

Office of Worship
Diocese of Richmond

GUIDELINES FOR LENT AND EASTER 2009

The annual observance of Lent is the special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of Easter. Through its twofold theme of repentance and baptism, the season of Lent disposes both the catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. Catechumens are led to the sacraments of initiation by means of the rite of election, the scrutinies, and catechesis. The faithful, listening more intently to the word of God and devoting themselves to prayer, are prepared through a spirit of repentance to renew their baptismal promises.

(*CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS CB, 249*).

The following may be reproduced in parish bulletins to remind the faithful of the Church's regulations for fast and abstinence during Lent:

REGULATIONS FOR FAST AND ABSTINENCE

Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all 18 years of age and older, who have not yet celebrated their 59th birthday. On a fast day one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids, including milk and juices, are allowed.

Abstinence is observed by all 14 years of age and older. On days of abstinence no meat is allowed. Note that when health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays of Lent and Good Friday are days of abstinence.

Note: If a person is unable to observe the above regulations due to ill health or other serious reasons, other suitable forms of self-denial are encouraged.

Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are the three traditional disciplines of Lent. The faithful and catechumens should undertake these practices seriously in a spirit of penance and of preparation for baptism or of renewal of baptism at Easter.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS AND THE RITES

- ***THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION***

Because Lent is oriented toward the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at Easter, care must be taken to maintain this central focus. Honoring the most ancient of customs, the baptism of infants normally should not take place during Lent except in the case of emergency or pastoral necessity. Infant baptisms during the Easter Season follow the traditional custom of the Church. As such, the celebration of confirmations and the reception of first communion are more appropriate during the Easter Season.

For RCIA catechumens **only**, the *Rite of Election* will be celebrated at **St. Bede**, Williamsburg, on February 28 at 10:00 am; at the **Cathedral of the Sacred Heart**, Richmond, on February 28 at 2:00 pm; and at St. Mary, Blacksburg, on March 1, at 2:30 pm. Bishop Francis X. DiLorenzo will call forth those preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at Easter.

The *Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election*, including signing the Book of the Elect by the catechumens, should be celebrated in parishes beforehand. In addition, the *Penitential Rite* for baptized candidates preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist may be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent, March 8, 2009 (RCIA 459-472). The *Scrutinies* for the Elect (unbaptized) are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent.

- ***THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE***

During Lent the faithful should be urged to take a greater and more fruitful share in the Lenten liturgy. It is very appropriate for the sacrament of reconciliation to be celebrated during Lent in a more solemn form, as described in the *Rite of Penance* (RP, 22-30. 48-59). The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to receive this sacrament during Lent. Schedules for confessions and communal celebrations should be arranged in each parish and among parishes so that all may be served adequately. Ideally, the faithful should celebrate the sacrament of Penance before the Easter Triduum begins.

- ***FUNERALS DURING THE SEASON OF LENT AND THE EASTER TRIDUUM***

Good liturgical practice would suggest reflecting the liturgical season in the choice of music and scripture.

On the Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, a Funeral Mass **may not be celebrated**. It may be celebrated on the weekdays of Lent. On these days the body of the deceased may be brought into the church for Funeral Liturgy outside Mass using the *Order of Christian Funerals*, Part I Chapter 4. A Mass for the deceased should be offered as soon as is convenient after Easter Sunday (OCF 107-203).

- ***MARRIAGES DURING THE SEASON OF LENT AND THE TRIDUUM***

Marriages during the season of Lent should respect the penitential character of the season; that is, a marked moderation in festivity. No flowers are allowed in the sanctuary (CB 252).

The celebration of marriage (and the convalidation of marriage) is not permitted during the Easter Triduum (RM 11).

- ***COMMUNION FOR THE SICK AND VIATICUM***

Holy Communion may be brought to the sick on all days except Holy Saturday. On Holy Saturday, Holy Communion may be given only as *Viaticum*. Weekday liturgies of the Word with Communion are not held on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday of the Triduum.

LENT AND THE WORSHIP ENVIRONMENT

During Lent the sanctuary should not be decorated with flowers (CB, no. 252). The Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare* Sunday), solemnities, and feasts are exceptions to this rule. On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, rose-colored vestments may be used (CB 252). The cross may be covered on Good Friday (CL 26 and Ordo), or even earlier, on the Monday after *Laetare* Sunday.

- ***HOLY WATER AND BAPTISMAL FONTS***

In the past, some parishes have emptied the baptismal font and other receptacles for holy water during the entire Lenten Season. While well intentioned, this does not reflect a sound liturgical theology or practice. The use of holy water as a sacramental is a primary symbol of our baptism and has long been encouraged by the Church for the devotion of the faithful. Liturgical norms indicate that the fonts may be emptied of holy water only at the beginning of the Triduum.

