LITURGICAL GUIDANCE
2/1/21

FOR WINTER ORDINARY TIME, LENT, AND THE TRIDUUM
DIOCESE OF DAVENPORT
WINTER ORDINARY TIME

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Blessing of Candles)

It is a traditional practice to bless candles on this day, both candles for the church for the coming year and candles that the faithful bring from home. The Missal places the blessing in the context of a special procession or a solemn entrance.

If candles are to be blessed, then we would recommend a simple entrance (or none) as has been usual during the pandemic. The priest would then begin Mass with the sign of the cross and greeting, give the introduction (#4), and then bless the candles (#5). The Mass would then continue as usual with Gloria (the penitential act is omitted) and the Collect.

Memorial of St. Blaise (Blessing of Throats)

The individual blessing of throats on the feast of St. Blaise should be avoided—both for the sake of time and to avoid proximity. Instead, the blessing prayer is said with hands extended over the people and without the use of the candles (Book of Blessings, #1628). “If the blessing is conferred during Mass, the blessing follows the homily and the general intercessions, or, for pastoral reasons, the prayer of blessing may take the place of the final blessing of the Mass...” (#1626).

RCIA: Rites during the Catechumenate

During the Catechumenate (before Election), celebrations of the word of God — during which the minor exorcisms, anointing with the oil of catechumens, and blessings may take place — are celebrated.

In celebrating these rites, the usual pandemic precautions apply. If a laying on of hands is called for, hands ought to be extended over the catechumens instead. An instrument (a fresh cotton ball or cotton-tipped applicator for each catechumen) is to be used for the anointing (as we’ve previously mentioned for both the Anointing of the Sick and Confirmation).
LENT

Ash Wednesday

While Ash Wednesday is not a holyday of obligation and while there is no requirement for the clergy and faithful to receive the imposition of ashes, it is a popular practice and many will likely want to take part, even under current circumstances. During this time of pandemic, the Holy See has modified the method of distributing the ashes, as outlined in the following “Note” from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments:

The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel”, or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.

The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask [N.B. or, better, has been wearing a mask the whole time] and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.

An instrument is not needed; typically one can simply use the tips of the fingers, similar to sprinkling spices into a recipe (think of adding a “pinch” of salt).

Because this method of distributing ashes, while common elsewhere, is relatively unknown in the US, please make sure to provide some explanation to the faithful so as to avoid unnecessary confusion. A sample bulletin insert might read:

A SAME AND DIFFERENT ASH WEDNESDAY IN 2021. We have had a year filled with different ways of living and praying. There are fewer people in church. No water in the front. No singing. Communion only in the hand. No coffee and doughnuts on the way home. Yet we still pray. Instead of giving ashes as a cross on the forehead – less safe in this COVID time – we can still receive them by sprinkling on the top of the head (permitted by our ritual rules, and the common practice in other parts of the world). While we will look a little cleaner, we will still bear ashes home to begin our Lenten practices. We can still repent, and believe in the Gospel. Come to Ash Wednesday, 17 February at [times].

In addition, depending on local situations, the following may be considered:

1. If you are expecting a large number of people wanting to have ashes imposed, consider celebrating the imposition of ashes outside of Mass (see the Book of Blessings, #1656ff). A deacon may preside at this rite (and bless the ashes, if needed); a lay person may lead this rite, using ashes blessed on a previous occasion (but no “drive through” ashes divorced from a celebration of the word). A parish could celebrate an early Mass, bless the ashes, and then schedule a number of additional services of the word with distribution of ashes throughout the day in order to accommodate the needs of the faithful. A priest may only celebrate 2 Masses on this day (it is not a Solemnity).

2. While not ideal, if the number of people present would so prolong time together indoors as to be unsafe, consider imposing the ashes outdoors (weather permitting), as people leave the church after the liturgy, rather than within the Mass itself.
3. Finally, it is good to recall that that the ashes are not mandatory, but are a traditional exterior sign of our interior conversion. The latter is the focus of our Lenten journey and our ongoing journey of faith. So, omitting the distribution of ashes is also an option.

1st Sunday: Rite of Election / Call to Continuing Conversion

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Bishop Zinkula—on the recommendation of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission—has opted not to celebrate a diocesan Rite of Election (and Call to Continuing Conversion) this year. Instead, Pastors are asked to celebrate these rites in their parishes.

Please recall that the Rite of Election is not optional. By virtue of their office, Pastors have the faculty to celebrate the Rite of Election in case of necessity (e.g. a particular catechumen cannot attend the diocesan rite). Given that there is no diocesan rite this year, the faculty is to be exercised. If someone other than the pastor is to preside, the faculty to do so must be requested from the bishop. While not required, parishes are encouraged to celebrate the Call to Continuing Conversion with their candidates if it is possible and safe to do so.

In order to not unduly prolong time together, we are recommending that parishes celebrate (as needed) the Rite of Election and/or the Call to Continuing Conversion at separate Masses, or to move the rites outside of Mass. The combined rite, because of the extra time involved, ought to be celebrated only outside of Mass.

We will be sending the rites modified to account for the pandemic to parishes.

In addition, here are links to 2 videos made by Bishop Zinkula. These should be shared with the catechumens and candidates after the rites are celebrated (mystagogy):

- Video message to catechumens (the Elect): https://youtu.be/Hos-3hqOGYs
- Video message to candidates: https://youtu.be/oIMrgl4MkBs

In the meantime, please:

1. Go to our Rite of Election webpage (https://www.davenportdiocese.org/rite-of-election) and register as you normally would (by Ash Wednesday), letting us know how many candidates and catechumens you will be initiating this year. We do need this information for our Rome reports.
2. Plan on taking some photos when the rite(s) are celebrated in your parish, and sending them to Barb Arland-Fye at The Catholic Messenger. We may not be able to gather physically, but it will be a real encouragement to see soon-to-be Catholics from around the diocese!

Please visit our Rite of Election page (https://www.davenportdiocese.org/rite-of-election) for updates.

2nd Sunday: Penitential Rite for Candidates (RCIA #459ff)

The RCIA allows for a “Scrutiny-like” rite to be celebrated with candidates for full communion “in accordance with the individual needs and circumstances of the candidates” (RCIA #407). It is usually celebrated on the 2nd Sunday of Lent, but may be celebrated on a Lenten weekday (or, if they are not to be received at Easter, “at the most suitable time”; #462). The rite may be celebrated within a Liturgy of the Word or at Mass. Some options to consider:
1. Given that the rite is optional, it may be omitted.
2. Celebrate the rite outside of Mass, with the candidates and sponsors alone.
3. If you have only a few candidates, celebrate the rite within Mass or across a number of Masses.

If the rite will be celebrated, consider having the candidates kneel in their place rather than having to move through the assembly (#468). If they are to come forward, make sure that they, and the sponsors, all keep six feet apart.

**3rd, 4th, 5th Sundays: The Scrutinies**

On the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent, the Scrutinies are celebrated. These required rites should take place within the ritual Mass “For the Celebration of the Scrutinies” and use the Lectionary readings for Year A (see RCIA #146). The Prefaces for the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent are used—and these are now found in Proper of Seasons and not with the other Prefaces. The Eucharistic Prayers include specific inserts for the godparents (I) and the elect (I, II, III).

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<th>IF SCRUTINIES CELEBRATED</th>
<th>IF SCRUTINIES NOT CELEBRATED</th>
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<td>Readings Cycle A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preface for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent (match gospel)</td>
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<td>Prayers for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Scrutinies (Ritual Masses)</td>
<td>Prayers for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays of Lent (Proper of Seasons)</td>
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<td>Final blessing includes the Prayer over the People proper for that Sunday</td>
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For a serious reason, pastors may dispense a catechumen from participating in one scrutiny or, in extraordinary circumstances, from two. Please see the diocesan faculties document (4.3) for details.

Some considerations in the light of the pandemic:

1. If you have a large number of catechumens, spread the celebration of the Scrutinies across a number of Masses
2. Alternatively, if the numbers are large and time is an issue, the Scrutinies may be celebrated outside of Mass, in the context of a Liturgy of the Word.
3. Have the catechumens and sponsors stay in their place, rather than come forward together (#152 and related). If the numbers are small enough to allow them to come forward, keep social distancing.
4. Omit the godparent placing their right hand on the shoulder of the Elect (#153 and related).
5. Omit the laying on of hands on the Elect; instead, extend hands over them (#154 and related).
Other Sacraments, Devotions, Activities

RCIA: The Presentations of the Creed & Lord’s Prayer

The Presentations of the Creed (#157ff) and the Lord’s Prayer (#178ff) take place during the 3rd and 5th weeks of Lent, respectively. These rites take place at a weekday Mass or in the context of a Liturgy of the Word outside of Mass, so the number of people present will be reduced and – in there are a large number of Elect – the rite can be celebrated multiple times during the proper week. If celebrated within Mass, the catechumens are dismissed before the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. Please recall, especially in the context of this pandemic, that the rite does not call for the handing of a physical copy of these texts to the Elect. They are to listen to the community as the texts are recited.

Confession / Communal Reconciliation

The guidance that we provided for Advent still applies. The safety measures (including limiting time together as well as the space and distance requirements for confession) will make holding communal reconciliation liturgies (Form 2) impossible this Lent. Instead, parishes ought to consider expanding the time they make available for individual confession (Form 1).

In addition, parishes may want to consider creating an on-line prayer service to serve as a way to prepare for individual confession. This prayer could certainly be modeled on the non-sacramental liturgies found in the Rite of Penance (prayer, readings, preaching, examination of conscience, etc.). This could be celebrated live, and then individuals could follow-up with Confession when available. If recorded, it could then be used by penitents throughout the season. In a virtual environment with multiple sites (such as via Zoom), musicians could be used (each in their own space). Of course, copyright requirements need to be observed. In other words, two separate rituals are celebrated: a “virtual” non-sacramental penance liturgy and then Form 1 of the sacrament itself.

