



LENT AND EASTER GUIDELINES - 2021

The Lent and Easter regulations are provided here for use during Lent and the Easter Triduum.

COVID-19 GUIDELINES

Please note that these guidelines are subject to change depending on the instructions from civil officials and medical professionals.

HOLY WATER

Due to the pandemic, Holy Water fonts at the doors of the church are to remain empty. It is not appropriate for the fonts to be filled with sand or other materials.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19, modifications must be made to our usual method of imposition of ashes.

There are two options for the imposition of ashes:

- Sprinkling a small pinch of dry ashes on the top of the head
- Using a cotton swab (Q-tip) to place ashes on the forehead
- Impose ashes in the usual manner after each person uses an alcohol/sanitizing wipe on his or her forehead

Whichever option is chosen, those imposing ashes are to sanitize their hands before and after and are to wear a mask during the distribution of ashes.

When ministering ashes with a cotton swab (Q-tip), we have found this process to work best:

- Arrange swabs on a tray. (The tray may also hold the dish with the ashes)
- You may sprinkle the ashes with holy water during the blessing
- There is no need to moisten the swabs with water for imposition of ashes
- To impose the ashes, take a swab, and dip it into the ashes
- Make the cross on the person's forehead with the swab while saying the usual words
- Dispose of the swab into a receptacle after each person
- Use a new swab for each person (One sided swabs can be purchased)

HOLY THURSDAY

For the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday, priests are to be careful to pour water over the foot without touching and to dry the foot with the towel without touching the skin of the person. The priest and those having their feet washed are to wear a mask. A fresh towel must be used for each person. Communion is not to be offered under both kinds.

GOOD FRIDAY

Either the first or second form of the showing of the Cross may be used.

Then, the priest standing in the middle before the altar, is to invite 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. Then, those who would like to come forward may do so as and venerate the Cross with a bow. Before being invited to come forward, all should be reminded to neither touch nor kiss the Cross.

EASTER VIGIL

The Easter Vigil should take place as usual keeping in mind requirements for social distancing.

- For the Baptism of those entering the Church, please keep in mind that new water is to be for each person. Baptismal pools should not be used this year. A separate towel must be used for each person.
- When there are multiple people being baptized and confirmed, for Confirmation and pre-baptismal anointing, each candidate is to use an alcohol wipe to clean the area to be anointed.

ASH WEDNESDAY

BLESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

The blessing and imposition of ashes takes place only on Ash Wednesday, ordinarily during the celebration of the Eucharist. The Roman Missal contains the Rite for the Blessing of Ashes within Mass. The Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes outside of Mass is found in the *Book of Blessings*. If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the blessing and distribution is to take place within the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. The minister for the blessing of ashes within the Mass is a bishop or priest. The minister for the blessing of ashes during a Liturgy of the Word is a bishop, priest or deacon. Other persons may assist the bishop or priest or deacon in the imposition of ashes: e.g. extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and other lay persons, when there is a true pastoral need. These persons do not, however, bless the ashes. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may bring blessed ashes to the sick and those confined to their home. If a minister is not available, a member of the family or another person may bring blessed ashes to a shut-in, using one of the formulas in the Roman Missal to impose the ashes.

LENT AND EASTER GUIDELINES

THE LENTEN SEASON

A distinction is to be made between Lent and the Easter Triduum. Strictly speaking, Lent ends with the beginning of the Triduum on Holy Thursday. The Ordo notes: "Lent runs from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Lord's Supper exclusive on Holy Thursday."

FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59. Those who are bound to fast may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to each one's needs, but eating solid foods between meals is not permitted.

Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years or older on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and on all Fridays of Lent. The determination of certain days as obligatory days of penance should not be understood as limiting the occasions for Christian penance.

MAINTAINING THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON OF LENT

The Spirit of the season of Lent should be maintained throughout the weeks of Lent. The obligation to observe penitential days of the Church is a very important part of our spiritual life. Individual circumstances must be taken into account, but in general, people should seek to do more rather than less, since fast and abstinence on the days prescribed should be considered a minimal response to the Lord's call to penance and conversion of life.

VEILING OF CROSSES AND STATUES

Beginning on the Fifth Sunday of Lent, the practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church may be observed. Crosses remain covered until the end of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil (RM, 5th Sunday of Lent). The Stations of the Cross and stained glass windows should not be veiled.

This optional practice helps us to have a fast of the eyes as a form of "fasting from beauty" just as we fast from other senses (food, drink, etc.). It helps us to concentrate on the great essentials of Christ's work of Redemption and reminds us of the penitential nature of Lent. The veiling of the cross emphasizes the unveiling and showing of the cross on Good Friday. The veiling of statues and images is intended to stir up desire for the return of Christ and symbols of Christ at Easter.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Pastors are reminded that daylight savings time this year will begin at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, March 14, which is the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

EASTER VIGIL

TIME FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE EASTER VIGIL

The Roman Missal states: "The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on the Sunday." No Mass may precede the Easter Vigil. Since the end of civil twilight (nightfall) will occur at 7:45 p.m. Central Daylight Time, **the Easter Vigil Liturgy may not begin before 8:00 p.m.** Central Daylight Time.

Only one Easter Vigil Mass is to be celebrated in each parish.

WEDDINGS, BAPTISMS, AND FUNERALS

WEDDINGS

Weddings are never to be celebrated on Sundays of Lent, during the Easter Triduum, or on Holy Saturday after the Vigil.

BAPTISMS

The Roman Missal states that baptism is one of the four parts of the Easter Vigil, celebrated "as day approaches, with new members reborn in Baptism." The RCIA is geared and planned for the reception of the sacraments of initiation at the Vigil. The *Rite of Baptism of Children* states: "To bring out the Paschal character of baptism, it is recommended that the sacrament be celebrated during the Easter Vigil or on Sunday when the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection."

While Baptisms during Lent are not normative in this archdiocese, it nonetheless remains the

prerogative of the pastor after consultation with the parents to decide on celebrating a baptism during Lent.

FUNERALS

Funerals may be celebrated on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, but not within the context of Mass. The Eucharist may not be distributed at a funeral on these days.

THE RITE OF PENANCE (CONFESSION)

FROM THE *RITE OF PENANCE*

“The season of Lent is most appropriate for celebrating the sacrament of penance. Already on Ash Wednesday the people of God has heard the solemn invitation ‘Repent and believe in the Gospel.’ It is therefore fitting to have several penitential celebrations during Lent, so that all the faithful may have an opportunity to be reconciled with God and their neighbor and so be able to celebrate the paschal mystery in the Easter Triduum with renewed hearts” (13). *The Rite of Penance ritual book contains two sample Lenten penitential services.*

ARCHDIOCESAN NIGHTS FOR CONFESSION

Three Wednesdays in Lent (March 10, March 17, and March 24, 2021) have been designated as the Archdiocesan “Nights for Confession.” **On these dates, the Sacrament of Penance is to be available in all churches from 5:00 p.m - 6:30 p.m.**

As part of the Year of the Eucharist, it is recommended that Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament occur in all parishes during the Archdiocesan Night for Confession on March 24

ART AND ENVIRONMENT

“Moderation should be observed in the decoration of the altar. (...) **During Lent it is forbidden for the altar to be decorated with flowers. Exceptions, however, are Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities and Feasts**” (GIRM 305).

Because the celebration of Marriage could be compared to the celebration of a Feast, flowers are permitted. “The festive character of the celebration of Marriage should be suitably expressed even in the manner of decorating the church” (OCM, 31). “If a Marriage is celebrated on a day having a penitential character, especially during Lent, the pastor is to counsel the spouses to take into account the special nature of that day” (OCM, 32).

LITURGICAL MUSIC

FROM *SING TO THE LORD*:

“In Lent the playing of the organ and musical instruments is allowed only to support the singing. Exceptions are Laetare Sunday (the Fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts” (GIRM 313). Likewise, because the celebration of Marriage could be compared to a Feast, instrumental music is allowed.

“During the season of Lent, alternate acclamations [to the *Alleluia*] with their proper verse are used, as found in the *Lectionary for Mass* (or, when there is only one reading before the Gospel, the Psalm alone may be used). The Gospel Acclamation may be omitted when it is not sung” (163).

LITURGICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SACRED TRIDUUM

HOLY THURSDAY

Lent ends with the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, which is the principal liturgy of the day. The tabernacle is to be empty with the door open before the liturgy begins. Due to COVID restrictions, Communion is not to be ministered under both kinds. Care is to be taken to ensure that enough bread is consecrated at this Mass for the Liturgy of Good Friday as well (Paschale Solemnitatis, 47).

On Holy Thursday the only Mass permitted is the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. There is to be only one Mass of the Lord's Supper in each parish unless special permission has been granted by the archbishop (RM, Holy Thursday 3).

PRESENTATION OF THE HOLY OILS IN THE PARISH

It is appropriate that the oils blessed and consecrated at the Chrism Mass be carried in as part of the entrance procession and presented before the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper or on another day after the Chrism Mass (RM, Chrism Mass 15). The proper rubrics and prayers for the presentation of the oils are attached in a subsequent section.

The oils from the previous year are to be disposed of by burning (BB, 1127). They may be burned in the Easter fire or in another lamp. If the oils cannot be burned, they may be buried in a place unlikely to be disturbed.

WASHING OF THE FEET

The washing of the feet (mandatum) should be characterized by simplicity and reverence. Care should be taken that this optional rite does not take on an exaggerated importance. It also should be celebrated in an authentic manner which allows for people to participate visually (CDWDS Explanatory note on *Missa in Cena Domini*).

The action of foot washing is to be carried out by the priest. A small number of participants may be invited. "It is for Pastors to choose a small group of persons who are representative of the entire people of God – lay, ordained ministers, married, single, religious, healthy, sick, children, young people and the elderly – and not just one category or condition" (CDWDS Explanatory note on *Missa in Cena Domini*).

For the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday, priests are to be careful to pour water over the foot without touching and to dry the foot with the towel without touching the skin of the person. A fresh towel must be used for each person. The priest and those having their feet washed are to wear a mask.

It is inappropriate to wash the feet of the entire congregation. This does not carry out the meaning of the ritual.

Furthermore, other rites or statements of commitment are not appropriate for Holy Thursday. *Please note that variations to this rite are not permitted, i.e. the washing of hands.*

TRANSFER OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

Following the prayer after Communion, the priest puts the humeral veil on over the chasuble and the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the place of reposition. The procession to the place of

reposition should take a direct route and should not take on the character of a Corpus Christi procession, e.g. the rubrics do not call for the use of a canopy (RM, Holy Thursday, 38).

There should be specially prepared tabernacle in a place apart from the main tabernacle. Parishes with an existing Eucharistic chapel outside of the body of the main church may repose the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle there. The place of reposition should be simply decorated (Paschale Solemnitatis, 49).

The Blessed Sacrament is to be reserved in a closed tabernacle. Under no circumstances is the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed in a monstrance (Paschale Solemnitatis, 55).

The faithful should be encouraged to spend some time in adoration throughout the remainder of the evening. If appropriate, the Gospel of John, chapters 13-17, may be read aloud at various times during this period of adoration. If adoration is to continue after midnight, it is to be in silence (Paschale Solemnitatis, 55, 56).

The Mass of the Lord's Supper ends in silence after the Blessed Sacrament has been reposed. There is no blessing or dismissal because the liturgy continues on Good Friday with the Celebration of the Lord's Passion. The altar and sanctuary are to be bare following the Liturgy.

It is not permitted to reserve the Precious Blood for adoration on Holy Thursday and for distribution on Good Friday (Norms for the Distribution of Holy Communion, 54).

GOOD FRIDAY

The celebration of the Lord's Passion, the principal celebration of this day, should take place about 3 p.m. unless a later time is chosen for pastoral need. The celebration of the Lord's Passion may not be celebrated after 9 p.m. (Paschale Solemnitatis, 63). There should be only one celebration of the Lord's Passion unless special permission has been received from the archbishop.

