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Dear Brother Priests:

Questions have arisen concerning the proper course of action for Holy Week liturgies. I offer below some guidelines for these liturgies which will remain in place barring any changes to the current restrictions established by the state and city. These protocols reflect those suggested by the Vatican and have been put forward after consultation with fellow priests.

Palm Sunday: The liturgical celebrations for Palm Sunday should occur following the guidelines of previous Sunday celebrations. Priests should bless palms and leave them in the church. The faithful may come to obtain blessed palms throughout the week if desired.

Chrism Mass: Decisions concerning the Chrism Mass will be made at a later time.

Holy Thursday: In Cathedral and parish churches, priests may celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper with a few members of the faithful present respecting the guidelines of the city and state. Preference for all Holy Week liturgies should be given to the elect, candidates, and their families. The washing of the feet is to be omitted. The Eucharistic procession closing the liturgy is to be omitted as well. The Blessed Sacrament should be kept in the tabernacle.

Good Friday: In Cathedral and parish churches, priests may celebrate the Passion of the Lord with a few members of the faithful present, once again, with preference given to elect, candidates, and their families. In the Universal Prayer, a special prayer for the sick, the dead, and the dismayed should be added. The second option for the veneration of the Cross should be followed: "The Priest ... 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 it in silence" (n.19).

Easter Vigil: Priests may celebrate the Easter Vigil with a small number of the faithful. The procession with the Paschal Candle is omitted. The candle is lit and the "Exultet" follows immediately. At the Baptismal liturgy, Baptisms, Confirmations, and Professions of Faith *may be done*. If, for health reasons, it is determined that these rites should be delayed, a specific instruction will come from my office.

Easter Sunday: The liturgical celebrations for Easter Sunday should occur following the guidelines of previous Sunday celebrations.

Each of these liturgies should be livestreamed, if possible, to ensure the participation of the faithful who are not present from their homes. The Triduum is a great source of grace and comfort to us especially in these times of great need.

Thanks for leading God's people in this challenging time. Thanks also for your prayers and fraternal support of me as I recuperate from the virus. Give me a call if you have any questions or suggestions.

God's peace to you and your people.

Fraternally in Christ,

Most Reverend Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans