



**Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany**  
**Office of Prayer and Worship**

**2017 LENT / HOLY WEEK / EASTER GUIDELINES**

***[The Easter Vigil is to begin in darkness. Please see note on page 4.]***

**THE SEASON OF LENT**

The season of Lent focusses on two closely related matters: the pre-baptismal and the penitential.

The pre-baptismal character is evident when the parish accompanies catechumens, elect and candidates through the Period of Purification and Enlightenment as they prepare to enter the Catholic Church and receive Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Lent's penitential character is seen when the baptized examine their faithfulness to the Gospel, seek God's mercy and forgiveness for their failings and the Holy Spirit's guidance in following Jesus' way more closely.

All of the Lenten practices of the Catholic Church, such as prayer, fasting and acts of charity are directed to support these ends.

**FAST AND ABSTINENCE**

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fasting (limiting the consumption of food) and abstinence (refraining from eating meat).

As a sign of our penance, the Diocese of Albany also preserves the custom of not eating meat on the Fridays of Lent. Therefore, all Catholics, 14 years of age and older are obliged to refrain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and the other Fridays of Lent. All Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59 are obliged to fast.

Fasting refers to the quantity of food eaten. Traditionally, fasting allows for eating only one full meal per day. Two additional, smaller meals may be eaten and there is no eating in between meals.

By retaining these traditions for our Diocese, we do not intend that they be interpreted as laws binding under pain of sin, but as customs from which we will not hold ourselves lightly excused. They are expressions of our desire to be converted in our hearts, to be reconciled with each other, and to love our neighbor. It is helpful to remember that the ability to decide how much or little one will eat is in itself a gift.

### **ASH WEDNESDAY**

Ashes are blessed and distributed during the Mass after the homily. When the distribution of ashes takes place outside of the Mass, the entire Liturgy of the Word precedes the Rite and the Service concludes with General Intercessions and the Lord's Prayer. The formulas found in the Missal are used to impose the ashes. Ashes may be given to those who are not yet baptized.

*Ashes are not to be distributed on any other day other than Ash Wednesday.*

In the case of true pastoral need, persons other than priests may be delegated to assist in the imposition of ashes, e.g. deacons, as well as extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, or other persons (Congregation for Divine Worship, January, 1979).

Ashes may be brought to the sick, or others confined to their homes, (Book of Blessings # 1657-1658).

### **WEEKDAY SOLEMNITIES AND FEASTS**

Solemnities usually celebrated in March are those of St. Joseph and the Annunciation. The Solemnity of St. Joseph falls on the Third Sunday in Lent this year and is transferred to Monday, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

### **VEILING STATUES**

In the dioceses of the United States, crosses in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for the Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the end of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. Images in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

### **PASSION SUNDAY (PALM SUNDAY)**

The blessing and distribution of palm branches takes place at all Masses. At least one Mass should begin with a Major Procession. All three readings should be used at Mass. For the genuine needs of some congregations, e.g. nursing home residents, only one reading may precede the Passion, or, if necessary, only the Passion account needs to be read, even the shorter form.

### **HOLY THURSDAY**

The evening celebration of the Lord's Supper is the main liturgy. For pastoral reasons, one other Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated. Only in case of genuine necessity may this second Mass take place in the morning. This single extra Mass should not detract from the main evening celebration.

### **GOOD FRIDAY**

The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord by its very nature may not be celebrated in the absence of a priest. (*Third Edition of the Roman Missal*, p.314)

### **EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is to take place on Holy Thursday after the evening Mass for a suitable period of time. “The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a closed tabernacle or pyx...under no circumstances may it be exposed in a monstrance” (Congregation for Divine Worship, January, 1988). Adoration is not to take place on Good Friday.

### **THE FUNERAL MASS**

A Funeral Mass is not to be celebrated on Holy Thursday, Good Friday or Holy Saturday (Congregation for Divine Worship, *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*, nos. 47, 59). A funeral celebrated on Holy Thursday morning or during the Easter Triduum takes the following form: rites at the door of the church, procession, opening prayer, liturgy of the word (as at a funeral Mass), homily, general intercessions, Lord's Prayer, final commendation (as at a funeral Mass), procession from the church (see ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS, Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass, nos. 183-203). Holy Communion is not to be distributed.

### **THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE**

In keeping with the spirit of the Sacred Triduum, the Sacrament of Matrimony ought not to be celebrated. The celebration of a Nuptial Mass is not permitted on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

### **THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

After the wonderful spiritual fruits of the Year of Mercy, every opportunity is to be given for people to avail themselves of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Individuals who wish to request the Sacrament should find it possible to do so without ever feeling that they are imposing.

