

# Lent and the Triduum - A Pastoral Guide

## Lent

The Lenten season has a dual character: to prepare catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. Catechumens will focus on the rite of election, the Scrutinies, and the other rites and catechesis that will prepare them for the sacraments of Christian initiation. The faithful, ever more attentive to the word of God and prayer, and supportive of the catechumens and candidates, prepare themselves by penance for the renewal of their baptismal promises. Care should be taken to preserve the spirit or tone of Lent.

*Eucharistic Prayers* The Eucharistic Prayers of Reconciliation are very appropriate during Lent. The current edition of the Roman Missal includes these Eucharistic Prayers, in the Appendix to the Order of Mass.

*Liturgical Music* The use of musical instruments is permitted only to support the singing of the assembly (GIRM, no. 313). Exceptions to this rule are the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday), and solemnities and feasts that take the place of a Lenten weekday. The Gloria is not sung or recited during Lent until Holy Thursday, except for the solemnities and feasts. The Alleluia is not used until the Easter Vigil. Lent might also be highlighted by greater use of silence during the liturgy (see GIRM, 45).

*Environment & Art* During Lent, the altar and sanctuary are not to be decorated with flowers (GIRM, No. 305). The exceptions to this rule are the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday), and solemnities and feasts.

- **Veiling crosses/statues:** *After the Holy Thursday liturgy*, any cross that cannot be removed from sight may be covered with a red or violet cloth in preparation for the veneration of the cross on Good Friday. The *Roman Missal* allows (but does not require) the veiling of crosses and images beginning after Masses on the Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent.
- **Baptismal fonts:** Filling baptistry and holy water fonts with sand during Lent is not appropriate. Preparation for baptism, and therefore a deep baptismal spirituality, is a fundamental focus of the Lenten season. Fonts should contain water throughout Lent, until after the Holy Thursday Mass of Our Lord's Supper. During a pandemic, if it seems prudent, holy water fonts may remain empty.

## Celebrations of the Sacraments during Lent

*Sacraments of Initiation* Because Lent in its rituals, scriptures, history, and place in parish life is oriented toward the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, the sacrament of baptism should not be celebrated during Lent except in cases of real necessity. It is certainly inappropriate to celebrate adult baptism during Lent, except, of course, in danger of death. The baptism of infants is also far more fitting on Easter Sunday and during the Easter season.

*Rite of Penance* The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation during Lent should be clearly and positively encouraged. It is customary that confession schedules are expanded in preparation for Easter.

- It is appropriate for the sacrament of reconciliation to be celebrated during Lent in a more solemn form, as described in the Rite of Penance.
- All in the faith community should know that Lent is the time for celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation, and that Lent ends on Holy Thursday afternoon. Parish confession schedules ought to reflect our liturgical beliefs, giving reasonable opportunity for receiving the sacrament during Lent.
- Ideally, the faithful will have celebrated the sacrament of reconciliation before the Triduum begins.

*Rite of Marriage* If marriages are celebrated during Lent, couples are to be reminded that wedding plans must respect the nature of the liturgical season.

*Lent and RCIA* The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), with its catechumenate period and its various stages and rituals, is encouraged for every parish of the Diocese. Liturgical planners and ministers should become thoroughly familiar with the RCIA, so that Lent and the Triduum may be celebrated as fully and richly as possible.

- When there are catechumens present, the Scrutinies are to be celebrated on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent. Readings are from cycle A of the Lectionary. See RCIA no. 146. The ritual prayers for the Scrutinies are found in the Missal and may be used in place of the seasonal prayers if desired.

### **Ash Wednesday**

Ash Wednesday is the Church's solemn call to keep the season of Lent. We accept this call, united with the catechumens, and recalling our own baptism as we enter this special time of prayer and penitential practice. Ashes are blessed and distributed after the homily of the Mass. Deacons or lay persons may be designated to help distribute the ashes. During this pandemic year, ministers may wish to sprinkle ashes on the heads of the faithful, or else wear a glove or use a swab to administer the ashes.

### **The Chrism Mass**

This year, the Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday morning, March 17<sup>th</sup>, at 10 a.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. At this liturgy the Oil of the Sick, Oil of Catechumens, and the Sacred Chrism are blessed by the Bishop and distributed for use in all our parishes and faith communities. As usual, oils will be distributed in the chapel after Mass; Tish Thornton has your count and will be sure your parish receives what you need for the coming liturgical year.

### **Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)**

On this day the Church "celebrates Christ's entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery" (*Roman Missal*). The *Missal* provides three forms for the memorial of the Lord's entrance, so these rites and their rubrics should be studied carefully as ministers, planners and musicians prepare the liturgy.

