



DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY WEEK 2020

INTRODUCTION

The liturgies of Holy Week commemorate, in a particular way, the passion, death, and resurrection of the Lord. Although public gatherings are suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the private celebration of the liturgy still “recalls the events that saved us” and “makes them present.” For in the liturgy, “the Paschal mystery of Christ is celebrated” and “in each celebration there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique mystery present” and efficacious (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1104).

Taking into account the norms provided by the federal and state governments, the *Center for Disease Control*, and the Congregation of Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in the *Decree in Time of Covid-19* (II) [hereafter, *DTC*] issued 25 March 2020 (<http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2020/03/25/0181/00409.html#en>), the Sacred Triduum must be celebrated in the following way.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In all liturgical celebrations the necessary health precautions must be observed, and no more than ten people may be present for the safety of all concerned.

The liturgies of Holy Week may still be celebrated by presbyters in parish churches without the presence of an assembly [*DTC*]. Indeed, it is recommended that presbyters either celebrate or concelebrate these liturgies. When concelebration occurs, presbyters are to receive the Precious Blood by intinction (see, *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 249). Presbyters who are unable to celebrate or concelebrate are to pray the corresponding Office of the Liturgy of the Hours.

A private liturgical celebration may include the ministers of the liturgy, but must not exceed ten people (e.g., celebrant, concelebrant(s), deacon, lector, server, musician). Moreover, social distancing must be observed and all practices that require physical contact omitted (i.e., the sign of peace and reception of the Precious Blood from the chalice by assisting ministers; note: deacons receive Holy Communion from the celebrant or concelebrant by intinction) [*DTC*]. Furthermore, certain other elements are omitted in the absence of the assembly (e.g., processions).

The liturgies of Holy Week may not be celebrated outdoors since all public gatherings are currently prohibited.

Churches may continue to remain open during Holy Week for private prayer during which the Sacrament of Penance may be made available. Again, these occasions are not to become public gatherings and all necessary health precautions must be observed.

In accordance with the rubrics of the liturgies of Holy Week, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is not to take place during the Sacred Triduum.

Apart from the guidelines provided below, the liturgies of Holy Week are to be celebrated according to the rubrics of the *Roman Missal*. No other adaptations may be made.

The faithful should be informed of the times of the various celebrations and encouraged to prayerfully unite themselves to the them, particularly by participating in them via broadcasts and/or by praying the Liturgy of the Hours (see, *Resources for Caring for Our Spiritual and Sacramental Lives When Public Gatherings Are Suspended*) [DTC].

Parishes are encouraged to stream the liturgies of Holy Week as they are able and to provide on-line resources (e.g., worship aids) that encourage the faithful to participate in them.

Note: All are welcome to join Bishop Lucia's celebration of the liturgies of Holy Week, which will be live streamed from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at the following times:

Palm Sunday: 9:45 AM	Holy Thursday: 5:10 PM	Good Friday: 2:00 PM
Holy Saturday: 8:00 PM	Easter Sunday: Pre recorded for Broadcast Channels	

Liturgies should be live streamed but may be recorded and then made available for the faithful to participate in them. The particular times for each liturgy are to be respected when recording or live streaming them: the Mass of the Lord's Supper is to take place in the evening on Holy Thursday; the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord is to take place on Good Friday in the afternoon or at a later hour; the Easter Vigil is to take place on Holy Saturday at 8:00 PM or after; Easter Sunday is to take place at any time on Sunday.

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

In parish churches, either the second or the third form of The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem may be used.

In keeping with the current restrictions on the distribution of Holy Communion, the distribution of palms should likewise not take place until public Masses and the distribution of Holy Communion resumes. There is little or no control over the spread of the virus, either by passing out the palms to cars driving by or by allowing people to pick them up in the church. More importantly, the distribution of palms should not be presented as a substitute for the sacrament of the Eucharist, from which the faithful must currently abstain (*Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions*).

The narrative of the Lord's Passion is read as usual without a greeting or signing of the book. If there are no other ministers, the Priest himself reads the narrative in its entirety.

THE CHRISM MASS

Bishop Lucia has decided to postpone the Chrism Mass until public gatherings resume so that the blessing and consecration of the holy oils may be a joyful celebration of the whole Church, particularly for the priests of the diocese who gather as a sign of their unity with the Bishop, their fraternity with one another, and their commitment to the promises they made at ordination.

