the priest celebrant, in the most reverent manner possible, for his personal act of adoration. **Per the 2020 decree of the Holy See, the “adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant” (no. 4).**
- The faithful who are physically present and those participating virtually via a livestream/broadcast of this liturgy, may be afforded the opportunity to adore the Cross in the following manner:

The priest “takes the Cross and, standing in the middle before the altar, invites the people in a few words to adore the Holy Cross and afterwards holds the Cross elevated higher for a brief time, for the faithful to adore it in silence” (*Rubrics for Good Friday*, no. 19).

Third Part: Holy Communion

- The Deacon, if present, or the priest celebrant, putting on the humeral veil, brings the Most Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle to the altar. Following Holy Communion, the ciborium “is taken by the Deacon or another suitable minister to a place prepared outside the church, or, if circumstances so require, it is placed in the tabernacle” (*Rubrics for Good Friday*, no. 29).
- Following the Prayer over the People the ministers genuflect to the Cross and depart in silence (*Rubrics for Good Friday*, no. 32).

- After the celebration, the altar is stripped, but the Cross remains on, or near, the altar with two or four candlesticks (*Rubrics for Good Friday*, no. 33).

The livestreamed liturgy of Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord, from Rosary Cathedral, will be available for viewing/listening at 3:00pm on Friday, April 2 via the Diocese of Toledo Facebook page as well as my Facebook page. These links are noted above under Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.

Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

First Part: Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium

- The Mass is to begin **no earlier than 8:30pm in the Diocese of Toledo** and, per Decree II (March 25, 2020) of the Holy See, is only to be celebrated “in Cathedral and parish churches. Seminaries, houses of clergy, monasteries and religious communities shall follow the indications of this decree” (no. 5).
- The Paschal Candle is privately prepared beforehand according to the rubrics.
- The preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted, per the 2020 decree from the Holy See.
- The necessary ministers who may be present do not hold lighted candles.

The liturgy begins in this way:

- With the lights of the church/chapel already turned on, the ministers, in silence, reverence the altar and go to their places.
- After the Sign of the Cross the Priest celebrant says the greeting as indicated in the rubrics for the Easter Vigil (no. 9).
- Following the greeting, the Paschal Candle is brought before the Priest celebrant. A lit taper is then presented to the Priest celebrant who lights the Paschal Candle, which is then placed in its stand.
- The procession is omitted, per the 2020 decree from the Holy See, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) follows (nos. 18-19).

Second Part: Liturgy of the Word

The rubrics for the Easter Vigil state that at least three readings should be read from the Old Testament, both from the Law and the Prophets, and their respective Responsorial Psalms should be sung. “Never, moreover, should the reading of chapter 14 of Exodus with its canticle be omitted” (no. 21).

Third Part: Baptismal Liturgy

- After the homily, the Baptismal Liturgy takes place.
- Pastors/Administrators/Presbyteral Moderators & Chaplains are to use their best practical, pastoral and prudent judgment in celebrating this part of the Easter Vigil.
 - The lowering of the paschal candle into the water during the blessing is optional
 - A dignified pitcher, or other worthy vessel, for water may be placed in the font to be blessed and used to pour water over those to be baptized.
 - A separate aspergil and bucket of water may also be placed inside the font. This water is then used to sprinkle the faithful following the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

Fourth Part: Liturgy of the Eucharist

The liturgy of the Eucharist follows the Universal Prayer in the usual manner.

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

The parish Mass schedule for Easter Sunday may be adjusted as necessary by the Pastor/Administrator/Presbyteral Moderator & Chaplain. Because the number of the faithful who attend Mass this day may likely exceed recent Sunday parish celebrations, additional Masses may be scheduled as deemed necessary.

The livestreamed Easter Sunday Mass, from Rosary Cathedral, will be available for viewing/listening at 10:00am on Sunday, April 4 via the Diocese of Toledo Facebook page as well as my Facebook page. These links are noted above under Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord.

Please be assured of my closeness in prayer as we prepare to enter the Season of Lent. May we keep our eyes fixed intently on Christ, recalling with love, hope and firm faith the power flowing from his Passion, Death and Resurrection.