- The blessing and distribution of palms may take place using any of the three forms for the Introductory Rites as provided in the *Missal*. During a pandemic, if a procession (First Form) or gathering of the faithful outside or in another location than the usual seating (Second Form) takes place, special consideration should be given to appropriate social distancing.
- The prayers for the blessing of the palms are used whenever the Procession or the Solemn Entrance is celebrated; the penitential rite of the Mass is then omitted.
- Readers and pastoral musicians are encouraged to study the rubrics for the proclamation of the Passion:
  - There is a Gospel Acclamation as usual, and a deacon receives the blessing as usual.
  - Omitted are candles and incense, the greeting and response (“The Lord be with you...”), the making of the sign of the cross on the book, forehead, lips, and breast, and the people’s response (“Glory to you, Lord”).
- The deacon and/or priest may be assisted by lectors in the reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. As always, but especially on these days, the lectors chosen for this should be well-trained and highly proficient in the proclamation of the Word.

## The Easter Triduum

The rites for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil are to be used in the form in which they are presented in the Roman Missal and Lectionary. These days — from Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon — are “the culmination of the entire liturgical year” (*General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, no. 18). Those responsible for liturgy should see to it that the liturgies of these days are characterized by care and dignity, by simplicity, and by that deep joy which is announced in the entrance song of Holy Thursday: “We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection.”

*Funerals during Triduum* A funeral Mass may not be celebrated on Holy Thursday (even before the celebration of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper), Good Friday, Holy Saturday, or Easter Sunday. If needed on these days, the body of the deceased may be brought to the church for the rite of final commendation, including the incensation and blessing of the body with holy water. Other appropriate prayers may also be added. The funeral Mass for the deceased should be celebrated as soon as convenient after Easter Sunday. At this funeral liturgy, the final commendation would be omitted.

*Marriages during Triduum* The Rite of Marriage may not be celebrated on Good Friday or Holy Saturday.

### Holy Thursday

- The Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper should be celebrated at the most suitable evening hour; the private celebration of any Mass is strictly forbidden.
- Bishop Christensen grants permission for any parish to have a second Mass of the Lord’s Supper for pastoral need (e.g. seating capacity, language considerations, etc.) A second Mass on Holy Thursday should **not** be celebrated merely for convenience.
- The tabernacle should be empty *before* the liturgy begins.
- Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for Holy Communion today and tomorrow, including a presentation host for Good Friday’s liturgy.

- Consecrated wine is not to be reserved for distribution on Good Friday.
  - Though Holy Communion may be brought to the sick today, Holy Communion may be distributed at the church itself only within the Mass.
- The Mandatum ritual should take place; although this ritual is always optional.
  - Following the Prayer after Communion, the Holy Eucharist is transferred to the place of reposition.
    - This may be the regular tabernacle if it is in an area removed from the sanctuary.
    - The Blessed Sacrament is never to be reserved in a monstrance during this time.
    - The entire assembly may participate in the Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament via a procession.
- After the transfer of the Holy Eucharist, the altar is stripped privately, and any crosses are removed or covered with a red or purple veil.
  - Lamps should not be lit before images of saints.
  - Holy water is removed from all fonts, to be refilled with water blessed at the Easter Vigil. They should not be filled with sand.
  - “The faithful should be encouraged to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable period of time during the night, according to local circumstances, but there should be no solemn adoration after midnight” (*Roman Missal*).

## Good Friday

The Good Friday liturgy is a part of the Triduum, which is one great feast celebrated over three days; the Good Friday liturgy may never be abandoned, reordered, or replaced by other rites or services, including ecumenical services.

- The celebration of the Lord’s Passion should take place about 3 p.m., but for pastoral reasons may be at a later hour, or as early as 12 noon. In any case, the celebration should conclude by 9 p.m.
- Bishop Christensen grants permission for any parish to have a second Celebration of the Passion of the Lord for pastoral need (e.g. seating capacity, language considerations, etc.)
- The Showing of the Holy Cross may take place in either of the two forms provided in the Roman Missal. In any case, in this pandemic year, it is strongly recommended that the cross not be venerated by touch, especially by a traditional kiss; a genuflection or bow of the head would be appropriate. The *Roman Missal* directs that only one cross should be used in the veneration.
- After the veneration, the cross is positioned near the altar and four candles are placed near it. The cross will remain there and the candles will remain lit for a period of time following the service to allow the faithful to spend some additional time in prayer before the cross.
- A special intercession may be included as the 11th of the Solemn Intercessions. Unless Rome provides a different text for 2021, the same text from 2020 should be used:

**Deacon: Let us pray also for all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health to the sick, strength**

**to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.**

**Priest: Almighty ever-living God, only support of our human weakness, look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children who suffer because of this pandemic; relieve the pain of the sick, give strength to those who care for them, welcome into your peace those who have died and, throughout this time of tribulation, grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

- Holy Communion is distributed only within the liturgy of the Lord's Passion, but may be taken to the sick at any time this day.
- After the Blessed Sacrament has been returned to its place of reservation, the presider says the Prayer Over the People from the *Roman Missal*. Then, all depart in silence. As mentioned above, the cross (with lighted candles) remains available for private prayer for a period of time.

