



URGENT MEMORANDUM

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

From: Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas

Re: Update on the Observance of Holy Week 2021

Date: Thursday of the First Week of Lent (25 February 2021)

*Be merciful, O Lord, to those who approach you in supplication,
and, accepting the oblations and prayers of your people,
turn the hearts of us all towards you.
Through Christ our Lord.*

-Prayer over the Offerings, Thursday of the First Week of Lent

As we continue to prepare for the solemn liturgies of Holy Week, during which we celebrate the saving Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, I wish to inform you of two communications recently received by my office.

These communications (see attached), a Note from the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments and a memo from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Divine Worship, emphasize the role of the local Bishop, who

is called upon to make prudent decisions in order that the liturgy can be celebrated fruitfully for the People of God and for the good of the souls entrusted to his care, while respecting the safeguarding of health and what has been prescribed by the authorities responsible for the common good.

Because circumstances vary from place to place, the Congregation believes the local Bishop can best determine how to celebrate these most sacred of liturgies in his particular diocese. With this in mind, I wish to convey to you the following.

The Pastor/Administrator/Presbyteral Moderator & Chaplain, because he has the unique perspective of knowing how best to minister to the people entrusted to his care, is to use his best practical, pastoral, and prudent judgment while planning and celebrating the Sacraments and liturgical rites of Holy Week.

The Pastor/Administrator/Presbyteral Moderator & Chaplain may choose either of these two options in celebrating Holy Week:

- The 2020 decree of the Holy See regarding the celebration of the liturgies of Holy Week during time of pandemic may be followed again this year; details of which were provided in the memo of February 4, 2021 (see attached).
- The Sacraments and liturgical rites may be adapted provided that all current health and safety protocols are followed; including social distancing and the wearing of masks/facial coverings.

Regardless of which option is chosen, the following are to be observed:

○ **Thursday of the Lord's Supper at the Evening Mass (Holy Thursday)**
Washing of Feet

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 again this year.** 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.

○ **Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)**

Second Part: Adoration of the Holy Cross

The Cross should be brought to the priest celebrant, in the most reverent manner possible, for his personal act of adoration. **Again this year, 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, are to be afforded the opportunity to adore the Holy 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).

Where a pastoral need requires it, the local Ordinary may permit additional liturgies to be celebrated on these two days (Holy Thursday and Good Friday).

Pastors/Administrators/Presbyteral Moderators & Chaplains who seek such permission are kindly requested to contact Father David Cirata, in the Office for Divine Worship, for further assistance.

PASTORAL SUGGESTIONS

The following pastoral suggestions are offered to further assist you in the planning of the Sacred Liturgies of Holy Week.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

- Due to continued social distancing guidelines, the first form of the Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem, the Procession, is not to be used.
- The second form [Solemn Entrance] of the entrance may be used in parish churches and in other designated places with all due practical and logistical considerations. In this case, "The Priest and ministers and a representative group of the faithful go to a suitable place in the church outside the sanctuary, where at least the greater part of the faithful can see the rite" (*Rubrics for Palm Sunday*, no. 13). The faithful are to stand in place (at their seat) with their palm frond in hand. The Priest Celebrant remains in place and, during the rite, sprinkles the palm fronds nearest to him with Holy Water and then he sprinkles Holy Water towards the congregation. Following the Gospel, and the invitation, the Priest Celebrant and the ministers enter the sanctuary and, after venerating the altar, the Priest Celebrant may incense it. Following the Collect, Mass continues in the usual manner.
- 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.

Chrism Mass

As noted in the February 4 memo, 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 able to attend 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. 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>

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

As customary, 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. Kindly enter through the doors at the Cathedral Office entrance and exit through the auditorium doors. Signs will be posted to aid this movement.

A station for each Deanery will be located inside the auditorium. The assigned parish representative submits the parish ticket (which will 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)

- The Washing of Feet is to be omitted this year.

- If the tabernacle is located outside the sanctuary, parishes may consider having an altar of repose (decorated with appropriate flowers and candles) set up in/near the sanctuary. Following the Prayer after Communion, the Priest Celebrant receives the humeral veil and transfers the Most Blessed Sacrament to a worthy and dignified repository sitting atop the altar of repose. This option allows the faithful to remain socially distanced in the church while in adoration before the Lord. Following the period of adoration, the Most Blessed Sacrament is removed from the repository and reserved in a dignified and readily accessible location.
- If the tabernacle is located in the sanctuary, the Priest Celebrant reverently transfers the Most Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. In order that the tabernacle is completely empty (and open) on Good Friday, as is customary, the Most Blessed Sacrament is removed from the tabernacle, following the period of adoration, and reserved in a dignified and readily accessible location.
- The altar is stripped at a convenient time following the Mass.

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 desire of the Holy See for 2020, again this year 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

- This ritual act was described on the second page of this memo. **The “adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant” (no. 4).**

Third Part: Holy Communion

- The Deacon, if present, or the priest celebrant, putting on the humeral veil, brings the Most Blessed Sacrament from the place where it is reserved 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).

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.**
- “Where, because of difficulties that may occur, a fire is not lit, the blessing of fire is adapted to the circumstances. When the people are gathered in the church as on other occasions, the Priest comes to the door of the church, along with the ministers carrying the paschal candle. The people, insofar as is possible, turn to face the Priest. The greeting and address take place as in no. 9 above; then the fire is blessed and the candle is prepared, as above in nos. 10-12” (*Rubrics for the Easter Vigil*, no. 13).

If the Pastor/Administrator/Presbyteral Moderator & Chaplain chooses to follow the 2020 decree of the Holy See, the Vigil begins in the following way:

- The Paschal Candle is privately prepared beforehand according to the rubrics.
- The preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted.
- The necessary ministers who may be present do not hold lighted candles.
- 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 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.
- Following the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, the Priest Celebrant sprinkles those nearest him with Holy Water. He then goes to the front of the sanctuary where he sprinkles towards the congregation without processing through the body of the church.

Prayer Resources

Parishes are encouraged to make prayer resources available, including some parts of the *Liturgy of the Hours*, to aid individual parishioners and families during Holy Week.

Please be assured of my continued prayers during this Lenten season. May Saint Joseph, Protector of the Universal Church, intercede for us and may we model his reverence and loving obedience to almighty God.