

Pastoral Considerations and Guidelines for Holy Week 2021

The current diocesan health and safety protocols remain in effect and are to be implemented together with these new guidelines for Holy Week of 2021.

Beyond these modifications, the liturgies of Holy Week are to be carried in the prescribed manners.

Concerning the Easter Vigil:

1. The Elect, (those receiving Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist) should be initiated at the Easter Vigil.
2. Taking into consideration the number of Candidates (Baptized Non-Catholics) and Baptized Catholics completing the Sacraments of Initiation, pastors may consider conferring these Sacraments to them at other Masses on Easter Sunday or another Sunday of Easter. Proper delegation from the bishop is required to confirm baptized Catholics completing the Sacraments of Initiation.

Palm Sunday

- The Second Form: The Solemn Entrance, is recommended to be used; however, if Palms are not going to be blessed and distributed the Third Form: Simple Entrance is to be used. The First Form: The Procession, should not be used.
- If palms are going to be distributed these should be distributed prior to blessing of Palms. Palms should be distributed as safely as possible; palms should not be taken by individuals from a common pile. For an example, a greeter wearing gloves (and trained in keeping the gloves from being contaminated) could be outdoors, handing palms to people as they enter, while maintaining as much distance as possible.
- If the Passion of our Lord is read in parts, the Priest takes the role of Christ, the Deacon (or lector, in the absence of a Deacon) takes the Narrator role and another lector should take the part of the Voice and the Crowd. Alternatively, the Passion may be read by the Priest or Deacon alone.

Holy Thursday

- Pastors are allowed to provide a second Mass of the Lord's Supper in order to accommodate the pastoral circumstances of the pandemic.
- The Washing of the Feet is to be omitted this year.
- The Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament is OPTIONAL. If it is omitted the Blessed Sacrament is reposed in the tabernacle, the purification is carried out in the normal way and the Holy Liturgy concludes with the Prayer after Communion. The altar is not kissed when departing the sanctuary.
- If the Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament is carried out the procession should be limited to only the clergy and required ministers, NO others should take part in the procession. The hymn accompanying the procession is sung only by the cantor OR omitted. The route of procession should take the most direct route possible.
- If Holy Communion is going to be distributed after a livestream of the Mass, it should be done as closely to the end of Mass as possible and in proximity to the place of reposition.

Good Friday

- Pastors may offer an additional Celebration of the Passion of the Lord to accommodate the pastoral circumstances of the pandemic.
- If the Passion of our Lord is read in parts, The Priest takes the role of Christ, the Deacon (or lector, in the absence of a Deacon) takes the Narrator role and another lector should take the part of the Voice and the Crowd. Alternatively, the Passion may be read by the Priest or Deacon alone.
- The Solemn Intercession “For an end to the pandemic” provided in 2020 is added as the 11th and Final Solemn Intercession.

IX b. For the afflicted in time of pandemic

Let us pray also for all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
only support of our human weakness,
look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children
who suffer because of this pandemic;
relieve the pain of the sick,
give strength to those who care for them,
welcome into your peace those who have died
and, throughout this time of tribulation,
grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love.
Through Christ our Lord.
R/. Amen.

- The First Form (taking the most direct route to the sanctuary) for the showing of the Cross is to be used. The Adoration of the Cross may take place in either of two forms.
 1. After the Priest or Deacon proclaims, “Behold the Wood of the Cross” and the people respond, they kneel or bow deeply from their places. If the procession to the adore the Cross is omitted, a prolonged pause, where the Cross is elevated is to be observed, while the faithful remain kneeling.
 2. Alternatively, once the conclusion of the Showing of the Cross concludes, the people may come forward to adore the Cross by a genuflection or bow but are not to kiss or touch the Cross. The Cross should be positioned so touching is not possible.
- When bringing the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar for Holy Communion, the Priest or Deacon wears a mask. It is proper that the Blessed Sacrament be accompanied by two ministers carrying candles. Physical distancing must be observed by all.

- The current guidelines regarding the Distribution of Holy Communion are to be observed during the distribution of Holy Communion, including accommodating those who have participated by social media.

The Easter Vigil

- The Blessing of the Easter Fire and Procession is to be omitted. The Paschal Candle is blessed and inscribed in the usual way and lit. This can be done standing in front of the sanctuary.
- The lighting of other candles or votive lights should be omitted.
- If the Exultet is sung, it is sung by one Deacon or cantor as in accord with the current Pandemic guidelines. It is permitted to read the Exultet.
- The Liturgy of the Word should be carried out in the normal way, the number of readings and responsorial psalms should be in accord with the rubrics of the Easter Vigil. Responsorial Psalms should be spoken, rather than chanted, to facilitate the participation of the congregation.
- The Baptismal Liturgy
 - Baptisms are to be celebrated by infusion (pouring) and not by immersion.
 - As much as possible, the Sacraments of Initiation are to be conferred this night. Pastoral Accommodations should be made for those who, for health concerns, require or request an individual celebration.
 - The water used in a baptism is not to be re-used on another person. Sufficient water for any Baptisms and the Sprinkling Rite must be prepared ahead of time.
 - Candidates for the Sacrament of Baptism are to wear appropriate face masks at all times.
 - The white baptismal garment is to be new or thoroughly cleaned.
 - The baptismal candle should be lit from the Paschal Candle directly by the Sponsor.
- The Renewal of Baptismal Promises
 - The re-lighting of candles is omitted
 - The Sprinkling Rite is conducted from the front of the altar with the Celebrant sprinkling the whole congregation at once, water is sprinkled once over center of the congregation, once over the left side and once over the right side. This is same fashion as incensing a congregation in Mass.
- The Sacrament of Confirmation
 - The Imposition of Hands should be done with the hands extended over the candidates as a group, eliminating the touching of the candidate's head.
 - As with the Rite of Election and Scrutinies, the sponsor's hand should be sanitized prior to being placed upon the candidate's shoulder.
 - The Anointing is done using a swab.
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - The Sign of Peace is to be omitted
 - Holy Communion is given only under one Species (the Host), even to those who are entering the Church, except for the Priests.

