

Planning for Holy Week and Easter

My Dear Parish Family,

Happy Easter! This coming Sunday is Palm Sunday and begins the *High Holy Days* for the Catholic Church, what we commonly refer to as Holy Week. Holy Week includes Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and, of course, Easter.

Generally, Holy Week brings many people to our Church throughout the week, and Easter Sunday is the busiest day of the year for us. Many people also love to receive blessed palms on Palm Sunday.

You may remember that we were forced to celebrate Holy Week last year on YouTube only. Our liturgies were not open to the public. We are in a much different place this year. With the vaccines available and people getting more comfortable, we may see an increase in people who want to celebrate these special liturgies in person. However, we still need to be prudent, careful and safe.

This year, we are blessed that our full Holy Week schedule will be celebrated as public liturgies. There may be some modifications to ensure that everyone is kept safe, but you are certainly welcome to celebrate Holy Week with your St. Paul of the Cross family. In addition, all of our liturgies will also be available on YouTube in our simplified format (see the schedule below) for those who may not feel comfortable coming to Mass.

I wanted to send this note to help you prepare for Holy Week and Easter, and make the best decision for you and your family.

This note will discuss:

- 1.What are the schedules for Holy Week and Easter at St. Paul of the Cross?
- 2.What to expect when you come to Church?
- 3.Helpful tips

Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday Schedules

Our Mass Schedule for Palm Sunday is our usual Sunday Mass schedule, with one additional opportunity for Palms:

Palm Sunday Masses:

Saturday evening 5:00 PM

Sunday morning 7:30 AM, 9:00 AM,10:45 AM

Drive-up Distribution of Palms Only [For 2021 Only]

1:00 PM (Behind the Chapel)

Simply drive to the back of the Church and someone will be there to distribute palms to you in your car. [Out of concern for those who do not feel comfortable attending Mass yet, we will have this option available this year only.] ****REMEMBER:** Mass on Palm Sunday will be available beginning at 8 AM on March 28 on our YouTube channel, [St. Paul of the Cross NPB](#).

Easter Sunday Mass Schedule:

Church _____ Ave Maria Hall

NO Saturday 5:00 PM Mass

7:30 AM

9:00 AM

9:15 AM

10:45 AM

11:00 AM

****REMEMBER:** Mass on Easter Sunday will be available beginning at 8 AM on April 4 on our YouTube channel, [St. Paul of the Cross NPB](#)

Triduum Schedule

The Triduum consists of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Holy Thursday Schedule:

Mass of the Lords Supper 7:30 PM

YouTube Mass available 7:30 PM

Good Friday Schedule:

Passion Liturgy 3:00 PM

YouTube Liturgy available 3:00 PM

Family Stations of the Cross 8:00 PM

YouTube Stations Always available

Holy Saturday Schedule:

Easter Vigil Mass 8:00 PM

YouTube Mass available 8:00 PM

**** PLEASE NOTE:** The Easter Vigil Mass can last for 1.5 to 2 hours. This is true for both the Mass in person and on YouTube.

What Else to Expect

1.MASKS: Bishop Barbarito has **REQUIRED** that all people who enter the Church or the Ave Maria Hall are to wear a mask or face covering for the entire time that they are in the Church. An announcement will be made at the beginning of each Mass, and additional masks will be made available for those who have forgotten theirs.

2.SOCIAL DISTANCING: For Holy Week and Easter, we will maintain our current practice of social distancing, by seating every other row and using the markings on the pews. Most pews are marked with multiple sections, so that multiple parties can be seated safely. Ave Maria Hall: We will also have the seats in the Ave Maria spaced apart to allow for social distancing.

3. BE KIND: It is important that we welcome the stranger, that we are hospitable to those who wish to join us for the Eucharist, and that we **make room** around the table of the Lord for everyone.

Helpful Hints

1.NOT FEELING WELL? It should go without saying that if you, or someone you have been in contact with is ill, or may have been exposed to COVID-19, please refrain from attending Mass or any of our other liturgies, for your own good health and the health of our other parishioners and visitors.

2.WHICH MASSES ARE MOST ATTENDED? In past years, the 9:00 AM and 10:45 PM Masses were most attended on both Palm Sunday and Easter; however all Masses have seen an increase in attendance lately, as I mentioned at the beginning of this letter. Please also remember that we will have additional Masses in the Ave Maria Hall for Easter at 9:15 and 11:00 AM. These Masses are generally less attended than those in the Church.

3. HAVE NOT COME TO MASS YET, BUT WOULD LIKE TO COME FOR EASTER? We would love to see you, but you may want to start with a less crowded Mass. Please also remember that, in the Catholic Church, Easter Day lasts for eight (8) days. Maybe it would be best try coming to one of our weekday Masses during the week following Easter.

4.BISHOPS DISPENSATION: If you should feel uncomfortable coming to Mass, please remember that Bishop Barbarito has extended his dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day Mass obligation for everyone. To quote that dispensation: Simply stated, no one is obliged or should feel obligated to come to church. This dispensation includes Easter.

5.YOUTUBE MASSES: As we have done since the beginning of the pandemic, we will offer all Holy Week liturgies on our YouTube channel, [St. Paul of the Cross NPB](#), in

order to allow you to participate in Mass safely from home. Easter Mass will be available by 8 AM April 4.

6.PRUDENCE IN COMMON SPACES: Like other common and public spaces, no matter how much effort we make to keep your church clean, you will be entering a space where you may come in contact with many people and other people may have touched the surfaces that you will touch. Please use the appropriate precautions, such as social distancing, face coverings and perhaps gloves.

7.PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: You are the best judge of your health. If you feel that it would be unwise or imprudent for you to attend Mass, please see #4 above. Finally, please also realize that as Christians we are called to care for one another. Some of the actions that are recommended actually do more to show that you care about others, such as using a face covering throughout the Mass. Please help us keep you and everyone else safe and healthy.

I look forward to seeing those who choose to attend Mass in person, and I especially look forward to the day when we will all be able to do so safely. I also want to thank you all for your continued support of your parish.

We are a community. We are a family. We are St. Paul of the Cross.

May God bless you, your family and the Parish Family of St. Paul of the Cross this Easter and always,

Fr. Tom