PRESIDER

The celebrant of this liturgy is a priest. Deacons assist, but may not preside at the celebration of the Lord's Passion. As a sign of humility, grief and sorrow for the church, the priest and the deacon prostrate before the altar at the beginning of the liturgy. All others kneel (RM, Good Friday 5).

INTERCESSIONS

The intercessions are to follow the wording and form handed down by ancient tradition, maintaining the full range of intentions (Paschale Solemnitatis, 67).

ADORATION OF THE CROSS

During the adoration of the cross, only one cross or crucifix should be used (RM, Good Friday, 19). According to local custom, if there is a pastoral need because of the crowd, additional crosses may be used. Nonetheless, there is to be a main cross to be venerated.

Either the first or second form of the showing of the Cross may used.

Then, the priest standing in the middle before the altar, is to invite 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. Then, those who would like to come forward may do so as and venerate the Cross with a bow. Before being invited to come forward, all should be reminded to neither touch nor kiss the Cross.

HOLY COMMUNION

Before the liturgy begins, the Blessed Sacrament is to be in the Holy Thursday place of repose. Following Holy Communion, what remains of the Blessed Sacrament should ideally be consumed except for what is needed for Viaticum. These are to be reserved in a secure place outside the church (RM, 22, 29).

SILENCE

The celebration of the Lord's Passion is characterized by somberness and quiet. The liturgy begins in silence and any necessary announcements are to be spoken before the entrance of the priest and the ministers (Paschale Solemnitatis, 65). There is to be no processional or gathering song. The liturgy also ends in silence with no recessional song. However, the sung participation of the assembly, at the appropriate times indicated in the Roman Missal, is integral to the liturgy.

CHARACTER OF GOOD FRIDAY

On Good Friday, we reflect on the Lord's suffering and death, the awesome extent of Christ's love, and consider our own willingness to sacrifice for others. We reflect on the humble obedience of Christ, and we seek the guidance and strength of the Spirit which helps us to be obedient to God's call in our lives. It is, above all other days, a day of quiet and contemplation. That contemplation is nurtured and guided by the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion. The willingness to sacrifice is reflected in obedience to the call to the Paschal fast and its law of fast and abstinence in a spirit of penitence.

Likewise, parishes and schools should be mindful of the solemnity of this day when scheduling events and celebrations. All members of the Catholic family of the Archdiocese of New Orleans are urged to give genuine witness to the true spirit of Good Friday by prioritizing participation in the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion and in dedicating time to personal and private prayer. It is not an appropriate day to have seafood dinners, etc.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

It is appropriate to celebrate the Stations of the Cross, however, the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion is to be the main focus of the day.

HOLY SATURDAY

At the beginning of the Easter Vigil, the tabernacle is to be empty with the door open and the lights are to be turned off in the church. The faithful should be invited to gather at the place where the Easter fire will be blessed.

TIME FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE EASTER VIGIL

The Roman Missal states: "The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on the Sunday." No Mass may precede the Easter Vigil. Only one Easter Vigil Mass is to be celebrated in each parish (RM, Easter Vigil 3).

The earliest time that the Easter Vigil may begin is 8 p.m.

THE PASCHAL CANDLE

The paschal candle is to be made of wax, never artificial, and renewed each year. Refillable oil candles and candle shells containing wax inserts and other similar products are not consistent with the symbolic role of the paschal candle which is consumed as the year progresses (Paschale Solemnitatis, 82).

Paschal candles from previous years are not to be used. These may be returned to the candle manufacturer for recycling. For more information, contact the candle retailer or the Office of Worship.

The fire used to light the individual candles held by the assembly is to be taken from the Paschal Candle.

LIGHTS

As a sign that Christ is truly our light, all lights in the church are to be turned on at the third singing of “The Light of Christ” (RM, Easter Vigil 17). However the candles in the church are not to be lit until the singing of the Glory to God (RM, Easter Vigil, 31). In accord with local custom, the lights may remain off until the singing of the Glory to God.

READINGS

The Easter Vigil contains a full complement of readings, however three Old Testament readings are required, plus the Epistle and the Gospel. Exodus 14 and its canticle must never be omitted (RM, Easter Vigil 21). The prayers which follow each psalm and canticle help to put the reading in its context and are to be maintained. In addition, the priest or deacon may choose to give an additional introduction to each reading (Paschale Solemnitatis, 86).

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

It is preferable that those already baptized in another Christian faith be received into the Church at a Sunday Mass rather than at the Easter Vigil. For pastoral reasons, they may be received into the Church and celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Easter Vigil. A clear distinction should be maintained between the Elect and those being received into full Communion (National Statutes for RCIA, 32-34).

For the Baptism of those entering the Church, please keep in mind that new water is to be for each person. Baptismal pools should not be used this year. A separate towel must be used for each person.

When there are multiple people being baptized and confirmed, for Confirmation and pre-baptismal anointing, each candidate is to use an alcohol wipe to clean the area to be anointed.

WEDDINGS, BAPTISMS, AND FUNERALS (TRIDUUM)

WEDDINGS

Weddings may not be celebrated during the Easter Triduum, including on Holy Saturday after the Vigil and Easter Sunday (RM).

BAPTISMS

The Roman Missal states that baptism is one of the four parts of the Easter Vigil, celebrated “as day approaches, with new members reborn in Baptism” (Easter Vigil 2). The RCIA is geared and planned for the reception of the sacraments of initiation at the Vigil. The Rite of Baptism of Children states: “To bring out the Paschal character of baptism, it is recommended that the sacrament be celebrated during the Easter Vigil or on Sunday when the Church commemorates the Lord’s resurrection” (9).

Baptisms may not be celebrated on Holy Thursday, Good Friday or Holy Saturday before the Easter Vigil (RM).

FUNERALS

Funerals may be celebrated on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, but not within the context of Mass. The Eucharist may not be distributed at a funeral on these days. On Good Friday, funerals are to be celebrated without singing, music or bells (Paschale Solemnitatis, 61).

MUSIC

From the Glory to God on Holy Thursday until the Glory to God at the Easter Vigil, **the organ and other musical instruments may be used only to support the singing** (RM, Holy Thursday 3). There is also to be no entrance/gathering song or closing song on Good Friday. There is also to be no entrance/gathering song at the Easter Vigil.

COMMUNION, PENANCE, AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

COMMUNION TO THE SICK

Holy Communion may be brought to the sick at any time on Holy Thursday, but especially following the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Holy Communion may be brought to the sick at any time on Good Friday. On Holy Saturday, Holy Communion may only be given as Viaticum to the dying until after the celebration of the Easter Vigil (RM).

PENANCE (CONFESSION)

The Sacrament of Penance may be celebrated throughout the Triduum and priests are encouraged to do so (RM).

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Anointing of the Sick may be celebrated throughout the Triduum (RM).

HELPFUL RESOURCES

USCCB Resources For Lent

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/lent/index.cfm>

USCCB Resources for the Paschal Triduum

18 Questions on the Paschal Triduum

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/questions-and-answers.cfm>

The Holy Thursday Mandatum

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/holy-thursday-mandatum.cfm>

The Roman Missal and the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/roman-missal-and-the-evening-mass-of-the-lords-supper.cfm>

The Roman Missal and the Good Friday Liturgy

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/roman-missal-and-the-good-friday-liturgy.cfm>

The Roman Missal and the Easter Vigil

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/roman-missal-and-the-easter-vigil.cfm>

Paschale Solemnitatis: CDWDS Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts

<http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Seasons/Documents/Paschale-Solemnitatis.pdf>

TEXT FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE HOLY OILS **IN THE PARISH**

The Presenter of the Oil of the Sick announces:

The Oil of the Sick.

The Priest says:

**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:

Blessed be God for ever.

The Presenter of the Oil of Catechumens announces:

The Oil of Catechumens.

The Priest says:

**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:

Blessed be God for ever.

The Presenter of the Holy Chrism announces:

The holy Chrism.

The Priest says:

**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:

Blessed be God for ever.