### **Holy Saturday**

Holy Communion may be given on this day only as Viaticum. Ordinary Communion visits to the sick should be made earlier in the week and on Easter. Communion visits are not permitted on this day, nor are Masses, even funeral Masses. The absence of these liturgical celebrations is in keeping with the nature and mood of this day.

### **The Easter Vigil**

- For the celebration of the Vigil in 2021, parishes may not start the liturgy earlier than 8:00 p.m. in the south, and 7:00 p.m. in the north. "The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday" (*Roman Missal*).
- The tabernacle is empty for the Easter Vigil. All bread that will be used for Holy Communion is to be consecrated at the Vigil, offering us the model of what should happen at every celebration of the Eucharist throughout the year.
- Candidates for reception into the full communion of the Church may be (and are more properly) received at another time.
- The rites of the Vigil are to be celebrated in the order in which they appear in the *Roman Missal* and RCIA. Parts of the Easter Vigil liturgy are never to be celebrated at other times on Holy Saturday, nor are they to be repeated at the Masses of Easter Sunday.
- Each year a new paschal candle is to be used. It should be made of wax and worthy in size and in beauty, befitting its role in the liturgy of this night, throughout the Easter season, and at the celebrations of baptism and burial throughout the year. The Easter candle remains in the sanctuary or near the ambo throughout the Easter season. After Evening Prayer II on the solemnity of Pentecost, the Easter candle is placed near the baptismal font, where it should be displayed with honor.
- The reading of the word of God is, in the words of the *Roman Missal*, "the fundamental element of the Easter Vigil." Though the number of readings from the Hebrew Scriptures may be reduced from seven to three, this is not to be done lightly. The reading from Exodus 14 with its canticle may NOT be omitted.

- The parts unique to the Vigil which should always be sung are:
  - the acclamations during the procession with the paschal candle;
  - the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet);
  - the Gospel alleluia acclamation;
  - the Litany of the Saints; and
  - the acclamation after the blessing of water.
- The planning for the baptismal liturgy should provide for its beauty and for the full preparation and participation of the assembly. Planners and ministers will have to work with both the *Roman Missal* and the RCIA ritual books. See the documents via the flock notes dispatch and posted on the diocesan website for more information.
- Those who are baptized at the Easter Vigil are to be confirmed immediately afterwards by the presiding priest at the Easter Vigil liturgy. These confirmations may not be postponed to a later time. Baptism and confirmation are proper to the presiding priest's ministry, and may not be delegated to another priest nor to a deacon.

### **Easter Sunday**

- The Easter Sequence is sung or said on Easter Sunday after the second reading and before the Alleluia. The Sequence is also optional throughout the octave of Easter.
- In the United States, the renewal of baptismal promises replaces the Creed on Easter Sunday. This is followed by a sprinkling of the people with the water that was blessed at the Easter Vigil.
- At the conclusion of the Mass, the deacon should dismiss the people with a dismissal form that includes a double alleluia. The double alleluia is also to be used for the dismissal at all Masses throughout the octave of Easter.

### **The Easter Season**

- The Triduum is concluded liturgically with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. The Triduum leads us to the Easter season, the fifty days from Easter Sunday until after Evening Prayer on Pentecost Sunday.
- It is recommended that a Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water replace the Penitential Rite at all Sunday Masses during the Easter season, including Pentecost.

### **Octave of Easter**

- All of the days in the octave of Easter (the eight days from Easter Sunday through the Second Sunday of Easter) have the rank of solemnity.
- Funeral Masses are permitted on the weekdays, but no other ritual Masses may be celebrated during this time.
- The Gloria is to be sung or recited; however, the Creed is to be omitted.
- Preface of Easter I is also to be used, and the double alleluia is to be used in the dismissal.
- The octave of Easter concludes with the Second Sunday of Easter, now subtitled "Divine Mercy Sunday." The proper prayers and readings are those for the Second Sunday of Easter. No additional prayers or services are required that day; however, pastors may choose to have a Divine Mercy prayer service at a time later in the day. It is not appropriate to incorporate a Divine Mercy prayer service into a Mass.