Stations of the Cross

Parishes may wish to consider offering “virtual” Stations. If the Stations of the Cross are to be celebrated with an assembly, all the usual norms for gathering for worship apply (distancing, masks, time together limited to 30 minutes, etc.). Participants should remain in their places rather than move around the church. A single minister, with a processional cross or candle, may move from station to station (assuming proper distancing from those in the assembly can be maintained). Versions of the Stations that do not require prolonged speaking on the part of the assembly are strongly recommended.

Fish Fries

General Principles to Reduce Risks at Lenten Fish Fry Drive-through Events, Etc.

- Dine-in service should be postponed during the pandemic.
- Those preparing and distributing food must be masked, gloved, and social distanced by 6 feet in a well-ventilated area. They should not have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Orders may be picked up or delivered to vehicles. Those picking up food should also wear a mask.
- The parish must ensure proper cleaning and disinfection is done before and after the event.
- Areas should be roped off to keep proper distancing and to limit the area that needs to be cleaned. Food storage and preparation areas should be off-limits to the public.
HOLY WEEK & TRIDUUM

Last year, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments issued two decrees (dated March 19 and March 25, 2020) that provided special guidance for the celebration of Holy Week during the pandemic. The instructions that were given were intended mostly to assist priests in circumstances in which the presence of a congregation would be impossible. Those provisions, however, were explicitly granted only for 2020. As Holy Week and the Triduum draw closer this year, we expect that the Holy See and the USCCB will provide updated guidance. In addition, the FDLC will provide their usual resource for Lent and the Triduum. At the same time, it is unknown what the status of the pandemic will be. Therefore, what follows is, of necessity, provisional.

Palm Sunday

Last year, according to the Holy See, the third form (simple entrance; no blessing of palms) was to be used in all parish churches. In other words, palms were not to be blessed and distributed at parishes. Otherwise, the liturgy was celebrated as usual. We have not heard if the same plan will be followed again this year. Provisionally, if palms are to be distributed, they should be laid out on tables so individuals touch and take a single leaf rather than rifling through a pile of branches, or masked and gloved ministers should hand them out, as people leave the church (not on the way in). Stay tuned….

The shorter form of the Passion reading should be used. The rubrics state that, after the reading of the Passion a brief homily should take place, if appropriate. A (brief) period of silence may instead be observed.

Chrism Mass

The place and manner of celebrating the Chrism Mass is yet to be determined. While Bishop Zinkula is looking at a number of options, we will still not be able to gather as an entire diocese as in the past.

Holy Thursday

The optional rite for receiving the blessed oils should be omitted, due to the extra time and procession involved. The washing of the feet should be omitted. Last year, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to a separate place of reposition was omitted—and the Blessed Sacrament was simply reposed in the usual Tabernacle. At this point, we recommend that this same practice be observed (pending instructions from the Holy See). The Bishop will allow for a 2nd celebration of the liturgy in each parish if needed.

Good Friday

If celebrated with an assembly, the Veneration of the Cross should take place without the people processing forward and either touching or kissing the cross. Instead, all should stay in their place, kneel, and observe a (necessarily) brief period of silent prayer. We anticipate that we will, again, add a Solemn Intercession specific to the pandemic. The Bishop will allow for a 2nd celebration of the liturgy in each parish if needed.

There is no shorter version of the Johannine Passion account. Per the rubrics, the homily should be brief.
RCIA Rites of Holy Saturday

The RCIA includes specific Rites to be celebrated on Holy Saturday. A number of options are possible for the Elect, including the Recitation of the Creed, the Ephphetha Rite, and the Choosing of a Baptismal Name (RCIA #185-205). Since these rites are optional (#186), consideration should be given to omitting them this year. Touch (as in the Ephphetha rite, #199) is avoided; the formula is simply recited. Candidates for Full Communion and Confirmation should celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (if not celebrated at some other point during Lent; see RCIA #408 and 482; National Statutes #27).

Easter Vigil

Last year, the Vigil was markedly adapted due to the pandemic. Again, while awaiting directives from the Holy See, there are some initial things to begin thinking about:

1. The lucenarium and procession may need to be shortened in some way, or even omitted as was done last year.
2. The number of readings should be reduced, even to a single Old Testament reading (Exodus 14) if necessary.
3. If you have both candidates and catechumens, consider moving the reception of candidates to other liturgies; if there are many candidates, consider receiving them at different Masses throughout the Easter Season.
4. If necessary due to larger numbers, consider limiting attendance at the Easter Vigil to the candidates and catechumens (and their godparents/sponsors and families), and have the rest of the parish attend “virtually.”
5. If baptisms are to take place, and the font is to be blessed, include pitchers full of water (and separate vessels full of water for the sprinkling) in the blessing. That way, you will not need to draw water from the font after water has been poured over someone. Baptisms are done by pouring, not by immersion. The water used at the vigil should then be poured into the ground.
6. Confirmation is done using a new instrument (cotton ball or swab) for each person being confirmed, as we have been doing. The “used” instruments should be burned.