



LITURGICAL ADVISORY + Holy Week, the Sacred Paschal Triduum & Easter Time

Catholic Diocese of Saginaw + Office of Liturgy + 5800 Weiss Street + Saginaw, Michigan 48603-2762

Chrism Mass Announcement:

Bishop Gruss will celebrate this year's Chrism Mass on Tuesday (of Holy Week), March 30, 2021, at 10:30 am at the Saint Thomas Aquinas Church, Saginaw. Further instructions and details will be forthcoming (given all the adjustments due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Liturgical Reminders:

- † It is not possible to distribute the Precious Blood to the faithful
- † Masks continue to be required as is social distancing and hand sanitizer
- † The invitation to and the actual "exchange of peace" is to be omitted
- † Holy Water stoups and fonts are to remain empty
- † Hymnals remain out of the pews
- † Do not re-use booklets or worship aids
- † One cantor or quartet of singers remains limited according to social distancing
- † Maintain social distancing of six feet between families as church architecture allows

Modifications to the Opening of Our Churches:

Given the recent modifications to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions from the State of Michigan and the number of individuals who have received and/or will receive the vaccination, Bishop Gruss is sanctioning parishes to:

- † Parishes are no longer required to maintain the maximum 25(-50)% capacity. The wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing for all remain paramount.
- † Because of the minimal contagion on the surface of furniture, disinfecting between celebrations of Mass is no longer necessary, however good daily cleaning after the last Mass is greatly recommended. [<https://www.cmmonline.com/news/surface-transmission-of-coronavirus-not-as-prevalent-as-airborne-transmission>]

- † Because of the complexity and earnestness of the rites of Holy Week, parishes may use altar servers (wearing facial covering/mask) for these liturgies as needed, provided they are able to do this safely. Servers should maintain social distancing except for short periods of time to assist as needed.
- † Singing is permitted and encouraged during these most solemn sacred liturgies and especially at the Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday, and throughout the Easter Season. Keep in mind that masks need to be worn by those in the congregation while singing due to COVID contagion spread by aerosol particles.
- † Fresh water may be blessed and used for the baptismal font as well as the sprinkling rite. However, water is not to be used for more than one individual at this time and the baptismal fonts are to be drained and cleaned after use. From the CDC COVID website: “CDC is not aware of any scientific reports of the virus that causes COVID-19 spreading to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, water playgrounds, or other treated aquatic venues.”

Liturgical Introduction:

On February 10, 2021, the Office of Liturgy sent out to all pastoral leadership and those identified who are intimately involved in the worship life of our diocesan parishes, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commission’s [FDLC] annual publication: **A Liturgy Preparation Aid for Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum and Easter Time 2021**. Within this very helpful resource, all the pertinent liturgical questions surfacing regarding the celebration of Holy Week, the Sacred Paschal Triduum and Easter Time were addressed. In the meantime, the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued a “Note” with worship and health safety in mind:

*The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has issued a **Note** to bishops and episcopal conferences on the celebration of Holy Week 2021. The text offers basic guidelines to assist bishops in their task of providing for the spiritual welfare of pastors and faithful in living this great week in the Church’s liturgical year. The Covid-19 pandemic presents the key challenge once again this year in celebrating these liturgies normally. The Note calls for “prudent decisions in order that the liturgy can be celebrated fruitfully for the People of God...while respecting the safeguarding of health and what has been prescribed by the authorities responsible for the common good.”*

*The Congregation refers to a **Decree** (it issued on March 25, 2020) and notes that the guidelines offered for the celebration of Holy Week in that document can be followed this year*

as well. Situations vary from country to country, where some have strict lockdown conditions making it impossible for the faithful to gather in Church, while others have returned to a more normal pattern of worship.

The **Note** highlights how the use of social media has greatly assisted the local Church “in offering support and closeness to their communities during the pandemic”. It suggests that this media outreach continue and encourages the faithful who are unable to attend their own church to follow diocesan celebrations as a sign of unity.

The text also recalls the importance of returning to a normal experience of Christian life through the physical presence of the faithful at Mass, where circumstances permit, as was noted in a letter from August of last year that the Congregation addressed to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences worldwide entitled “Let us return to the Eucharist with joy!”

Finally, the **Note** says the Chrism Mass can be moved to another more suitable day, if necessary, and that suitable aids for family and personal prayer are encouraged.

Vatican + 17 February 2021 + 12:30 pm

In light of the FDLC publication and the advisory of the Vatican’s “Note” for this year’s celebration of Holy Week, the Sacred Paschal Triduum and Easter Time, the Office of Liturgy would like to offer via this Advisory some pastoral, liturgical information and/or clarifications. This is in response to all the questions and inquiries that have come into the OOL as parishes finalize their liturgical preparations to celebrate these most holy days of the Church’s Liturgical Year.

Pastoral and Liturgical Suggested Practices Given the COVID-19 Pandemic:

NB: *Below are excerpts from the FDLC’s “A Liturgy Preparation Aid for Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum and Easter Time 2021” and edited by the OOL for the Diocese of Saginaw. Please see preparation sheets provided in the FDLC Aid to assist your parish with your liturgical preparations.*

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

The (unblessed) palms may be distributed as the faithful enter the Church with the Ministers of Hospitality/Ushers dispensing them by wearing gloves.

The blessing of palms may take place using any of the three forms for the Introductory Rites as provided in the *Roman Missal*. However, given the current COVID-19 guidelines and protocols in place, it is NOT recommended to engage in any procession with parishioners – only the necessary (minimal) liturgical procession with social distancing.

The shorter form of the Passion Gospel may be used.

The homily should be brief, or a period of silence may also be observed. (cf. *Roman Missal*, Palm Sunday 22)

THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

As noted by the CDWDS last year, the liturgies of the Triduum should not be taped, but live-streamed at their liturgically-appointed times.

NB: {1.} *For full directives on the proper celebration of the Triduum, please see Paschale Solemnitatis, the Roman Missal, and the Roman Ritual (RCIA).*

{2.} *The following paragraphs do not intend to cover all rubrics and rituals for the Triduum, but simply highlights some considerations for practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AT THE EVENING MASS

The sacred oils, blessed and consecrated by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass, may be presented to the parish in a variety of ways. We recommend presenting all three of them before Mass begins with a simple procession. The vessels may be placed on a cloth-covered table in the sanctuary or directly into the ambry.

The Washing of Feet is an optional ritual. Therefore, according to the Vatican directives of 2020, it is once again encouraged to be omitted this year.

Parishes are also permitted to repose the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle without a processions or altar of repose. However, if there is a procession to the Tabernacle (by the needed liturgical ministers), it should be spaced out widely.

FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD: GOOD FRIDAY

Take advantage of the variety of options for the unveiling of the Cross. Choose the one that suits your worship space and the ministers' proximity to the assembly.

Only one Cross (NOT a crucifix) should be offered for adoration. During the pandemic, it might be wise to use the option of simply showing the Cross to the faithful – “The priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored, 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 in silence” (*Roman Missal*, Good Friday, 19).

NB: A special intercession should be included as the 11th of the Solemn Intercessions (the same text from 2020 should be used):

Let us pray 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.

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.

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD:

I: THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT

“The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday. This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. Reprehensible are those abuses and practices that have crept into many places in violation of this ruling, whereby the Easter Vigil is celebrated at the same time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses” (*Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*, no. 78. Congregation for Divine Worship, January 16, 1988, quoting *The Roman Missal*).

“According to a most ancient tradition, this night is one of vigil for the Lord, and the Vigil celebrated during it, to commemorate that holy night when the Lord rose from the dead, is regarded as the mother of all holy vigils. For in that night, the Church keeps vigil, waiting for the resurrection of the Lord, and celebrates the sacraments of Christian initiation”. (*Paschale Solemnitatis*, no. 77; quoting Exodus 12:42; St. Augustine, Sermon 219; and the *Ceremonial of Bishops*)

The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium – “The first part consists of symbolic acts and gestures, which require that they be performed in all their fullness and nobility, so that their meaning, as explained by their introductory words of the celebrant and the liturgical prayers, may be truly understood by the faithful. In so far as possible, a suitable place should be prepared outside the church for the blessing of the new fire, whose flames should be such that they genuinely dispel the darkness and light up the night.

