



March 25, 2020

4 pages via email to parishes

Dear Father,

In this time of tribulation, we as priests of Jesus Christ, are all the more called to deepen our exercise of this sacred ministry to the glory of God and the service of His people. Each day we do this through the celebration of the Eucharist even when it is not possible for the people to be present. We also do this through the celebration of the Liturgy of Hours in which we pray for God's people as their priests, and I strongly encourage every priest to spend at least an hour before the Blessed Sacrament in prayer for the people.

We are approaching the most sacred time of the year. It is essential that, in every parish in the diocese, the ceremonies of Holy Week and Easter proceed even though adapted to the restrictions required at this time.

Due to the current pandemic, the liturgical celebration of the paschal mysteries of Holy Week, the Triduum and Easter will be celebrated without the physical participation of the faithful. The following instruction outlines how these liturgies are to be celebrated in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Michael, and in all parish churches throughout the Archdiocese of Toronto. Religious communities are to determine for themselves the most appropriate ways to proceed, but are to model their liturgies on what is set here for parishes:

Palm Sunday - Sunday, April 5, 2020:

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Michael:

- The liturgy of Palm Sunday will begin at 10:00 am, and will be livestreamed so that the faithful may prayerfully unite themselves in their homes to the celebration of the liturgy.
- The liturgy will commence with the blessing of palms, the proclamation of the Gospel and the Solemn Entrance, but without the procession of palms. Blessed palms will be distributed at a later date.
- Present at the liturgy will be the priests of the Cathedral parish.
- The liturgy will proceed in the usual way.

At parish churches:

- At a suitable time, the pastor accompanied (as applicable) by his associate pastor(s), or resident priest(s), will begin the liturgy of Palm Sunday with the blessing of palms, the proclamation of the Gospel and Solemn Entrance, but without the procession of palms. The liturgy will then proceed in the usual way. Blessed palms will be distributed at a later date.



The Mass of Chrism - Tuesday, April 7, 2020:

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Michael:

- The Mass of Chrism will begin at 10:00 am, and will be livestreamed so that the clergy, religious and lay faithful of the archdiocese will have an opportunity to prayerfully unite themselves in their homes to the celebration of the liturgy.
- Present at the liturgy will be the priests of the Cathedral parish.
- The liturgy will include the blessing of Holy Oils, which will be distributed at a later date.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper - Thursday, April 9, 2020:

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Michael:

- The Mass of the Lord's Supper will begin at 7:00 pm, and will be livestreamed so that the faithful may prayerfully unite themselves in their homes to the celebration of the liturgy.
- Present at the liturgy will be the priests of the Cathedral parish.
- The washing of feet will be omitted.
- At the end of the Holy Mass, the Blessed Sacrament will be reposed in the tabernacle. There will not be a procession to a special place of reposition.

At Parish Churches:

- At a suitable time in the evening, the pastor accompanied (as applicable) by his associate pastor(s), or resident priest(s) will begin the Mass of the Lord's Supper.
- The washing of feet will be omitted.
- At the end of the Holy Mass, the Blessed Sacrament will be reposed in the tabernacle. There will not be a procession to a special place of reposition.
- Priests who will be unable to celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper are to pray the Vespers (Evening Prayer) of the Day

Good Friday - April 10, 2020:

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Michael:

- The Good Friday Passion of the Lord will begin at 3:00 pm, and will be livestreamed so that the faithful may prayerfully unite themselves in their homes to the celebration of the liturgy.
- Present at the service will be the priests of the Cathedral parish.
- Following the special decree of March 19 from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, special prayers will be said "for the sick, the dead, for those who feel lost or dismayed."



At Parish Churches:

- At the usual time of 3:00 pm, the pastor accompanied (as applicable) by his associate pastor(s), or resident priest(s) will begin the liturgy for Good Friday.
- Special prayers are to be said “for the sick, the dead, for those who feel lost or dismayed.”

The Easter Vigil - Saturday, April 11, 2020:

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Michael:

- The Easter Vigil will begin at 7:00 pm, and will be livestreamed so that the faithful may prayerfully unite themselves in their homes to the celebration of the liturgy.
- Present at the liturgy of the Vigil will be the priests of the Cathedral parish.
- At the Solemn Beginning of the Vigil, the lighting of the fire is omitted. The Paschal Candle is to be lit in the sanctuary. The procession with the Paschal Candle is omitted. The Exsultet then follows immediately, and the Vigil proceeds in the usual way.
- The renewal of baptismal promises is to replace the baptismal liturgy.
- The rite of baptism and the reception of baptized Christians is to be deferred to a later time.

At Parish Churches:

- At a suitable time in the evening, the pastor accompanied (as applicable) by his associate pastor(s), or resident priest(s) will begin the liturgy of the Easter Vigil.
- At the Solemn Beginning of the Vigil, the lighting of the fire is omitted. The Paschal Candle is to be lit in the sanctuary. The procession with the Paschal Candle is omitted. The Exsultet then follows immediately, and the Vigil proceeds in the usual way.
- The renewal of baptismal promises is to replace the baptismal liturgy.
- The rite of baptism and the reception of baptized Christians is to be deferred to a later time.

Easter Sunday - April 12, 2020:

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Michael:

- The Mass for Easter Sunday will begin at 10:00 am, and will be livestreamed so that the faithful may prayerfully unite themselves in their homes to the celebration of the liturgy.
- Present at the Mass will be the priests of the Cathedral parish.
- Special prayers will be said for those affected by the current pandemic, for our religious and government leaders, and for the dead.



At Parish Churches:

- At a suitable time, the pastor accompanied (as applicable) by his associate pastor(s), or resident priest(s), will celebrate the Mass of Easter Sunday.
- Special prayers are to be said for those affected by the current pandemic, for our religious and government leaders, and for the dead.

Preparation for the sacred time of Holy Week, the Triduum and Easter

Sacrament of Reconciliation: The only ordinary way of attaining forgiveness for sins is participating in individual and integral confession and absolution. Nevertheless, if a person is unable to make an appointment with a priest for the Sacrament during the current pandemic, it will suffice for the moment to pray the Act of Contrition as best as one can intending it truthfully, and to commit to participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as soon as possible when conditions allow. There will be no permission granted for General Absolution.

Resources - Devotions and scripture readings – to assist the faithful during these sacred days, we will make available, a variety of resources at: www.archtoronto.org/covid19 - these will include the following:

- the Holy Rosary
- the Stations of the Cross
- the Act of Contrition
- the scripture readings for the various liturgies
- the Office of Readings for the various days in Holy Week, the Triduum and on Easter Sunday
- (for parishes) Instruction from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops re: Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults in extraordinary circumstances

May God bless you always and sustain you in your sacred ministry of serving God's people.

In Christ,

† Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto