



Office of Worship

2021 Lent & Easter Guidelines During a Pandemic

Regulations on Fasting and Abstinence

Fasting and abstinence have a long history in the Church. The custom of self-denial is meant to simplify one's lifestyle so that freed from all distractions, we may hear and respond to God's continued call to conversion and holiness.

- **Fasting** is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Catholics between the ages of 18 to 59 years (inclusive). On days of fasting, one full meal is allowed. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to one's needs, but together should not equal another full meal. Liquids are allowed.
- **Abstinence** from meat is to be observed by all Catholics who are 14 years of age or older. Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays of Lent, and Good Friday are days of abstinence.
- **Pastoral Note:** Persons unable to observe the above regulations due to ill health or other serious reasons, may practice other forms of self-denial that are suitable to their condition.

Ash Wednesday – February 17, 2021

First and foremost, **the reception of ashes is not mandatory nor required.** Parishioners should be reminded it is their own internal disposition and intention to repent and start over that is the best fruit of Ash Wednesday, and the ashes are an external sign of that internal reality. They may enter into Lent with a repentant heart even if they decide that receiving ashes is not the right thing for them this year.

Notwithstanding the above, if parishes choose to distribute ashes during the current health crisis, the following options are presented for consideration. Above all else, **ashes may not be self-imposed:** they are always given by a minister.

Option 1 – Swab/Cotton Ball Application

Out of an abundance of caution, a cotton ball or swab could be used (as in anointing). The following are to be considered:

1. Masks are worn by ministers and recipients during the distribution.
2. Cotton balls or swabs are used to place the ashes on the recipients' forehead. (**Note:** The ashes will need to be moistened for the cotton to work effectively.)
3. The cotton balls or swabs are disposed of properly afterwards.

Option 2 – Normal Application with Thumb

There have been reports that seem to indicate the virus is not transmitted through cautious physical touch, so long as all the safety precautions remain in place. If after careful consideration parishes choose the usual distribution of ashes with the thumb, please do the following:

1. Masks are worn by ministers and recipients during the distribution.

2. Ministers sanitize their thumbs before and after the distribution (perhaps after every 2 or 3 persons or between families/households).

Option 3 – Sprinkled over the Crown of the Head

The Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments has approved the sprinkling of ashes on the top of the recipient's head with no physical contact. The following are the protocols:

1. Masks are worn by ministers and recipients during the distribution.
2. After blessing the ashes, the priest says, only one time, one of the formulas found in the *Roman Missal*: "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
3. The minister takes a pinch of ash and sprinkle them over the head of the recipient "without saying anything."

Rite of Election – February 21, 2021

Due to the coronavirus, the 2021 Rite of Election is to be celebrated in the individual parish or mission of the catechumens (i.e., the unbaptized). Bishop Gregory Parkes has determined not to celebrate a large diocesan Rite of Election at the Cathedral as in past years, and he has delegated permission to pastors and parochial administrators to preside in his place. Information went to pastors and RCIA directors and is found online at the Office of Worship webpage.

RCIA Scrutinies

For parishes that have members of the Elect who are preparing for the sacraments of initiation at the 2021 Easter Vigil, the three Scrutinies are celebrated with them on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent (March 7, 14 and 21). The scrutinies "are rites for self-searching and repentance and are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak...in the hearts of the elect...and to bring out all that is upright and good" (RCIA no. 141).

- The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the prayer texts from the Ritual Mass section – 2. *For the Celebration of the of the Scrutinies* – found in the *Roman Missal* (RCIA nos. 146, 156, 170 & 177).
- Because of the intimate connection between the readings and the scrutiny prayers, the readings for the particular Mass where the scrutiny is celebrated uses the Cycle A readings (RCIA #146). All other Masses follow the Cycle B readings for 2021.

Sacraments During Lent & the Triduum

PENANCE/RECONCILIATION: During Lent the faithful may desire the sacrament of penance to prepare for Easter. With the current coronavirus health emergencies, parishes may choose to offer the sacrament in a variety of ways.

