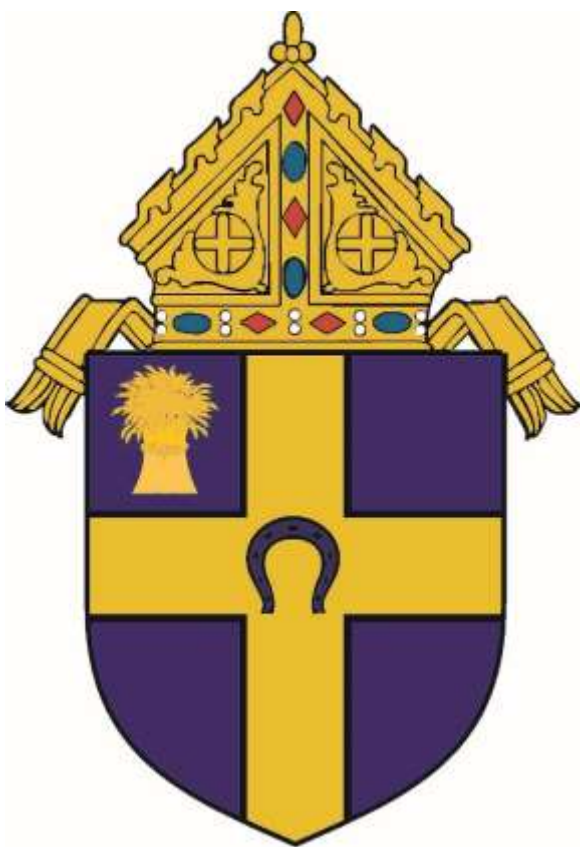


GUIDELINES FOR
LENT, HOLY WEEK, AND EASTER



THE DIOCESE OF FARGO

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Dear Monsignors and Fathers,

The high point of the Liturgical Year is the celebration of Easter, when we most solemnly recall the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection. During this privileged time the Church seeks to participate more intensely in the Lord's paschal mystery, whereby we are freed from sin and given new life in Christ.

The season of Lent is a time for the faithful to prepare to ascend "...[the] holy mountain of Easter"¹. It should be the deepest desire of every pastor that the faithful entrusted to his care would more fully encounter Christ, especially during the celebration of the Paschal Triduum.

This guide stitches together in one place the indications from the many liturgical books to be consulted for liturgies in Lent, Holy Week, and Easter, and to address points that may be confusing or ambiguous. It is by no means exhaustive and it will still be necessary to review the pertinent liturgical books, most especially, the Roman Missal.

May your attentive preparation help you participate more fully in the mystery of Christ, and enable you to lead the faithful more deeply into that same mystery.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. John T. Folda
Bishop of Fargo

SEASON OF LENT

Character of the Season

Within the cycle of a year the Church's liturgy "...unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, from the incarnation and birth until the ascension, the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of blessed hope and of the coming of the Lord."² Attentiveness to the special character of each liturgical season and liturgical texts provided by the Church is essential to personally experience the "unfolding" of the mystery of Christ.

Lent prepares us to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ; that is, his passion, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It has two themes: Baptism, and repentance.³

During this time, catechumens prepare to participate in the Paschal Mystery for the first time through the Sacraments of Initiation. Their spiritual preparation intensifies during Lent, especially through the celebration of the scrutinies. The prayers and exorcisms of these rites instill a deeper knowledge of the mystery of sin and an increased desire for purification and redemption by Christ.⁴

The baptized, although already initiated, know that they are still inclined to sin and do not yet live their baptismal vocation perfectly. During Lent they also seek the purification of their minds so that they may more fully live out their calling as adopted sons and daughters of God.⁵ The penitential character of the season should not be neglected so that the faithful may come to detest their own sins, recognize the social consequences of sin, and pray for sinners. The inward movement of repentance should take outward form, especially through the reception of the Sacrament of Penance, intensified prayer, fasting, devotional practices, and works of mercy on behalf of our brothers and sisters.⁶

Sacred Music

The alleluia is not said from the beginning of Lent until the Paschal Vigil.⁷ There are no exceptions to this rule.

During the season of Lent, musical instruments are to be used only to support singing. There should be no solo instrumental music during the liturgy. Exceptions to this rule would be Solemnities, Feasts, and the Fourth Sunday of Lent (*laetare*).⁸

The songs chosen during Lent may either draw the faithful into the mystery being celebrated or obscure it. When choosing music, keep in mind the twofold theme of Lent: repentance and preparation for Baptism/renewal of Baptism. Every parish should have at least a small repertoire of Lenten songs or hymns that they can choose from.

Lent may also be a time to introduce some of the proper texts of the Mass in the form of chanted antiphons. (Entrance, Offertory and Communion). These texts have been developed by the Church at prayer over the centuries, and are "...the fruit of the interior life of the Church".⁹ Proper training is recommended for singers so these chants will be rendered beautifully.

Ornamentation of the Church

The altar should not be decorated with flowers for the entirety of Lent. Exceptions are made for Feasts, Solemnities, and the Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare*).¹⁰

The baptismal font and holy water stoups may not be emptied until after the Mass of the Lord's Supper. They should not be filled with sand. "The 'fast and 'abstinence' which the faithful embrace in this season does not extend to abstaining from the Sacraments or sacramentals of the Church. The practice of the Church has been to empty the Holy Water fonts on the days of the Sacred Triduum in preparation of the blessing of the water at the Easter Vigil, and it corresponds to those days on which the Eucharist is not celebrated (i.e., Good Friday and Holy Saturday)."¹¹

In Dioceses in the United States the altar may be adorned with a cloth of other colors (during Lent, for example, some cloth could be violet), but the uppermost cloth covering the *mensa* is always white in color.¹²

Baptism

Baptism of children who have not yet reached the age of reason is permitted during Lent.¹³ Although Lent is a period of preparation for Baptism which is administered at the Easter Vigil, nevertheless, this should be balanced with the indication in the *Order of Baptism of Children* that a child should be baptized within the first weeks after birth.¹⁴ It is not fitting to have a Baptism during holy week (except in the danger of death, in which case the child should be baptized without delay) but rather to baptize the child at the Easter Vigil, or during the Octave of Easter.¹⁵

Weddings

Weddings are permitted during Lent, with the exception of Good Friday and Holy Saturday, but the spouses should know of the penitential character of Lent and its implications for the liturgy.¹⁶ The rubrics of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* should be consulted regarding whether the wedding should be celebrated within Mass or without Mass, and if within Mass, which Mass formularies and readings to use.¹⁷

Confirmation

Regional confirmations with the diocesan bishop are sometimes scheduled during Lent due to the difficulty of scheduling them all during the Easter season. Liturgical law does not prohibit this practice.¹⁸ These liturgies are planned according to the *Confirmation and First Eucharist Manual* which provides a table of which Mass formularies and readings to choose from. Parishes that host regional confirmations during Lent should make sure the altar is not adorned with flowers and that there is no solo instrumental music.

Confirmation of baptized non-Catholics entering the Church and of uncatechized Catholic adults will follow the RCIA process. Also, keep in mind that children above the age of reason are considered adults with regard to law governing Christian Initiation.¹⁹ Please refer to the ***RCIA Guidelines [in development]*** for more detailed instructions and contact the Diocesan Liturgy Office with questions.

Priests must always keep in mind that if they confer the Sacrament of Confirmation without delegation it is not only illicit, it is also invalid. In some cases the faculty to confirm has been delegated to priests either by universal law or particular law. Please follow the flowchart in [Appendix I: Confirmation Permission for Pastors and Parish Priests](#), which indicates in which cases priests already have delegation to confirm, and in which cases they need to specifically request it. There may be areas where it is not clear whether or not delegation is needed. In such cases, it is always best to ask. All questions regarding confirmation faculties, as well as special requests to the bishop for delegation to confirm should be addressed to the Chancellor's Office.

Funerals

Funeral Masses may be celebrated on any day during Lent except: the Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday and the Paschal Triduum (Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday).²⁰ Nevertheless, a funeral liturgy outside Mass is permitted even on the days when a funeral Mass is not permitted.²¹ If a funeral without a Mass is done, a Mass for the soul of the deceased should be offered as soon as possible after Easter. Unless a priest handles these funerals carefully and with sensitivity, grieving people can be seriously offended and alienated from the Church. The reasons for this ancient custom must be explained with loving concern.

RCIA

See **RCIA guidelines [in development]** for more detailed information.

Penance Services (24 Hours for the Lord)

At the beginning of Lent, "...the faithful are to be clearly reminded that both according to the law and tradition, they should approach the Sacrament of Penance during this season".²² Repentance is a fundamental part of preparation for Easter. Consequently, it is most appropriate that the faithful would receive the Sacrament of Penance during Lent.²³

There should be regularly scheduled times for confessions throughout the year, but during Lent, even greater initiative should be taken. During the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in 2015, Pope Francis requested that his initiative “**24 Hours for the Lord**”, be implemented in every diocese. This initiative, held the Friday and Saturday of the 3rd week of Lent, entails a continuous twenty-four-hour period of confessions. Because the Diocese of Fargo does not have significant urban populations, this initiative is not practical without some adaptation. In the Diocese of Fargo, during Lent, each parish should do the following:

1) *Hold a penance service at some point between Ash Wednesday and Wednesday of Holy Week.* Penance services bring out the communal nature of penance, and encourage the faithful to pray for one another as they seek the forgiveness from God. Generally, priests from other parishes are called upon to assist. This provides an opportunity for those parishioners who would like greater anonymity to confess to a priest they do not know.

2) *Extend the usual hours of scheduled confessions.* If few people are coming, the goal would be to extend its availability by adding another time when it seems more will be able to come. Do not lose heart if there are not immediate results. Recall that conversion relies upon the interior working of grace, and works on God’s time. “I caught him, with an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world, and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread.”²⁴

3) *Preach on the reality of sin, the need for conversion, and the mercy of God.* Remind the faithful that “...God is always ready to forgive, and he never tires of forgiving.”²⁵ Be mindful of the Lenten liturgical texts and scriptural readings, which often provide rich reflection on these themes.

4) *Catechize the faithful regarding the Sacrament of Penance.* The faithful should be reminded that this Sacrament “...is the sole, ordinary means for a member of the faithful who is conscious of serious sin to be reconciled with God and the Church.”²⁶ They should also know that anyone who is aware of

having committed a mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion without previously having been to sacramental confession.²⁷ Finally, teach them how to make an integral confession: examine conscience, have sorrow/contrition for sins, intend to sin no more, confess each and every grave sin, confess venial sins for spiritual benefit, receive absolution, do act of penance.²⁸

Fasting and Abstinence

On the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, the faithful should be reminded of the following: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. In addition, Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.

“For members of the Latin Catholic Church, the norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding upon members of the Latin Catholic Church from age 14 onwards.

Members of the Eastern Catholic Churches are to observe the particular law of their own *sui iuris* Church.

If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily his Resurrection.”²⁹

Stations of the Cross

“Devotional exercises which harmonize with the Lenten season are to be encouraged, for example, ‘The Stations of the Cross’; they should help foster the liturgical spirit with which the faithful can prepare themselves for the celebration of Christ's paschal mystery.”³⁰

Liturgy of the Hours

Obligatory memorials that fall on weekdays of Lent are not celebrated as such. Rather, everything is taken from the proper of seasons, with the exception of the following:

- *Office of Readings*: the proper reading in honor of the saint and its responsory may be added after the patristic reading and its responsory from the proper of seasons.³¹
- *Morning and Evening Prayer*: the ending of the concluding prayer may be omitted, and the saint's antiphon (from the proper or Common) and prayer added.³²

Memorials are not celebrated on Ash Wednesday, during Holy Week and the Octave of Easter.³³

On Good Friday and Holy Saturday, a public celebration of the Office of Readings with the people should take place before Morning Prayer, insofar as possible.³⁴

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday takes precedence over all other celebrations.

This is a day of fasting and abstinence. For the specific regulations please refer to the section [Fasting and Abstinence](#).

