



DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

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DEPARTMENT FOR LITURGY AND WORSHIP

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Priests and Deacons

From: Father Nicholas S. Vaskov
Director for Liturgy and Worship

Date: January 22, 2019

Re: Liturgical Considerations for Lent and Holy Week
in Light of *On Mission for The Church Alive!*

The following liturgical considerations for Lent and Holy Week are provided in light of the circumstances of *On Mission for The Church Alive!* Some further questions related Lent and Holy Week may be answered in the [February 2010 Bishop's Committee on Divine Worship Newsletter, Volume XLVI](#). Other questions can be directed to the Department for Liturgy and Worship at nvaskov@diopitt.org or (412) 456-3041.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* **does not require** that the distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday, Masses of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, Celebrations of the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday or Easter Vigils on Holy Saturday take place in every parish. In the introduction to the Sacred Paschal Triduum, the *Roman Missal* is eager to point out:

The celebrations of the Sacred Triduum are to be carried out in cathedral and parochial churches and only in those churches in which they can be performed with dignity, that is, with a good attendance of the faithful, an appropriate number of ministers, and the means to sing at least some of the parts.

Consequently, it is desirable that small communities, associations, and special groups of various kinds join together in these churches to carry out the sacred celebrations in a more noble manner. (SPT, 3)

Especially in regards to the Sacred Triduum, one suggestion might be to divide the celebrations equally among the church buildings. If you have two priests assigned to three church buildings, each church building could be the site for two of the three liturgies over the days of the Sacred Triduum.

2. If the liturgies of these days – especially the days of the Sacred Triduum – will not be celebrated in every parish, consideration might be given to having other public prayers take place in those churches where the main liturgies are not taking place.

The communal praying of one of the hours of the Divine Office or the Stations of the Cross or the communal recitation of the rosary or chaplet of Divine Mercy could be possible devotions during these days.

3. Because of the special character of the Sacred Triduum, funeral Masses are not permitted on Thursday, Friday, Saturday of the Pascal Triduum or on Easter Sunday.

If necessity requires it, a funeral outside of the celebration of the Holy Mass (i.e. Liturgy of the Word only) is permitted during these days, however, no funerals are permitted on Easter Sunday.

HOLY THURSDAY

4. No other Mass besides the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated on Holy Thursday, with the exception of the Chrism Mass celebrated by the Bishop on Holy Thursday morning.

Holy Communion may only be distributed to the faithful during Mass; but it may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day.

5. "The altar may be decorated with flowers with a moderation that accords with the character of this day. The tabernacle should be entirely empty; but a sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated in this Mass for the Communion of the clergy and the people on this and the following day." (EMLS, 5)

If the Good Friday Celebration of the Passion of the Lord will not be celebrated in the same church building as the Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper there is no need to consecrate hosts for the following day. In this case, the *Roman Missal* states:

If the celebration of the Passion of the Lord on the following Friday does not take place in the same church, the Mass is concluded in the usual way and the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle. (EMLS, 44)

6. The reception of the Holy Oils blessed at the Chrism Mass may take place at the Mass of the Lord's Supper during the Presentation of the Gifts. The Rite of Reception can be found at <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/reception-of-holy-oils.cfm>.

7. Even if the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper is not celebrated in a particular church building, that church building can remain open during the evening hours for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at a suitable place of repose.

When the church building is closed for the evening, the Eucharist should remain at the place of repose if the Good Friday Celebration of the Passion of the Lord will take place in that church building.

If the Good Friday Celebration of the Passion of the Lord will not take place in that church building, the Eucharist should be placed in a suitable place outside of the Church (i.e. the sacristy) or, if circumstances so require, in the tabernacle. Wherever the Eucharist is reposed, a candle should always be burning nearby.

GOOD FRIDAY

8. "On this and the following day, by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick." (GFCPL, 1)

"On this day, Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful only within the celebration of the Lord's Passion; but it may be brought at any hour of the day to the sick who cannot participate in this celebration." (GFCPL, 2)

"The *Roman Missal* does not envision the possibility that a deacon could officiate at the Celebration of the Lord's Passion, even though it appears that the celebration appears to be a service of the Word with the distribution of Holy Communion." (see [BCDW Newsletter XLVI, 6](#))

9. At the beginning of the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, the Eucharist should be reposed at the place of repose from the previous evening. Also, "the altar should be completely bare: without a cross, without candles and without cloths." (GFCPL, 3)
10. After the distribution of Holy Communion, the Eucharist should be taken "to a place prepared outside the church or, if circumstances so require, it is placed in the tabernacle." (GFCPL, 29)

HOLY SATURDAY

11. "Holy Communion may only be given on Holy Saturday day as Viaticum." (HS, 3)

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

12. "The Mass of the Vigil, even if it is celebrated before midnight, is a paschal Mass of the Sunday of the Resurrection." (EV, 4)

13. In the case of mission churches and cluster parishes, can multiple paschal candles be used for the Service of Light?

The *Roman Missal*, not envisioning the pastoral situation of mission churches or cluster parishes, specifies that only one paschal candle is used. To accommodate the particular circumstances, the Secretariat of Divine Worship might suggest that the candles from the mission churches or other parish churches could be present at the Easter Vigil, having been prepared in advance, and blessed alongside the main candle (perhaps having deacons or other representatives holding them). In keeping with the rubrics, for the lighting and procession only one candle should be lit (the principal one, or the one which will remain in that particular church). As the other candles in the congregation are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. Once all the candles are extinguished after the singing of the *Exsultet*, the other paschal candles are put aside. On Easter Sunday morning, those candles could be taken to each of the missions and carried, lit, in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary. However, the *Exsultet* would not be sung again. (see [BCDW Newsletter XLVI, 14](#))