

DECREE
In time of COVID-19

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As Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, I promulgate the following decree regarding the liturgies of Palm Sunday and Holy Week throughout the territorial Diocese of Trenton to assist the clergy and the faithful in the spiritual celebration of the Paschal Mysteries.

PALM SUNDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

The Mass for Palm Sunday will be celebrated by the Bishop without a congregation, with palms blessed, and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Diocesan websites at 11 am on Sunday, April 5, 2020.

The Mass for Palm Sunday may be celebrated without a congregation by the pastor/parish priest in parish churches with live-stream capability; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

Blessed palms can be made available for distribution at a later date.

CHRISM MASS

The Chrism Mass will be postponed and re-scheduled for another date/time with the renewal of priestly commitment and the blessing/consecration of oils occurring at that time.

Oils/chrism from the current supplies (currently in use) may continue to be used until a new supply is blessed/consecrated and made available.

If the parish is running low on oils/chrism, contact Fr. Michael Hall, Director of Worship, mhall@dioceseoftrenton.org.

PASCHAL TRIDUUM: the following liturgical directives are to be observed in accordance with the “Decree in Time of COVID-19” issued on March 19, 2020 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments by mandate of the Supreme Pontiff for the year 2020 only.

The Paschal Triduum **cannot** be transferred to another time.

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HOLY THURSDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

Televised or live-stream broadcasts should be live (not recorded).

The Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated by the Bishop without a congregation and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Diocesan websites at 7 pm on Thursday, April 9, 2020.

The Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated without a congregation by the pastor/parish priest in parish churches with live-stream capability; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

During the Evening Mass for the Lord's Supper:

- The Washing of the Feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted;
- The usual procession with the Blessed Sacrament to a place of repose is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament should be kept in the tabernacle, as usual.

Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers of the day from the Liturgy of Hours instead.

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GOOD FRIDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

The Commemoration/Celebration of the Lord's Passion will be celebrated by the Bishop without a congregation and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Diocesan websites at 3 pm on Friday, April 10, 2020.

The Commemoration/Celebration of the Lord's Passion may be celebrated without a congregation by the pastor/parish priest in parish churches with live-stream capability; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also

notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

A special commemoration in the General Intercessions for the sick, the dead and for those who feel lost or dismayed will be developed by the Office of Worship and sent to the parishes for mandated use.

Priests who are unable to celebrate this liturgy should instead pray Vespers of the day from the Liturgy of Hours instead.

HOLY SATURDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

The Easter Vigil will be celebrated by the Bishop without a congregation and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Diocesan websites at 7 pm on Saturday, April 11, 2020.

The Easter Vigil may be celebrated without a congregation by the pastor/parish priest in parish churches with live-stream capability; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

During the Easter Vigil:

- The preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted
- The paschal candle is lit without procession followed by the recited Easter Proclamation
- The Liturgy of the Word takes place
- The Baptismal Liturgy is only the renewal of Baptismal Promises; a symbolic (small) of Holy Water may be blessed but holy water fonts should remain empty
- The Rite of Christian Initiation and/or Reception into Full Communion will be postponed and re-scheduled once restrictions are lifted

Priests who are unable to celebrate the Easter Vigil should instead pray Vespers/Matins/Lauds of the day from the Liturgy of Hours instead.

EASTER SUNDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

Mass for Easter Sunday will be celebrated by the Bishop without a congregation and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Diocesan websites at 10 am on Sunday, April 12, 2020.

Mass for Easter Sunday may be celebrated without a congregation by the pastor/parish priest in parish churches with live-stream capability; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

Priests are otherwise asked to celebrate Easter Sunday without a congregation.

Given by mandate of the Bishop, Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., J.C.D., March 20, 2020, for the Diocese of Trenton.

POST-SCRIPT:

No general absolution is to be given at this time; if that changes, it will be communicated / announced.

Regarding Plenary Indulgence:

The *Plenary Indulgence* is granted to the faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the *will** to fulfill the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), ***as soon as possible***.

Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the divine Redeemer: "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15: 13), will obtain the same gift of the *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions.

This Apostolic Penitentiary also willingly grants a *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions on the occasion of the current world epidemic, also to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.

The Church prays for those who find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the *Viaticum*, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a *Plenary Indulgence* on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended (cf. *Enchiridion indulgentiarum*, no.12).

(*fulfillment of the usual conditions may not be immediately possible; therefore, the *will* to fulfill them suffices with the intention to fulfill the usual conditions "as soon as possible.")