The blessing and distribution of ashes normally takes place during Mass. However, when circumstances require, especially in the case of the sick who cannot come to Ash Wednesday Mass, the blessing and distribution of ashes may be done apart from Mass. In such cases the Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes from the Book of Blessings is to be followed.³⁵

If necessary, laypersons may assist the priest in the distribution of the ashes.³⁶

First Sunday of Lent

The Bishop of Fargo presides at the Rite of Election/Call to Continuing Conversion at the Cathedral in Fargo. All catechumens and candidates should come. If attendance is not possible because of inclement weather, great distance, or other serious reasons, the pastor is both authorized and required to celebrate the Rite of Election in his own parish.³⁷ This

permission should not be used except in cases of real necessity; it is valuable for the catechumens and candidates to experience the wider church and have fellowship with others who are entering the Church.

Second Sunday of Lent

The Penitential Rite for the baptized seeking completion of their Sacraments of initiation or reception into full communion with the Church is celebrated. [RCIA 465-471] It is usually celebrated during Mass.

Third Sunday of Lent

The first Scrutiny is celebrated (only if there are elect {catechumens} to be baptized) at one of the Masses on this day. [RCIA 150-156]

- Use the Ritual Mass for the 1st Scrutiny. [RM, *Ritual Masses*, I. For the Conferral of the Sacraments of Initiation 2.a. For the First Scrutiny]
- Use the readings from Year A (Gospel of the Samaritan Woman).
- There are proper intercessions, which should be followed without significant changes. [RCIA 153]
- The scrutinies are NOT optional. However, the Bishop of Fargo may “dispense, on the basis of some serious obstacle, from one scrutiny or, in extraordinary circumstances, even from two.”³⁸ Requests for dispensation should be sent to the Chancellor’s Office.

Fourth Sunday of Lent

The second Scrutiny is celebrated (only if there are elect {catechumens} to be baptized) at one of the Masses on this day. RCIA 164-170

- Use the Ritual Mass for the 2nd Scrutiny. [RM, *Ritual Masses*, I. For the Conferral of the Sacraments of Initiation 2.b. For the Second Scrutiny]
- Use the readings from Year A (Gospel of the Man born blind)
- There are proper intercessions which should be followed without significant changes. [RCIA 167]

Fifth Sunday of Lent

In Dioceses of the United States, the practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church may be observed beginning on the 5th Sunday of Lent. Crosses are to remain covered until the end of the Good Friday liturgy, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.³⁹

The third Scrutiny is celebrated (only if there are elect {catechumens} to be baptized) at one of the Masses on this day. [RCIA 171-177]

- Use the Ritual Mass for the 3rd Scrutiny. [RM, *Ritual Masses*, I. For the Conferral of the Sacraments of Initiation 2.c. For the Third Scrutiny]
- Use the readings from Year A (Gospel of Lazarus)
- There are proper intercessions which should be followed without significant changes. [RCIA 174]

HOLY WEEK

“During Holy Week the Church celebrates the mysteries of salvation accomplished by Christ in the last days of his life on earth, beginning with his messianic entrance into Jerusalem.

The Lenten season lasts until the Thursday of this week. The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, is continued through Good Friday with the celebration of the Passion of the Lord and Holy Saturday, to reach its summit in the Easter Vigil, and concludes with Vespers of Easter Sunday.”⁴⁰

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

On this day the Church recalls the entrance of Christ the Lord into Jerusalem to accomplish his Paschal Mystery.⁴¹

The Roman Missal gives three ways to commemorate the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem.

- First Form: The Procession - Begin at a location outside of the Church; Chant Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessing of palms; Gospel reading; Procession to Church accompanied by chants and people holding palms.
- Second Form: Solemn Entrance - This is the same as the First Form, except everything takes place inside the church.
- Third Form: The Simple Entrance – The priest and ministers process to the altar in the usual way.
- Which form to use:
 - Either the First or Second Form is used at the principal Mass.
 - At all other Masses either the Second or Third Form is used.
 - The Second Form may be repeated at other Masses besides the principle one, but not the First Form.
 - When the Third Form is used, the palms may be blessed.
 - If a pastor has multiple parishes, the solemn procession may be done at each one.

The Passion Narrative is read by deacons and priests, or if necessary, by lay readers. If lay readers are assisting, the part of Christ is reserved to the priest.⁴²

- The narrative is read without candles or incense. There is no greeting, and the book is not signed. If there is a deacon, he asks for a blessing as usual; lay readers do not ask for a blessing.
- A homily is given, if appropriate. A period of silence may also be observed.⁴³

The faithful should be reminded that Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence (see [Fasting and Abstinence](#)), of the requirement of an annual confession (see [Penance Services](#)), and of the Easter precept (see [Easter Precept](#)).

In selecting music, be attentive to the prayers, readings, and chants of the liturgy. The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem in any of its three forms is joyful and exuberant. But from the Collect until the end of Mass it takes a more somber tone characterized most of all by the reading of the Passion narrative.⁴⁴

Chrism Mass

In the Diocese of Fargo, the Chrism Mass is generally held on the Tuesday of Holy Week. Please be attentive to the *Clergy Bulletin* for the specific date and time and for instructions on returning old Holy Oil bottles and the transfer of new Holy Oils.

The Chrism Mass is a manifestation of the communion of the priests with their bishop.⁴⁵ They participate in the consecration of the holy chrism as witnesses and cooperators with the bishop. They also renew their Priestly Promises, as a sign of their commitment to faithfully carry out their office. Insofar as is possible, all of the priests of the Diocese should participate in the Chrism Mass.

It is a custom that for school children, especially those who are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, to participate in the Chrism Mass. Due to space

limitations please inquire with the Liturgy Office whether there is space available for a large group.

A printed “Order for Reception of Holy Oils” will be available to pick up along with the Holy Oils after the Chrism Mass.

THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

The Sacred Triduum begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, and concludes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. It is called the 'Sacred Paschal Triduum' because it commemorates the Lord's Passover or paschal mystery.⁴⁶

Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence. It is also recommended that Holy Saturday, as far as possible, be observed as a day of penance up to the Easter Vigil. (See [Fasting and Abstinence](#))⁴⁷

On Good Friday and Holy Saturday (before the Easter Vigil) neither the Mass nor any other Sacraments except Penance and Anointing of the Sick are to be celebrated.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, in danger of death, the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and Holy Communion are still to be administered even on these days.⁴⁹

Liturgical Ministers (servers, musicians, lectors, EMHC) will need to be scheduled for the extra liturgies of the Triduum. It is also helpful to schedule rehearsals for servers and other liturgical ministers. If there are persons preparing for Baptism or reception into the Church at the Easter Vigil it is also important to rehearse with them.

The following chants should always be sung, if possible:⁵⁰

- Solemn Intercessions on Good Friday
- Chants for the Showing of the Holy Cross and for the Adoration of the Holy Cross (*Behold the Wood of the Cross*, etc.)
- Acclamation for procession with Easter Candle (*The Light of Christ*, etc.), the Exsultet, the Alleluia, the Litany of Saints, and the acclamation after the blessing of water.

As a general principle, the Easter Triduum should be celebrated solemnly and with great care. The following recommendations are based on this principle.⁵¹

- In larger churches, where resources permit, a more ample use of the Church's musical heritage, both ancient and modern, should be used.

- In groups of multiple parishes served by only one priest:
 - If the parishes are small enough that it would be difficult to find enough liturgical ministers (servers, musicians, etc.), it is recommended that all gather in the principal church and there celebrate the Paschal Triduum.
 - If the parishes are larger and the liturgies can be carried out with requisite care and solemnity the celebrations may be repeated according to the given norms. [See below – the Good Friday service may be repeated with the bishop’s permission; a second Mass may be said on Holy Thursday with the bishop’s permission]

Thursday of the Lord’s Supper

Mass is celebrated in the evening, at the time that will permit the best participation of the local community.⁵²

If pastors are aware of a pastoral need for another Mass to be celebrated in the evening, they may seek the bishop’s permission to do so. In cases of genuine necessity, they may also request to celebrate a Mass earlier in the day but it must be for those who cannot participate in the evening Mass, such as residents of a nursing home or inmates in prison.⁵³ Requests for permission should be submitted to the Chancellor’s Office.

Holy Communion may only be distributed to the faithful during Mass; but it may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day.⁵⁴

The altar may be decorated with flowers with a moderation that accords with the character of this day.⁵⁵

The tabernacle should be entirely empty at the beginning of Mass, but enough hosts for communion on Holy Thursday and on Good Friday should be consecrated.⁵⁶

Bells are rung during the *Gloria*; they then remain silent until the Easter Vigil.⁵⁷

The homily should shed light on the principle mysteries being commemorated: The institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood, and Christ’s command of fraternal charity.⁵⁸

The Washing of Feet is an optional rite which follows the homily. It recalls Christ's command to love one's neighbor, even to the point of death. It is permitted to wash the feet of women as well as men, and pastors are encouraged to select persons according to the variety and unity of the Church (young and old, healthy and sick, religious and lay).⁵⁹

It is fitting that after the distribution of Holy Communion the priest entrusts the Eucharist to the Deacon, acolyte or EMHC so that afterwards it may be brought to the sick.⁶⁰

The Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament occurs after the prayer after communion. Those things required for the procession should be prepared and rehearsed beforehand.

An altar of repose should be prepared. It should be decorated in a way conducive to prayer and meditation and with a seriousness in harmony of the liturgy celebrated that day.

- **At the altar of repose the Eucharist may not be exposed in the monstrance.** It is rather to be placed in a tabernacle or pyx. The altar of repose should not be made to resemble a tomb.⁶¹
- The faithful should be invited to spend some time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. From midnight onward, however, the adoration should take place without external solemnity.⁶²

After the Mass of the Lord's Supper the altar is stripped, and the crosses in the church are either covered (unless this has already been done) or removed.⁶³

"If the celebration of the Passion of the Lord on the following Friday does not take place in the same church, the Mass is concluded in the usual way and the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle."⁶⁴

Those who take part in the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper are dispensed from Evening Prayer this evening.⁶⁵

Friday of the Passion of the Lord

“On this and the following day, by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick.”⁶⁶

“On this day, Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful only within the celebration of the Lord’s Passion; but it may be brought at any hour of the day to the sick who cannot participate in this celebration.”⁶⁷

On this day a public celebration of the Office of Readings with the people should take place, insofar as possible.⁶⁸

The celebration of the Passion of the Lord traditionally takes place at 3:00 pm. If the size or nature of a parish or other community indicates the pastoral need for an additional liturgical service, the pastor may request permission from the bishop to do so. Requests for permission should be submitted to the Chancellor’s Office. This service, however, cannot be celebrated in the absence of a Priest.⁶⁹

Prior to the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, the altar should be completely bare: without a cross, without candles and without cloths.⁷⁰

Although not a Mass, the order of this liturgy stems from ancient tradition and is not to be altered. The order of the liturgy, as laid out in the Roman Missal, is to be followed without additions or omissions.⁷¹

The Passion Narrative is sung or read in the same way as on Palm Sunday. A brief homily is to be given.⁷²

Only one cross is to be used for the Adoration of the Cross. Individual reverencing of the cross by the faithful is preferred, and it is only if there are very large numbers of persons that the simultaneous veneration of the cross take place.⁷³ Some have interpreted the term ‘cross’ in the rubrics for the *Adoration of the Holy Cross* to indicate a bare cross without the image of Christ crucified. However, upon examination of the word ‘cross’ in

related liturgical texts, a stronger case can be made for using a cross adorned with an image of Christ crucified.⁷⁴

After the celebration the altar is stripped, but the cross remains with two candles.⁷⁵

Devotions such as the *Stations of the Cross* are to be encouraged, even on Good Friday, but should be properly ordered to the liturgical celebration of the Lord's Passion, that is, not be given greater importance either by schedule or promotion.⁷⁶ (See [Stations of the Cross](#))

Those who take part in the celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday are dispensed from Evening Prayer.⁷⁷

Holy Saturday

Because Holy Saturday is the day when the Church meditates on the Lord's passion, death, and descent into hell, it is appropriate that an image of Christ lying in the tomb is placed in the church for the veneration of the faithful. An image of the Sorrowful Virgin Mary is also appropriate.⁷⁸

On this day a public celebration of the Office of Readings with the people should take place, insofar as possible.⁷⁹

If adults are to be baptized at the Easter Vigil the following pre-baptismal rites must be completed if they have not already been done. They should be done in the morning, or at least significantly prior to the Easter Vigil.

- Anointing of Catechumens with its corresponding exorcism. [RCIA 102-102] Use the Oil of Catechumens blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass.
- Presentation of the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and the Ephetha. [RCIA 157-162; 178-183; 197-199]

Those completing their Sacraments of initiation or being received into full communion, if they have not already done so, should go to confession.⁸⁰

If infants are to be baptized during the Easter Vigil the pre-baptismal rites are done **before** the Vigil⁸¹:

- Rite of Receiving the Children/Child. [*Order of Baptism of Children* 32-43 or 72-80]
- The Liturgy of the Word may be omitted.
- Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism. [*Order of Baptism of Children* 49-50 or 86-87] The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

The Easter Vigil should not begin before nightfall.⁸² The time of nightfall is calculated each year by the Diocesan Liturgy Office and published in the *Clergy Bulletin*.

The Paschal Candle should be made of wax and renewed each year.⁸³ It should be large enough to last through the celebration of Masses during the Easter Season, and during baptisms and funerals throughout the year. In smaller parishes where the cost of a large ornate paschal candle is prohibitive, a smaller less ornate candle should be purchased. The Roman Missal does not envision the pastoral situation of multiple churches served by one priest alone and where the Easter Vigil is celebrated in only one of the churches. Priests of clustered parishes may choose to follow the proposal of the USCCB Secretariat for Divine Worship whereby the paschal candles used in the other parishes be present and blessed at the Easter Vigil.⁸⁴

Even if there are no candidates for Baptism, the blessing of baptismal water should still take place in parish churches.⁸⁵ In this case:⁸⁶

- Use the 2nd option for the introduction to the Litany of Saints (*Dearly Beloved, let us humbly invoke...*)
- Omit the prayer following it (*Almighty ever-living God, be present...*)
- Bless the baptismal water (*O God, who by invisible power...*)

If there are adults to be baptized, they make their profession of faith individually and are then immediately baptized. [RCIA 224-226]

If there are infants to be baptized, their parents and godparents make their profession of faith collectively and the infants are baptized.⁸⁷ [*Order of Baptism of Children* 57-60 or 94-97]

- If infants have been baptized, they should be anointed with Chrism immediately after their Baptism.⁸⁸ [*Order of Baptism of Children* 62 or 98] Adults who will be immediately confirmed are not given this post-baptismal anointing.⁸⁹

After the celebration of Baptism (either adults or children or both) the rite proceeds as follows:⁹⁰

- Explanatory Rites (Baptismal Garment and Candle) [RCIA 229-230]
- For the baptism of infants, the rite of Ephphetha is omitted
- The Celebration of Confirmation [RCIA 233-235]
- Renewal of Baptismal promises (by congregation), followed by sprinkling with water. [Roman Missal, *The Easter Vigil* 55]

On account of the length and level of involvement of the Easter Vigil, it may be a temptation to rush the Eucharistic Liturgy. Rather, it should be carried out with great devotion and proper solemnity.⁹¹

Those who take part in the Easter Vigil are dispensed from both Night Prayer and the Office of Readings.⁹²

Easter Sunday – At Mass during the Day

It is customary, after the homily, to renew baptismal promises according to the text used for the Easter Vigil and to have the sprinkling of baptismal water.⁹³ If this is done, the creed is omitted.

SEASON OF EASTER

Character of the Season

“The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one ‘great Sunday.’”⁹⁴ During the season of Easter the Church asks the faithful to bask in the glory of the Resurrection. After the ardor of Lenten penance and the intensity of the Sacred Paschal Triduum, the Lord invites his brothers and sisters to enter into his “rest”, the “...day that knows no evening”.⁹⁵

In this season the faithful are led to a “... [deeper] understanding of the paschal mystery and an ever greater assimilation of it in daily life through meditation, participation in the Eucharist, and the practice of charity.”⁹⁶

Sacred Music

“Easter is the time above all others for singing the alleluia.”⁹⁷ During the Octave of Easter, a double alleluia is added to the dismissal, and all of the faithful respond “Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.”⁹⁸

The glory of the Resurrection, gratitude for new life in Christ through Baptism, communion with the Risen Lord in the Eucharist, and thanksgiving for his mercy are all themes that should be present in the songs that are chosen for Mass. Musicians should not tire of the glory of Easter, and continue to choose Easter songs throughout the entire Easter season, that is, all the way up to Pentecost Sunday.

Paschal Candle

“The paschal candle has its proper place either by the ambo or by the altar and should be lit at least in all the more solemn liturgical celebrations of the season until Pentecost Sunday, whether at Mass, or at Morning and Evening Prayer. After the Easter season the candle should be kept with honor in the baptistery, so that in the celebration of Baptism the candles of the baptized may be lit from it. In the celebration of funerals the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate that the death of a Christian

is his own Passover. The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit nor placed in the sanctuary outside the Easter season.”⁹⁹

Easter Blessings

The Easter season is a traditional time for the blessing of homes. The Easter blessing of homes can also be an opportunity for a pastoral visit.¹⁰⁰ [Book of Blessings, Chapter 50, *Order for the Blessing of Homes During the Christmas and Easter Seasons*]

Easter Precept

Pastors should remind the faithful of the precept to receive Holy Communion during this time.¹⁰¹ “After being initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, each of the faithful is obliged to receive holy communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year.”¹⁰² It may be advisable to include catechesis on the worthy reception of the Eucharist, and proper sensitivity to those in irregular situations who cannot currently receive Communion.

Easter Water

“If the consecration of water has taken place at the Easter Vigil, the blessed water should, insofar as possible, be kept and used throughout Easter Time to signify more clearly the relationship between the Sacrament and the Paschal Mystery.”¹⁰³

The faithful may also be encouraged to take home some of the holy water blessed at the Easter Vigil. If possible, some plastic bottles or other containers may be supplied for the people, along with catechesis and explanation about this sacramental.

Sundays of Easter Time

The Blessing and Sprinkling of water [Roman Missal, Appendix II] may take the place of the penitential rite on Sundays, especially in Easter Time.

- It is very appropriate for the choir to sing the song from the Easter Vigil “*I Saw Water Flowing*” (*Vidi Aquam*) during the sprinkling.

Preaching on Sundays of Easter should be ‘mystagogical’. Mystagogy is the last part of the RCIA process. It is a postbaptismal catechesis in which the newly baptized are guided into a deeper participation in the mystery of Jesus Christ which they now are able to experience sacramentally.¹⁰⁴ But all the baptized are in need of continued mystagogy. “Whether the homily explains the text of the sacred scriptures proclaimed in the readings or some other text of the Liturgy, it must always lead the community of the faithful to celebrate the Eucharist actively, ‘So that they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by faith.’”¹⁰⁵

A mystagogical homily is best prepared by prayerfully reading the lectionary readings and the proper liturgical texts (collect, prayer over the gifts, preface, prayer after communion, antiphons). It is also helpful to review Part II of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, *The Celebration of the Christian Mystery*.

Prayers for the needs of the newly baptized should be included in the General Intercessions at Mass.¹⁰⁶

2nd Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy)

Pope St. John Paul II, during the Great Jubilee of 2000, established the 2nd Sunday of Easter as Divine Mercy Sunday. This day, at the close of the Octave of Easter, is fitting, since the Paschal Mystery, which is celebrated at Easter, is “...the culmination of [the] revealing and effecting of mercy”.¹⁰⁷

The faithful should be made aware that they may obtain the following indulgences on Divine Mercy Sunday: ¹⁰⁸

- “A *plenary indulgence*: granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the

tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!"")

- “A *partial indulgence*, granted to the faithful who, at least with a contrite heart, pray to the merciful Lord Jesus a legitimately approved invocation.”
- “All who for a just cause cannot leave their homes or who carry out an activity for the community which cannot be postponed, may obtain a plenary indulgence on Divine Mercy Sunday, if totally detesting any sin, as has been said before, and with the intention of fulfilling as soon as possible the three usual conditions, will recite the Our Father and the Creed before a devout image of Our Merciful Lord Jesus and, in addition, pray a devout invocation to the Merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you).”
 - “If it is impossible that people do even this, on the same day they may obtain the Plenary Indulgence if with a spiritual intention they are united with those carrying out the prescribed practice for obtaining the Indulgence in the usual way and offer to the Merciful Lord a prayer and the sufferings of their illness and the difficulties of their lives, with the resolution to accomplish as soon as possible the three conditions prescribed to obtain the plenary indulgence.”

Priests should inform their parishioners of the Divine Mercy Sunday indulgences, hear their confessions, and lead them in the prayers, and encourage them to practice works of charity.¹⁰⁹

Ascension of the Lord (7th Sunday of Easter)

In the Diocese of Fargo the Solemnity of the Ascension is celebrated on the 7th Sunday of Easter

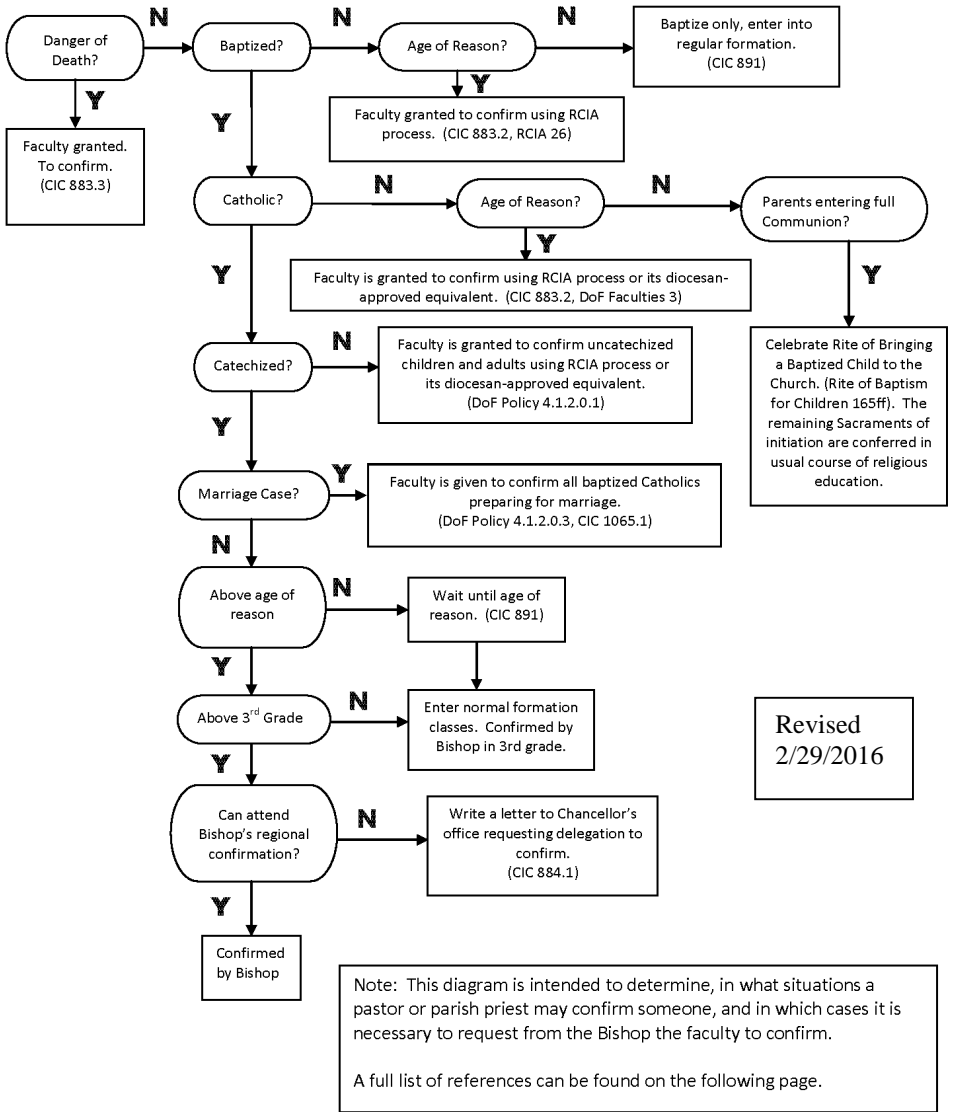
Pentecost Sunday

Pentecost, which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, concludes the season of Easter.

As a preparation for this Sunday the faithful may be encouraged to pray the Novena to the Holy Spirit.

After the last liturgy of the day, the Paschal Candle should be moved from the sanctuary to the baptistery, where it will remain for the rest of the year. (See [Paschal Candle](#))

APPENDIX I: CONFIRMATION PERMISSION FOR PASTORS AND PARISH PRIESTS



Revised
2/29/2016

Note: This diagram is intended to determine, in what situations a pastor or parish priest may confirm someone, and in which cases it is necessary to request from the Bishop the faculty to confirm.

A full list of references can be found on the following page.

Code of Canon Law

Can. 882 The ordinary minister of confirmation is a bishop; a presbyter provided with this faculty in virtue of universal law or the special grant of the competent authority also confers this sacrament validly.

Can. 883 The following possess the faculty of administering confirmation by the law itself: 1/ within the boundaries of their jurisdiction, those who are equivalent in law to a diocesan bishop; 2/ as regards the person in question, the presbyter who by virtue of office or mandate of the diocesan bishop baptizes one who is no longer an infant or admits one already baptized into the full communion of the Catholic Church; 3/ as regards those who are in danger of death, the pastor or indeed any presbyter.

Can. 884 §1. The diocesan bishop is to administer confirmation personally or is to take care that another bishop administers it. If necessity requires it, he can grant the faculty to one or more specific presbyters, who are to administer this sacrament. §2. For a grave cause the bishop and even the presbyter endowed with the faculty of confirming in virtue of the law or the special grant of the competent authority can in single cases also associate presbyters with themselves to administer the sacrament.

Can. 891 The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops has determined another age, or there is danger of death, or in the judgment of the minister a grave cause suggests otherwise.

Can. 1065 §1. Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before they are admitted to marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience.

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4.1.2.0 Beyond the cases already granted by the law, pastors and parish priests are permitted to confirm the baptized, without previous authorization of the local Bishop, in the following circumstances: 1. All those non-catechized Catholic adults and non-catechized children above the age of seven, after a suitable

period of formal instruction (RCIA, National Statutes, 25-29). 2. All those adults who were baptized as members of another Christian community, who have undergone a suitable period of formal catechetical instruction, and are received into the Church by some official act outside of the Easter Vigil (RCIA, National Statutes, 30-37). 3. All those Catholic adults preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage “if this can be done without grave inconvenience” (Canon 1065 §1).

Diocese of Fargo Faculties for Priests

Sacraments of Initiation

1. To baptize one who has completed the fourteenth year of age without previously referring the matter to the diocesan bishop, provided that the requirements of the “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults” (RCIA), or its diocesan-approved equivalent have been met. (Canon 83)

2. To administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to those persons who have attained the use of reason and whom they are baptizing in accord with the requirements of the “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults” (RCIA) or its diocesan approved equivalent. (Pastors enjoy this faculty by virtue of office.) (Canon 866; Canon 883, 20)

3. To administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to those persons who have attained the use of reason and who are already baptized in another church or ecclesial communion, on the occasion of their profession of faith and admission into full communion with the Catholic Church in accord with the requirements of the “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults” (RCIA) or its diocesan-approved equivalent. (Canon 883, 2°)

4. To administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Easter Vigil to Catholics who, although baptized earlier, have not been reared in the Catholic Church, on the occasion of their reconciliation with the Catholic Church provided that such individuals have participated in the catechesis of the “Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults” (RCIA) or its diocesan-approved equivalent.

ENDNOTES

¹ Ceremonial of Bishops (CB) 249

² *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) 102

³ Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the General Roman Calendar (UNLY) 27; CB 249

⁴ Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) 143

⁵ Roman Missal (RM), *Preface I of Lent*; CB 251

⁶ CB 251; Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts (CLEF) 15

⁷ UNLY 28.

⁸ RM, *Lent*, Rubric 4; CLEF 17, 25

⁹ Pope Pius XI, Apostolic Constitution, *Divini Cultus Sanctitatem*, December 20, 1928

¹⁰ RM, *Lent*, Rubric 4; CLEF 17, 25

¹¹ Congregation for Divine Worship, *Responsum ad dubium*, Prot. N. 569/00/L, March 14, 2000

¹² General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) 304

¹³ The rubrics of the *Order of Baptism of Children* (OBC) do not prohibit the practice of baptizing children during Lent.

¹⁴ OBC, *Introduction* 8.

¹⁵ CLEF 27.3; 88; OBC, *General Introduction* 6

¹⁶ Order of Celebrating Matrimony (OCM), *Introduction* 32

¹⁷ OCM, *Introduction* 33-38

¹⁸ The days on which confirmations may be celebrated can be deduced by looking several liturgical books and documents together. The rubrics and introduction of the *Order of Confirmation* (OC) place no restrictions on which days confirmations may be celebrated. The Roman Missal does, however. RM, *Good Friday*, Rubric 1: the celebration of all sacraments except Penance and Anointing of the Sick are forbidden on Good Friday and Holy Saturday [except in cases of emergency]. CLEF 27.3 further narrows the scope, stating that it is not fitting to celebrate confirmations during Holy Week. Thus, confirmations may not be celebrated during the Triduum, and should not be done during Holy Week [except for emergencies], but are not forbidden during the rest of Lent.

¹⁹ RCIA, *Appendix III: National Statues for the Catechumenate* 18; CIC 852 §1

²⁰ GIRM 380

²¹ Order of Christian Funerals (OCF) 178.1

²² CLEF 15; CIC 989

²³ Rite of Penance (RP), *Introduction* 13

²⁴ G.K. Chesterton, *The Innocence of Father Brown*, The Queer Feet

²⁵ Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction, *Misericordiae vultus*, April 11, 2015, 22

²⁶ RP, *Introduction* 31

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- 27 Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) 1457
28 RP, *Introduction 6-7*; CCC 1448, 1450-1460
29 <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/lent/catholic-information-on-lenten-fast-and-abstinence.cfm>
30 CLEF 20
31 General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours (GILH) 238-239
32 GILH 238-239
33 GILH 237
34 GILH 210; CLEF 40
35 Book of Blessings (BB) 1656-1678
36 BB 1659
37 Diocese of Fargo Policy 4.1.8.2
38 RCIA 34.3
39 RM, *Fifth Sunday of Lent*, rubric
40 CLEF 27
41 RM, *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord* rubric 1
42 RM, *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord* rubric 21
43 MR, *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 22.
44 CB 263; CLEF 28
45 CB 274; MR, *The Chrism Mass* rubric 4
46 CLEF 38
47 CLEF 73
48 CLEF 73; RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord* 1
49 OBC, *Introduction 8.1*; Code of Canon Law (CIC) 867 §2; Pastoral Care of the Sick, 276, 280.
50 CLEF 42
51 CLEF 43
52 RM, *Thursday of the Lord's Supper*, Rubric 1
53 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 3
54 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 4
55 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 5
56 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 5
57 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 7
58 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 9
59 Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Decree, *In cena Domini*, January 6, 2016
60 RM, *Mass of the Lord's Supper*, Rubric 33; CLEF 53
61 CLEF 55
62 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 43
63 RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 41
64 RM, *Holy Thursday* rubric 44
65 GILH 209; RM, *Holy Thursday*, Rubric 42
66 RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 1
67 RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 2
68 GILH 210

⁶⁹ RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 4; CLEF

⁷⁰ RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 3

⁷¹ CLEF 64

⁷² RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 11

⁷³ RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 19; CLEF 69

⁷⁴ See *Bishop's Committee on Liturgy Newsletter* Vol. LIV, April 2018.

“*Good Friday adoration of the Holy Cross: corpus or no corpus?*” The Missal would seem to indicate a plain cross. Why not a crucifix? There is no liturgical legislation that unequivocally answers this question. It is worth noting that in describing the cross placed on or near the altar, the 1975 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) said only a cross (*crux*), while the 2002 GIRM added “with a figure of Christ crucified” (*crux cum effigie Christi crucifixi*) in no. 117 and no. 308. The Ceremonial of Bishops also specifies for the procession “an acolyte carrying the cross, with the image to the front” (no. 128). The “Order for the Blessing of a New Cross for Public Veneration” affirms that “the ‘figure of the precious, life-giving cross of Christ’ is preminent, because it is a symbol of the entire paschal mystery” (Book of Blessings, no. 1233). It also seems to suggest that the cross to be blessed will be the one “presented to the faithful for their adoration” on Good Friday (no. 1234), and that “the cross should preferably be a crucifix, that is, have the corpus attached” (n. 1235). Finally, *Built of Living Stones* observes, “The cross with the image of Christ crucified is a reminder of Christ’s paschal mystery. It draws us into the mystery of suffering and makes tangible our belief that our suffering when united with passion and death of Christ leads to redemption” (no. 91). For these reasons, it seems that although there is no definitive support for either position, a stronger case can be made for a cross with a corpus.” See also 1962 *Missale Romanum* rubric 14 of *Feria VI in Passione et Morte Domini*. “*Adhibeatur Crux satis magna, cum Crucifixo.*” (A sufficiently large cross should be used, with a figure of the Crucified.) Although this rubric applies explicitly only to the *forma extraordinaria* of the Mass, historical perspective is helpful for interpretation of ambiguous rubrics in the Roman Missal of Paul VI.

⁷⁵ RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 33

⁷⁶ CLEF 72

⁷⁷ GILH 209; RM, *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, Rubric 34

⁷⁸ CLEF 74

⁷⁹ CLEF 73; GILH 210

⁸⁰ RCIA 482

⁸¹ OBC *Introduction* 28.

⁸² RM, *The Easter Vigil*, Rubric 3

⁸³ CLEF 82

⁸⁴ See *Bishop's Committee on Liturgy Newsletter* Vol. XLVI, February 2010. Eighteen Questions on the Paschal Triduum, 14: “*In the case of mission churches and cluster parishes, can multiple paschal candles be used for the Service of Light?*” The Roman Missal, not envisioning the pastoral situation of Revised 05/06/2020

mission churches or cluster parishes, specifies that only one paschal candle is used. To accommodate the particular circumstances, the Secretariat of Divine Worship might suggest that the candles from the mission churches or other parish churches could be present at the Easter Vigil, having been prepared in advance, and blessed alongside the main candle (perhaps having deacons or other representatives holding them). In keeping with the rubrics, for the lighting and procession only one candle should be lit (the principal one, or the one which will remain in that particular church). As the other candles in the congregation are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. Once all the candles are extinguished after the singing of the Exsultet, the other paschal candles are put aside. On Easter Sunday morning, those candles could be taken to each of the missions and carried, lit, in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary.

⁸⁵ CLEF 88

⁸⁶ RM, *The Easter Vigil*, Rubric 40-44

⁸⁷ RM, *The Easter Vigil*, Rubric 49

⁸⁸ OBC, *Introduction* 28,2; RM *The Easter Vigil*, Rubric 51

⁸⁹ RCIA 228

⁹⁰ RM *The Easter Vigil*, Rubric 51

⁹¹ CLEF 91

⁹² GILH 211, 212

⁹³ RM, *Sunday of the Resurrection – At Mass During the Day*

⁹⁴ CB 371

⁹⁵ CCC 1166

⁹⁶ CB 374

⁹⁷ CB 371

⁹⁸ CB 373

⁹⁹ CLEF 99; RM, *Pentecost Sunday – At Mass during the Day*; OBC, *General Introduction* 25; OCF, *General Introduction* 35

¹⁰⁰ CLEF 104

¹⁰¹ CLEF 104;

¹⁰² CIC 920 §1,2

¹⁰³ OBC, *General Introduction* 21; CB 372

¹⁰⁴ RCIA 247; CB 374

¹⁰⁵ Lectionary for Mass, *Introduction* 24

¹⁰⁶ RCIA 248

¹⁰⁷ Pope St. John Paul II, Encyclical, *Dives in misericordia*, Nov. 30, 1980

¹⁰⁸ Apostolic Penitentiary, *Decree*, Indulgences attached to devotions in honor of Divine Mercy.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.