In the meantime, presbyters may continue to use the holy oils blessed and consecrated at the last Chrism Mass. They may contact the Office of Liturgy for more of the holy oils. In emergency situations, they may bless the oil (i.e., olive oil or another oil extracted from plants) used in the Anointing of the Sick within the context of a particular celebration (*Pastoral Care of the Sick*, 22). Similarly, for pastoral reasons, they may bless the oil used in a particular celebration of the Anointing of Catechumens (*R.C.I.A.*, 102). After these singular celebrations, the blessed oil used is to be properly disposed (e.g., absorbed with cotton and burned). Presbyters may not, however, consecrate Chrism. The ability to do so belongs exclusively to a bishop (*The Order of Blessing the Oil of Catechumens and of the Sick and of Consecrating the Chrism*, 6).

HOLY THURSDAY OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

“The faculty to celebrate Mass on this day in a suitable place, without the people, is granted in an exceptional manner to all priests” [DTC].

“The Washing of the Feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted” [DTC].

“At the end of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle” [DTC]. If the Passion of the Lord will be celebrated in the same church on Good Friday, the Prayer after Communion is said, the Final Blessing is omitted, and the celebrant and the ministers depart the sanctuary in silence. Otherwise, the Mass is concluded in the usual way (i.e., with the Final Blessing and Dismissal).

Altars of Repose are not to be set up for private prayer. The faithful are not able to gather publicly as there is little or no control over the formation of crowds on a night when, according to tradition, they are accustomed to visiting churches to continue their adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Churches, however, may remain open for private prayer. Again, these occasions are not to become public gatherings.

FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

This liturgy must be celebrated by a priest.

If there are no other ministers, the Priest himself reads the narrative of the Lord’s Passion in its entirety.

In the Universal Prayer, the following special intention is to be added [DTC]. Note: Steven W. Medicis, Director of Music of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Syracuse, set the text to music for the purpose of chanting it. It is attached.

XI. For an end to the pandemic

Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end
to the coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world,
that our God and Father will heal the sick,
strengthen those who care for them,
and help us all to persevere in faith.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty and merciful God,
source of all life, health and healing,
look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease;
protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us
and in your fatherly providence
grant recovery to the stricken,
strength to those who care for them,
and success to those working to eradicate this scourge.
Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

Precautions should be taken and reasonable adaptations made so that whatever form is chosen for The Showing of the Holy Cross, social distancing is maintained insofar as possible. For example, the priest who shows the Cross should also carry/handle it.

“The adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant” [DTC]. Other ministers present are to adore the Cross by means of a genuflection or a bow.

Since the Eucharist is kept in the tabernacle, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament from the place of repose is omitted. The ciboria are brought to the altar in the usual manner.

Churches may remain open for private prayer. Signs, however, should indicate that the Cross may only be venerated by means of a genuflection or a bow.

THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT

The Easter Vigil is not to begin before 8:00 PM.

The Vigil begins in the sanctuary near the paschal candle with the Sign of the Cross and Greeting (“Dear brethren (brothers and sisters), on this most sacred night...). The lighting and Blessing of the Fire is omitted and the Preparation of the Candle takes place. The candle is lit, the Procession along with the proclamation, “The Light of Christ” is omitted, and the Exsultet is proclaimed in the usual way (i.e., with ministers holding lighted candles, the blessing of the Deacon if he proclaims it, and incense).

Note: additional paschal candles for multiple parishes may be prepared in advance of the Easter Vigil and blessed alongside the primary candle. They are lit, but then extinguished at the conclusion of the Exsultet. When they are brought to the other worship sites, they can be lit and carried to the sanctuary in the entrance procession (*USCCB*).

“For the ‘Baptismal Liturgy’ only the ‘Renewal of Baptismal Promises’ is maintained” [*DTC*]. This requires the Blessing of Water (*Roman Missal*, 54) and the Rite of Sprinkling.

Given recent developments and directives, the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation should not take place at the Easter Vigil this year. They may take place when public gatherings resume within Mass on any Sunday of Easter, on Pentecost (31 May 2020), or on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity (7 June 2020). Please see the attached updated *Decree for the Adaptation of the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation* as well as the *Dispensation from the Obligation to Celebrate the Remaining Scrutinies in Preparation for the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation*. In any case, the Period of Postbaptismal Catechesis or “Mystagogy” cannot take place until after Baptism is celebrated. Any questions concerning the *R.C.I.A.*, should be directed to the Office of Liturgy and the *R.C.I.A.*

EASTER SUNDAY

If the Vigil is not celebrated, the paschal candle is prepared before Mass begins, lighted, and placed in its stand.

In Masses that are streamed, the Rite of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises may take place after the homily. In this case, the Creed is omitted.

In keeping with the current restrictions on the distribution of Holy Communion and palms, the distribution of holy water should likewise not take place until public Masses and the distribution of Holy Communion resumes.

*By mandate of Bishop Lucia for the year 2020 only.
From the Office of Liturgy.
30 March 2020*