In the past few years many parishes have developed the practice of providing ample opportunity for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the Sacred Triduum. This has been done by way of communal Reconciliation services (with individual confessions) as well as times set aside and published for the individual celebration of reconciliation. Parishes are encouraged to continue to offer these options for their parishioners.

Should a parish deem it appropriate, definite times may be set aside during the Sacred Triduum to celebrate individual confession/reconciliation. It is very appropriate also to encourage participation in the

communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation or in the individual celebration prior to the Sacred Triduum.

### **DISTRIBUTION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST**

Holy Communion may be taken to the sick and homebound on Holy Thursday and Good Friday according to the Ritual. On Holy Saturday, before the celebration of the Vigil Mass, Holy Communion is given only to the dying as Viaticum.

### **THE EASTER VIGIL**

The Easter Vigil is to be celebrated in its entirety in all parish churches and other communities. However, in the circumstance of multiple parishes being served by one priest, the communities should share in one celebration. Care is to be given so that both or all the communities are identified. This may be done by ministerial representation and / or alternating the celebration of the Triduum services among the parishes.

**“The Easter Vigil begins and ends in darkness. The entire celebration should take place at night, that is, it should either begin after nightfall or end before the dawn of Sunday** (General Norms, n. 21). **This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. “From the very outset, the Church has celebrated that annual Pasch which is the solemnity of solemnities, above all by means of a night vigil. For the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our faith and hope, and through baptism and confirmation, we are inserted into the paschal mystery of Christ, dying, buried and raised with him, we shall also reign.”** (*Circular letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*, n. 80)

The Easter Vigil is not to be celebrated at the time of day that is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses. No Easter Mass is to be celebrated prior to, or in place of, the Easter Vigil. The Vigil is not to be celebrated more than once in its entirety at a given church. An additional Mass may be celebrated after the Vigil for reasons of necessity. This Mass may use the Liturgy of the Word and the other texts of the Vigil Mass and should include the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

### **EASTER SUNDAY**

The Rite of Renewing Baptismal Promises and the sprinkling of the assembly with Holy Water takes place at all Masses after the homily, in place of the Profession of Faith.

### **A NOTE REGARDING CONFIRMATION**

In the Latin Church the original minister of Confirmation is a bishop.

EXCEPTIONS TO THIS TRADITION, WHERE A PRIEST MAY CONFIRM ARE:

1. During the Easter Vigil, adults and children of catechetical age (*at least age 7*) who are initiated into the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist administered by a priest. (Rites of Christian Initiation, n.232)
2. At the Easter Vigil, on Pentecost Sunday and at other times of the year, a priest may administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to:
  - a. an adult baptized person being received into full communion with the Catholic Church from another Christian tradition. (Code of Canon Law, canon 882)
  - b. an adult baptized but not catechized in any Christian tradition.
  - c. an adult baptized Catholic (*never confirmed*) brought up in, or who joined another Christian tradition and who now seeks full reception into the Church. If such an individual had been confirmed prior to joining another Christian tradition, they are not confirmed again.
3. For pastoral reasons, those previously baptized in the Catholic faith who prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation by joining Catechumens and Candidates for Full Communion through the RCIA process in a parish setting. Please note: the faculty to confirm these adults must be requested in each instance from the bishop. See form on following page.

**ADDITIONAL CONFIRMATIONS RESERVED TO THE BISHOP**

1. A Baptized Catholic raised in the faith, but who had lapsed over many years but now desires to be actively involved in the Church and whose formation takes place separate from RCIA catechumens and candidates.
2. A baptized Catholic raised in the faith, but who, for some reason was never confirmed.

**THE EASTER DUTY**

All of the faithful, after they have received their First Communion, are bound by the obligation of receiving the Eucharist at least once each year.

**Rev. Anthony M. Barratt  
Director of Prayer and Worship**

**REQUEST FOR THE FACULTY  
TO ADMINISTER THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION  
IN ACCORD WITH CANON 882 \***

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, request the faculty to administer the sacrament of Confirmation to the following, who was/were previously baptized in the Catholic Church, but was/were never confirmed. Preparation for the sacrament has taken place with those who were never baptized and who will receive the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil and those baptized in another Christian tradition who seek full Communion with the Catholic Church.**

**We plan to celebrate this sacrament on \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g. the Easter Vigil, Pentecost)**

**Confirmation Candidates:**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**Signature of Priest:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parish/Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form to: The **Bishop's Office**, 40 North Main Ave. Albany, NY 12203

**\*(Please see page 4, 2017 LENT / HOLY WEEK / EASTER GUIDELINES for explanation.)**