



**COURAGEOUSLY**  
*Living the Gospel*

**Liturgical Directives and Accommodations  
For the Celebration of Holy Week Liturgies  
March 27, 2020**

During this difficult time through which we are living because of the COVID – 19 coronavirus outbreak, the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued two decrees to bishops (Prot. N. 153/20 on March 19 and a follow up B0181 on March 25) with instructions regarding the celebration of the Holy Week liturgies. Bishop Parkes is issuing the following directives and accommodations to the priests of the Diocese of St. Petersburg to assist them perform their ministry during this sacred week, in light of the continued suspension of the celebrations of public Masses.

1. **Concerning the Date of Easter.** As the heart of the entire liturgical year, Easter is not just one feast among others. The Easter Triduum therefore cannot be postponed nor transferred to another date.
2. **Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion.** Where there is a measure of the possibility of doing so, Bishop Parkes gives permission to the priest(s) of the parish to celebrate Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion with the following provisions:
  - a. There will be no physical presence or participation of the faithful. Instead, if there is the possibility of livestreaming the celebration for the faithful, pastors are encouraged to do so.
  - b. The only other ministers present can be deacons, music, readers or anyone else deemed necessary to celebrate the liturgy in a dignified and sacred manner while maintaining proper spacing.
  - c. *Option 1* (with palms): the “Second Form: The Solemn Entrance” with the blessing of palms and the proclamation of the Gospel is used, but without the procession.
  - d. *Option 2* (without palms): the “Third Form: The Simple Entrance” is used, but without the procession.
  - e. The Liturgy of the Word takes place as directed in *Roman Missal* nos. 21-22.
  - f. The Liturgy of the Eucharist follows.
  - g. Options for distributing blessed palms:
    - i. Since it is asked that churches remain open, the blessed palms could be left in baskets for the faithful to pick up during the week.
    - ii. After the celebration of the Mass, the blessed palms could be handed to the faithful as they drive up. Precautions for the protection of volunteers and the faithful according to CDC protocols should be in place.

3. **The Chrism Mass.** Having evaluated the concrete situation of the protocols for the State of Florida, as set forth by Gov. Ron DeSantis, the Bishop has decided the following with regard to the Chrism Mass on Tuesday, April 7, 2020:
  - a. The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral with no physical presence or participation of the faithful. It will be livestreamed with the Bishop presiding and the Deans concelebrating. If a Dean is unable to concelebrate, he should ask one priest of his deanery to be present on his behalf.
  - b. The only other ministers present will be deacon(s), servers, music, readers, and anyone else necessary to celebrate the liturgy in a dignified and sacred manner while maintaining proper spacing.
  - c. The blessed oils will be prepared and packaged so that each Dean, or his representative, can take them back to his deanery for distribution to the parishes.
  
4. **Holy Thursday.** Where there is a measure of the possibility of doing so, Bishop Parkes gives permission to the priest(s) of the parish to celebrate the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper with the following provisions:
  - a. There will be no physical presence or participation of the faithful other than the assistance of priests, deacon(s), music, or other ministers deemed necessary, while respecting proper distancing (see 2.a. regarding livestreaming).
  - b. The washing of the feet is to be omitted.
  - c. At the end of Mass, the procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose is to be omitted.
  - d. The Blessed Sacrament will be kept in the tabernacle.
  - e. Priests who are unable to participate in a parish Mass of the Lord's Supper are granted the faculty to celebrate this Mass at a suitable time and place on this day without the physical presence or participation of the faithful.
  
5. **Good Friday.** As with Holy Thursday, if there is a measure of possibility, the priest(s) of the parish are given permission to celebrate the Passion of the Lord with the following provisions:
  - a. There will be no physical presence or participation of the faithful other than the assistance of priests, deacon(s), music, or other ministers deemed necessary, while respecting proper distancing (see 2.a. regarding livestreaming).
  - b. The special intention listed below is to be added to the Solemn Intercessions.
  - c. The Adoration of the Holy Cross may occur, however, the expression of reverence to the Cross should be a profound bow or genuflection. The adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant.
  - d. The faithful should be encouraged to spend time in prayer before a crucifix or cross at home and/or watch a livestream of the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord.

**SOLEMN INTERCESSIONS** (Special Intention):

**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.**

Pray 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 you 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.

(USCCB Committee on Divine Worship, March 21, 2020)

6. **The Easter Vigil.** As with Holy Thursday and Good Friday, if there is a measure of possibility, the priest(s) of the parish are given permission to celebrate the Easter Vigil with the following provisions.
- a. There will be no physical presence or participation of the faithful other than the assistance of priests, deacon(s), music, or other ministers deemed necessary, while respecting proper distancing (see 2.a. regarding livestreaming).
  - b. At “The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or *Lucernarium*” the preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted.
  - c. The Paschal Candle will be lit, but the procession is omitted.
  - d. The Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) follows.
  - e. The Liturgy of the Word takes place.
  - f. For the “Baptismal Liturgy” the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” alone is necessary (cf. *Roman Missal*, no. 55).
  - g. Regarding the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Bishop Parkes grants to pastors permission to delay the celebration of the three Sacraments of Initiation to another time outside the usual Easter Vigil (cf. RCIA nos. 26-30) at which time they may use the abbreviated form of initiation found in the ritual book (cf. Part II. RITES FOR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES, 2. *Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances*, nos. 340-369). **NOTE:** If we are past this crisis by Saturday, May 30, 2020, perhaps the Vigil of Pentecost with its additional readings may be a good time to consider for celebrating the full initiation of the Elect. Other options would be Pentecost Sunday (May 31, 2020) or Trinity Sunday (June 6-7, 2020).
  - h. The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows.
  - i. Those who are unable to unite themselves to a celebration of the Easter Vigil in a church are encouraged to pray “the Office of Readings for Easter Sunday from the Liturgy of the Hours” (cf. March 19 Decree “In Time of Covid-19” Prot. N. 153/20).