The paschal candle should be prepared, which for effective symbolism must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world. It is blessed with the signs and words prescribed in the Missal or by the Conference of Bishops” (*Paschale Solemnitatis*, 88).

NB: *See “Appendix II” on page 9 on the use of multiple Paschal Candles and further details regarding the celebration of the Easter Vigil.*

Consideration should be given to the safe, socially distanced gathering of the faithful at the fire and the procession into the church. If this cannot be done safely, the gathering of people at the fire may be limited to the ministers and the Elect (with their godparents).

NB: *Since all would need to remove their masks and exhale forcefully to extinguish them, the use of small lit candles by the faithful is strongly discouraged both during the Lucernarium and the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.*

While the reading of the Word of God remains a “fundamental part” of the Vigil, for the purposes of brevity in this unusual year the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced. As few as three readings from the Old Testament may be read, both from the Law and the Prophets, and their respective Responsorial Psalms sung. The reading from Exodus 14 with its canticle may NOT be omitted. (cf. *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 21)

Candidates for the “Reception into the Full Communion of the Church” may be received at another time during Easter Time.

If it can be done safely in covered containers, it is desirable that the bread and wine be brought forward by the newly baptized. (cf. *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil 60)

Baptism – “Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament and therefore, is preferred” (National Statutes 17, CIGI 22). This year, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, consider the practice of infusion (pouring) rather than immersion baptism. Certainly, we will want to use the symbols of water and oil in their fullness.

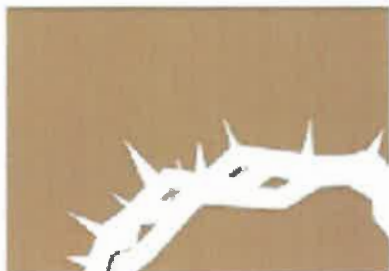
NB: *[As previously cited:] Fresh water may be blessed and used for the baptismal font as well as the sprinkling rite. However, water is not to be used for more than one individual at this time and the baptismal fonts are to be drained and cleaned after use. From the CDC COVID website: “CDC is not aware of any scientific reports of the virus that causes COVID-19 spreading to people through the water in pools, hot tubs, water playgrounds, or other treated aquatic venues.”*

Confirmation – Anointing with Sacred Chrism may be administered with the presider’s thumb IF he cleanses his hand after each Chrismation. However, the CDWDS has already determined that the anointing with Chrism may take place with an instrument (e.g. a Q-tip for each confirmand). The priest who baptizes [and receives into full communion] receives from the law itself the faculty to confirm and is obliged to use it (Canon 885.2). In any case, gloves are not to be worn for the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Eucharist – With both adults and children of catechetical age, all three sacraments of initiation are to be administered at a single liturgy (National Statutes 14, Canon 842.2). In light of the pandemic and temporary restrictions regarding the shared cup, the reception of Holy Communion must be under the form of the host alone.

II: EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD: MASS DURING THE DAY

Renewal of Baptismal Promises – The assembly renews their baptismal promises on Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday. A sprinkling rite may follow this recitation. Consider your own worship space and the safest path for only the priest-celebrant to take.



I: Liturgical Ministry

- Begin a conversation now with your liturgical ministers (e.g. Ministers of the Word, Sacristans, Altar Servers, Cantors, etc.) about their availability, willingness, and level of comfort (given the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions):
 - Do not assume anything
 - Parishioner's "typical" holiday routines (e.g. travel, gatherings, work schedules, etc.) may be radically different from a typical year
 - Communicate the unusual practices around health, safety and hygiene to all liturgical ministers (some may have not served in many weeks and may be unfamiliar with all the guidelines and protocols in place due to COVID-19)

NB: Be sure to prepare and/or train all liturgical ministers according to the present Guidelines and Protocols (along with the new modifications).