- Offer more opportunities for individual confessions (RITE I).
- Offer *Communal Reconciliation Services with Individual Confessions* (RITE II). This will need careful planning, making sure of social distancing, and making sure there are plenty of priest confessors.
- Under no circumstance may a parish consider *Communal Reconciliation Services with General Confession and Absolution* (RITE III).

FUNERALS: The season of Lent may be more reflective in the funeral liturgies by the choice of music and scripture readings.

- Lent may also reflect a change in the color of vesture, using the options of purple or black (OCF #39).
- A funeral Mass **may not be celebrated** on the Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday (OCF #178). On these days, the *Funeral Liturgy outside Mass* may be used. A Mass for the deceased should be offered when convenient after Easter.

MARRIAGE. Marriages celebrated during the season of Lent should respect the penitential character of the season (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony* #32).

- The altar is not to be decorated with flowers (*Ceremonial of Bishops* #252).
- The celebration of Marriage on Good Friday and Holy Saturday is to be avoided altogether (OCM #32). Marriages can be celebrated after the Easter Vigil.

COMMUNION FOR THE SICK & VIATICUM. Communion may be brought to the sick on all days except Holy Saturday. On Holy Saturday, Holy Communion may be given only in the form of Viaticum (*Circular Letter* #75 and *Roman Missal: Holy Saturday* #1). Communion services outside the liturgy are not held during the Triduum.

Passion (Palm) Sunday – March 28, 2021

On this day the Church remembers Christ's entrance into Jerusalem. This commemoration, with the blessing of palms, is not a historical re-enactment, rather it is a ritual action that marks our own entry into Holy Week. Due to the coronavirus, the following are the recommendations for 2021.

- The giving out of palms and blessing during the liturgy may take place.
- While three forms are given for the beginning, caution may warrant the simple entrance.
- The proclamation of the Passion is essential and may not be omitted. It is read without candles or incense. It may be proclaimed using one to three readers. The part of Christ is usually reserved for the priest, but lay persons are allowed to do any of the parts (*RM: Palm Sunday* #21).
- Blessed palms could be available to the faithful to pick up at a table near a church entrance. Provisions should be made to bring blessed palms to members of the community who cannot yet attend with the parish community.

Chrism Mass – Tuesday, March 30, 2021

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle at 11:30 a.m. It is Bishop Parkes' desire to celebrate the Chrism Mass with the presbyterate present. We will be watching the coronavirus carefully with the hope of allowing deacons and a represented number of the laity.

- Parishes are to properly dispose of their 2020 oil stocks at the parish, either by burying or burning them.
- The Office of Worship will provide each parish with pre-poured and packaged bottles of the Oil of Catechumens (OC), the Oil of the Sick (OI), and Sacred Chrism (SC). Please, **do not bring any empty bottles** with you to the Cathedral.
- The Vicars Forane (Deans) or parish clergy representative will receive the pre-packaged oils at the conclusion of the Chrism Mass. They will bring them back to the parish.

Holy Thursday – April 1, 2021

Lent ends with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the principal liturgy of this day. In the Sacred Triduum, the Church celebrates the greatest mysteries of our redemption, keeping by means of special

celebrations the memorial of her Lord, crucified, buried and risen (*RM: Thursday of the Lord's Supper* o. 1)

- The tabernacle is emptied before the liturgy begins (#5).
- Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for the liturgy of Good Friday as well.
- The oils blessed and consecrated at the Chrism Mass may be carried into church either before the Mass or during the entrance procession or at the offertory (*Roman Missal: Thursday of Holy Week [Holy Thursday] – Chrism Mass #15*). The proper rubrics, prayers and responses for the presentation of the oils are included on Pages 6-7 of these guidelines.
- The washing of the feet (“mandatum”) is an act of humility and service which inspires the community to do the same. Even during the coronavirus health emergency, the washing of the feet may be done safely and with minimal contact, i.e. all are wearing masks and individual towels are used for wiping and drying feet.
- At the end of Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the place of reposition following the prayer after communion (see *RM: Thursday of the Lord's Supper #37-44*)
 - The place of reposition should be decorated simply.
 - **Under no circumstance is the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed in a monstrance** (*Circular Letter #57*).
 - The faithful should be encouraged to spend time in adoration throughout the remainder of the evening. Adoration should conclude by midnight (*Circular Letter #55 & 56*).
- After Mass, the altar is stripped, and the sanctuary is cleared of flowers and adornments. The crosses may be covered in red or violet for Good Friday.
- Votive candles should not be lit before images of the saints (*Circular Letter #57*).

Good Friday – April 2, 2021

On this day, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick (*RM: Good Friday #1*).

- The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer is encouraged.
- The celebration of the Lord's Passion, the principal celebration of the day, traditionally is celebrated at 3:00 p.m. If pastoral need dictates, there may be another celebration later in the day.
- The altar should be completely bare: without cross, without candles, without cloths (#3).
- During the veneration of the cross, only one cross should be used (#19).
- During this time of Covid-19, the faithful may reverence the cross with either a bow or a genuflection. They should not be allowed to kiss or embrace the cross.

Holy Saturday (Easter Vigil) April 3, 2021

By most ancient tradition, this is the night of keeping vigil for the Lord in which, following the Gospel admonition, the faithful, carrying lighted lamps, should be looking for the Lord when he returns, so that at his coming he may find them awake and have them sit at his table (*RM: The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night #1*).

- The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer is encouraged.
- The Easter Vigil begins at a time that allows for the new fire to break the darkness of night. The end of civil twilight on this evening at 8:11p.m.; therefore, so that it can begin in total darkness, **the Vigil should not be scheduled before 8:00 p.m.** Also, the Easter Vigil is to be the only liturgy celebrated on this evening.

- The Paschal Candle must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficient size, so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world (*Circular Letter #82*).
- It is recommended that the Exsultet (Easter Proclamation) be sung by one who can do so with grace and beauty.
- At least three of the seven Old Testament readings should be used; reading number three from Exodus 14:15-15:1 should never be omitted (RM #21).
- The *Glory to God* is sung after the last Old Testament reading with its Responsorial Psalm and prayer. The altar candles are lit, and the bells rung (RM #31).
- Adults and children of catechetical age (the Elect) being initiated during the Easter Vigil are to receive all three sacraments (Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist) together at this liturgy (*RCIA #305 & 481; National Statutes #14, 18 & 35; Code of Canon Law 883:2*).
- Due to COVID-19, baptism should be by pouring and not immersion.
- The sprinkling of the assembly after the *Renewal of Baptismal Promises* may take place if using fresh water. Due to COVID-19, the holy water fonts at the church doors should not be filled.

Easter Sunday and the Easter Season

The fifty days from Easter Sunday (April 4, 2021) to Pentecost (May 23, 2021) are celebrated as one feast day. The entire season is considered one “great Sunday” (*Ceremonial of Bishops #371*).

A. Easter Sunday – April 4, 2021

- For parishes planning sunrise worship services, civil twilight begins on Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021 at 6:52 a.m.
- The *Sequence* is sung or said before the *Alleluia* at all Masses on Easter Sunday (*GIRM #62*).
- At all the Masses on Easter Sunday the *Rite of Renewal of Baptismal Promises* (according to the text used at the Easter Vigil) and its accompanying sprinkling rite replaces the Creed. Due to COVID-19, fresh water should be used and blessed for this sprinkling.
- The double *Alleluia* is added to the dismissal formulary during the octave of Easter (*CB #373 and RM: The Easter Vigil #69*), i.e. “Go forth, the Mass is ended, alleluia, alleluia,” or “Go in peace, alleluia, alleluia” and the response, “Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.”

B. Octave of Easter – April 5-10, 2021

- The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord (*Ceremonial of Bishops #373*).
- The *Ordo* reminds us that the *Gloria* is to be sung or recited during the octave of Easter.
- The *Sequence* is optional during the days of the octave (*GIRM #64*).
- The double *Alleluia* is added to the dismissal formulary during the octave of Easter (*CB #373 and RM: The Easter Vigil #69*), i.e. “Go forth, the Mass is ended, alleluia, alleluia,” or “Go in peace, alleluia, alleluia” and the response, “Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.”

