

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALBANY

LITURGICAL UPDATES

12th January 2021 Version 2

Every prayer and blessing as we begin the new year. Please God, the situation with the pandemic may ameliorate as the year progresses. Of course, there continues to be much uncertainty and so, the guidelines and information given below are always subject to change. The guidelines and information below assume that the already existing Diocesan Guidelines and Liturgical Updates are and will be followed. Therefore, the guidelines and information below are really adaptations of the existing Guidelines/Updates applied to the particular nature and characteristics of a number of the liturgies during Lent, Holy Week, the Sacred Triduum, and Easter

I. The Year of St. Joseph (8th December 2020-8th December 2021). There are a number of resources available to help parishes celebrate this special year; for example, see <http://www.fdlc.org/joseph>. A reminder that the Solemnity of St. Joseph occurs on 19th March.

II. St. Blaise and the Blessing of Throats. It is recommended that the “pastoral” option is used; namely that the priest or deacon says the prayer of blessing over those present (rather than the individual blessing using crossed candles). For details see: *the Book of Blessings*, Chapter 51, n. 1628 and the 2020-2021 Ordo, p. 55.

III. Ash Wednesday, 17th February 2021. The liturgical books indicate that the ashes are “imposed”, or that the minister “places [them] on the head”, using either of the given formulae. **Therefore, as instructed in the *SCDWDS Note*, issued on 12th January 2021, the priest will address those present and say, only once, one of the two formulae given in the Missal. He will then cleanse his hands, put on a face mask, and distribute the ashes to those present by sprinkling the ashes on the head of each person without saying anything.**

IV. Holy Week, the Sacred Triduum and Easter. More general details are given in the Diocesan 2021 Lent/Holy Week and Easter Guidelines. Again, please note that any of these guidelines may well change and be updated due to developing conditions with the pandemic. Given the complex nature of the various liturgies, it would be good for parish leaders and others involved with those liturgies, to refresh their knowledge of the various Diocesan Liturgical Guidelines issued during the pandemic, that would apply to any liturgy (for example: processions, gatherings, the number of people/ministers on the sanctuary etc.) A few summary points are provided below to assist with planning:

A. Palm Sunday. It is strongly recommended that Form One is not used, as this involves the gathering of people in a space and then a procession to the church that may involve difficulties in social distancing etc. Therefore, the Second Form is strongly recommended, but *only* where given procession of ministers can be conducted in observance of the various health protocols. Where this is not possible, the Third Form should be used.

For more details on the three forms please see: Roman Missal, Third Edition, Palm Sunday, The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem, nn. 1-18.

Whatever form is used, palms should not be left on a table for people to pick up, but rather, the unblessed palms must be handed out to individuals by the ushers/hospitality ministers.

B. Holy Thursday, the Chrism Mass. At present, the Chrism Mass is scheduled to take place at the Cathedral on **Tuesday, 30th March at 7.00 pm** (NOTE the day and date). At this stage in early January, it is difficult to know whether it might be necessary to limit the attendance at the Mass due to the ongoing pandemic, as occurred with the priesthood/diaconate ordinations in September 2020. More information will be given nearer the time with respect to attendance and the distribution of oils. In any case, the Chrism Mass will be live-streamed.

C. Holy Thursday, the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

The Mandatum or Washing of Feet. This is, of course, an option in the Roman Missal (cf. Roman Missal, Third Edition, Thursday of the Lord's Supper, n. 10). Given the current circumstances and the difficulties of prudently maintaining health protocols, regrettably this liturgical action should be omitted.

The Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament (Roman Missal, Third Edition, Thursday of the Lord's Supper, nn. 37-44). Wherever possible, this should take place as usual. Parish leaders should, of course, plan the liturgical actions carefully, so that a procession can take place safely (bearing in mind health protocols) and that the altar of repose is also situated in a place of safety for those who wish to visit and pray.

D. Good Friday, the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord. The Roman Missal notes that the reverencing of the cross may take the form of some "sign appropriate to the usage of the region" (cf. The Roman Missal, the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, n. 18). The cross should not be kissed, but people may come forward and bow or genuflect. Similar arrangements as with people coming forward to receive Holy Communion during the Mass could be followed to ensure an orderly and safe veneration of the cross.

However, if there are too many concerns about celebrating the adoration of the cross in this form, the priest may also hold up the cross for a brief time and invite the people to adore the Holy Cross (cf. Roman Missal, the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, n. 19).

Holy Communion may be distributed in the usual way.

E. The Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. Various recommendations are made below with respect to the parts of the Vigil that may raise some health protocol questions:

Part One of the Vigil: the Lucernarium

If the people are to hold candles, ensure that the ushers/greeters hand these out (rather than leaving the candles on a table)

A gathering of people outside the church at an Easter fire is not recommended. Fortunately, the Roman Missal makes provision for this part of the Mass to be “adapted”; that is conducted inside the church (where safe and practical!) with the people already in place within the church (cf. Roman Missal, The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, n. 13)

As with the general Diocesan Reopening/Liturgical Guidelines or Updates, ensure that a procession can occur following health/reopening protocols

Part Two of the Vigil: The Liturgy of the Word

It is strongly recommended that when choosing the number of readers, that consideration is given to maintaining the various health/reopening protocols (for example, social distancing and the capacity of the sanctuary in terms of the number of people)

Part Three of the Vigil: The Baptismal Liturgy

The Baptismal Liturgy may proceed in the usual way (bearing in mind the health/reopening protocols)

Diocesan Reopening Guidelines, for example those issued on 29th June 2020, give some instructions with respect to the celebration of baptisms that can be applied to the Vigil, and the Confirmation Guidelines similarly can assist with planning this part of the Mass. All these documents can be found on the Diocesan Portal (Prayer and Worship)

Many people desire to take **Holy Water** home with them. It is suggested that they bring water in a suitable container that will then be blessed during the Vigil.

Some Useful Resources:

CDWDS *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* (1988)

The various Diocesan Coronavirus Liturgical Guidelines and Updates still in force

Huck, G. *The Three Days. Parish Prayer in the Paschal Triduum* (Chicago: LTP 1992)

Turner, P. *Glory in the Cross. Holy Week in the Third Edition of the Roman Missal*
(Collegeville, MN.: Liturgical Press/Pueblo Books 2011)

In conclusion, we all have fresh memories of how the Sacred Triduum and Easter had to be celebrated last year. Please God, this year, we will be able to celebrate these liturgies that are at the very heart of the liturgical year and of our faith, safely, reverently and with great joy. As the opening instruction of the Easter Vigil says:

“If we keep the memorial of the Lord’s paschal solemnity in this way, listening to his word and celebrating his mysteries, then we shall have the sure hope of sharing his triumph over death and living with him in God.”