- Consider creating a comprehensive worship aid (print and digital) to assist people in praying.
 - Do not forget that many people coming to (or watching online) are "amateur worshipers", not necessarily "professional worshipers"; they will feel more comfortable if you provide an outline of the Holy Week liturgies and the responses from the **Order of Mass**, and other basic pieces of information
 - Since most parishes are not using hymnals, such a worship aid should include the music sung by the congregation. You must make sure to follow proper copyright guidance and only use music you have permission to reprint
 - Make sure both the printed and digital versions are laid out properly and able to be used in church and at home (for those who are live-streaming)

II: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) to the Sick/Homebound

Once again, given the recent modifications to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions from the State of Michigan (particularly the ban lifted for visitors to nursing homes) and the number of individuals who have received and/or will receive the vaccination, Bishop Gruss is granting pastors, parochial administrators, pastoral administrators and directors of parish life permission to resume the pastoral praxis of dismissing EMHC to bring Holy Communion to the Sick/Homebound. It is strongly recommended that:

- The EMHC cannot assume the policies of any nursing care facility; therefore, the EMHC must contact each facility to be visited and adhere to their protocols
- The EMHC already be vaccinated
- The EMHC and “resident” keep all social distancing protocols and wear face coverings/masks
- The EMHC be instructed as to how to appropriately minister in these COVID-19 pandemic conditions
- The EMHC “abbreviate” (do not stay long!) their time of prayer and visitation

III: Liturgical Musicians and Liturgical Music

[As previously cited:] Singing is permitted and encouraged during these most solemn sacred liturgies and especially at the Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday, and throughout the Easter Season. Keep in mind that masks need to be worn by those in the congregation while singing (due to COVID contagion spread by aerosol particles).

- The restriction of only one accompanist and one cantor remains in place (given the current *Guidelines and Protocols*). Unfortunately, this means no parish choirs or large groups of singers or instrumentalists. However, in order to follow the principle of “progressive” solemnity this Holy Week/Triduum/Easter, you may consider the following modifications for mature young adults and/or adults:
 - Engaging a single instrument (e.g. trumpet, etc.) to be well-rehearsed and properly placed according to all social distancing requirements within the area of musical instruments per Mass
 - Engaging a quartet (e.g. 4 singers only) of well-rehearsed singers and properly placed according to all social distancing requirements within the designated choir space per Mass or Triduum liturgy

NB: Face coverings may ONLY be removed when the instrumentalist is playing or the cantor/quartet is singing.

- Be sure to keep all liturgical musical selections familiar to the assembly.

IV: Enhancement of the Worship Space

- All appropriate Holy Week/Triduum/Easter enhancements may be utilized as usual. However, keep in mind the priority of all social distancing restrictions when: 1)

selecting limited individuals to prepare the environment; and 2) be particularly aware of the necessity of wearing face covering/mask and/or gloves during the set-up.

- Perhaps consider using the liturgical principle “less is more” this year keeping in mind the COVID-19 Pandemic and plan for simple – but elegant – enhancements within the sanctuary and throughout the church.
- Also, keep in mind that, if you are using alternative space with live-streaming, these spaces should likewise be enhanced to reflect a Holy Week/Triduum/Easter environment.

Appendix II:

Multiple Paschal Candles & Easter Vigil

Considerations and Clarifications Regarding the Paschal Candle(s) at the Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord (The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night)

[Issued from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship 2014]

1. What considerations should be given for the paschal candle used at the Easter Vigil?

This candle should be made of wax, never be artificial, be replaced each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. The paschal candle is the symbol of the *light of Christ, rising in glory*, scattering the darkness of our hearts and minds. Above all, the paschal candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choice of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed.

2. 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 (additional worship site) and carried [lit] in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary.

- ☒ The Exsultet (Easter Proclamation) should be sung by one who can do so with grace and beauty at the Ambo.
- ☒ At least three of the seven Old Testament readings must be proclaimed.
- ☒ The reading from Chapter 14 of the Book of Exodus with its canticle may never be omitted.
- ☒ The Glory to God should be sung. The ringing of the Church bells accompanies this hymn.
- ☒ The Elect (adults and children of catechetical age) being baptized during the Easter Vigil (RCIA 562-594) are to be confirmed by the presiding priest (RCIA 588).
- ☒ Only those Candidates for Reception Into Full Communion (with natural connections to the Elect to be baptized) should be Received Into Full Communion at the Easter Vigil. All questions regarding this should be addressed to the diocesan Office of Liturgy.



Acknowledgements:

*Some of this material is adapted from our
Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) collaborators
from the Archdioceses of Cincinnati and Detroit*

We are grateful for their comprehensive work shared with us in these unprecedented times.