C. The Easter Season

- The Paschal Candle is lit for all liturgical celebrations of the Easter season (*Ceremonial of Bishops #372*). It is not to be extinguished after the gospel on the solemnity of the Ascension or Pentecost.
- As a reminder of our baptism, it is appropriate that on all the Sundays of Easter, including Pentecost, the *Rite for the Blessing & Sprinkling of Water* (cf. Appendix II in the *Roman Missal*) replaces the usual *Penitential Act*. Due to COVID-19, fresh water should be used and blessed.

Ascension of the Lord – Sunday, May 16, 2021

The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops voted in the year 2000 to transfer the solemnity of the Ascension from the Thursday forty-days after Easter to the Seventh Sunday of Easter, in accord with an indult granted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the Holy See. Therefore, for the Catholic Churches in the Province of the State of Florida, the Seventh Sunday of Easter is always to be replaced by the solemnity of the Ascension.

- For the year 2021, the Ascension of the Lord is celebrated on **Sunday, May 16.**
- The Ascension of the Lord has two sets of Mass texts: 1.) for the Vigil Mass to be used on the evening before, and 2.) for the Mass During the Day.
- The Paschal Candle is not to be extinguished after the gospel on the solemnity of the Ascension.

Pentecost – May 23, 2021

Celebrated fifty days after Easter Sunday, the Solemnity of Pentecost concludes the Easter Season.

- Pentecost has two sets of Mass texts: 1.) for the Vigil Mass to be used on the evening before, and 2.) for the Mass During the Day.
- The Sequence of Pentecost is sung or recited at all Masses and is sung before the Gospel acclamation (Alleluia).
- The double *Alleluia* is added to the dismissal formulary for the Vigil Mass and Mass During the Day (*RM: Pentecost*), i.e. “Go forth, the Mass is ended, alleluia, alleluia” or “Go in peace, alleluia, alleluia” and the response, “Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.”
- With Easter Time concluded, the Easter Candle is returned to its place near the baptismal font.

THE RECEPTION OF THE HOLY OILS BLESSED AT THE CHRISM MASS DURING THE MASS OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Introduction

1. It is appropriate that the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens, and the holy Chrism, which are blessed by the bishop during the Chrism Mass, be presented to and received by the local parish community.
2. The reception of the holy oils may take place at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday or on another suitable day after the celebration of the Chrism Mass.
3. The oils should be reserved in a suitable repository in the sanctuary or near the baptismal font.
4. The oils, in suitable vessels, may be carried by members of the assembly into the church during any of the following 3 options: before the Mass begins, during the offertory procession or during the entrance procession before the Act of Penitence.
5. The oils are received by the Priest and are then placed on a suitably prepared table in the sanctuary or in the repository where they will be reserved.
6. As each of the oils is presented, the following or other words may be used to explain the significance of the particular oil.
7. The people’s response may be sung.

Presenter of the Oil of the Sick:

The Oil of the Sick.

Priest:

May the sick who are anointed with this oil experience the compassion of Christ and his saving love in body and soul.

The people may respond (spoken or sung):

Blessed be God for ever.

Presenter of the Oil of Catechumens:

The Oil of Catechumens.

Priest:

Through anointing with this oil, may our catechumens who are preparing to receive the saving waters of Baptism be strengthened by Christ to resist the power of Satan and reject evil in all its forms.

The people may respond (spoken or sung):

Blessed be God for ever.

Presenter of the Holy Chrism:

The holy Chrism.

Priest:

Through anointing with this perfumed Chrism may children and adults, who are baptized and confirmed, and Priests, who are ordained, experience the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit.

The people may respond (spoken or sung):

Blessed be God for ever.

*[If received during the entrance procession, the Act of Penitence follows.
If during the offertory procession, the bread and wine for the Eucharist
are then received and the Mass continues in the usual way.]*

(Source: Secretariat for Divine Worship, USCCB, 2021 webpage)