PARTICULAR LITURGIES DURING LENT, THE EASTER TRIDUUM, AND EASTER SEASON

Note. In those parishes that celebrate a Sunday liturgy in another language, every effort should be made so that the three principal Triduum liturgies (Mass of the Lord's Supper, Celebration of the Lord's Passion, and the Easter Vigil) are multi-lingual.

- ***ASH WEDNESDAY- February 25, 2009***

The blessing and distribution of ashes may take place at **either** a celebration of the Eucharist or at a Liturgy of the Word. This is not a holy day of obligation. The blessing and distribution of ashes follow the homily. The ordinary minister for blessing the ashes is a priest or deacon, while others (e.g. extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion) may

assist with the distribution of ashes. There is no *Act of Penitence (Penitential Rite)* at the beginning of this liturgy.

- ***PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION - April 5, 2009***

On this day the Church remembers Christ's entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery. The commemoration on this day with the blessing of palms and the procession is not an historical re-enactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem but a ritual action that marks our entry into Holy Week and the celebration of the Christian Passover.

Three forms are offered for the beginning of the liturgy on this day: the Procession, the Solemn Entrance, and the Simple Entrance. Masses beginning with either the solemn entrance or the procession omit the *Act of Penitence (Penitential Rite)*.

The Passion proclaimed on this day is essential to the liturgy and cannot be omitted. It may be proclaimed using one or several readers. If read in sections, the priest should read the sections that include the words of Jesus.

- ***CHRISM MASS - Monday, April 6, 2009***

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Monday, April 6, 2009, at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Richmond. Parishes are to properly dispose of their old oils (by burning or burying them in the ground) prior to the Chrism Mass (please **do not** bring them with you to the Cathedral). Parish representatives should bring 3 clearly marked containers to the designated spot before the liturgy, and retrieve them afterwards.

TRIDUUM LITURGIES

- ***HOLY THURSDAY - April 9, 2009***

Lent ends with the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, which is the principal and only Mass of the day. The tabernacle is emptied before liturgy begins. Communion under both forms is the norm. Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for the liturgy of Good Friday as well.

The washing of the feet (*mandatum*) is an act of humility and service which inspires the community to do the same. The number of people need not be limited to twelve, and the feet of both men and women may be washed. (*CIRCULAR LETTER*, 51; USCCB BCL Newsletter, Feb. 1987)

It is appropriate that the oils blessed and consecrated at the Chrism Mass be carried in at the presentation of the gifts. The proper rubrics and prayers for the presentation of the oils are found in the Sacramentary Supplement or on the USCCB liturgy website.

Following the Prayer after Communion, the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the place of reposition. The place of reposition should be decorated simply. **Under no circumstances is the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed in a monstrance.** The faithful should be encouraged to spend some time in adoration throughout the remainder of the evening. There is no adoration after midnight (CL 55, 56). Under no circumstances is it permitted to reserve the Precious Blood for adoration on Holy Thursday and for distribution on Good Friday (Norms #30).

After Mass, the altar is stripped and the sanctuary is cleared of flowers and adornments. Votive candles should not be lit before the images of saints (CL 57).

- ***GOOD FRIDAY - APRIL 10, 2009***

The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer, is strongly encouraged.

The Celebration of the Lord's Passion, the principal celebration of this day, is traditionally celebrated at 3:00 pm. For pastoral reasons, the Celebration of the Lord's Passion may be repeated. During the Veneration of the Cross, only one cross (preferably a bare cross, not a crucifix) must be used; using additional crosses diminishes the symbolism of the "one" cross as the symbol of victory and salvation. The order of this liturgy - Proclamation of the Passion, Veneration of the Cross, and Distribution of Holy Communion - is not to be altered.

"In no way should manifestations of popular piety, either by the time or manner in which they are convoked substitute for this solemn liturgical action. Nor should aspects of the various acts of piety be mixed with the Good Friday celebration, creating a hybrid." (*Fourteen Questions on the Paschal Triduum*, USCCB) Other devotions, such as the Stations of the Cross, may be celebrated but should not compete with the principal liturgy of the day.

- ***HOLY SATURDAY - April 11, 2009***

The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer, is strongly encouraged.

The Easter Vigil should begin at a time that allows for new fire to break the darkness of night. Sunset this year will occur at approximately 6:42 pm; therefore, so that it can begin in total darkness, the Easter Vigil should not be scheduled before 7:30 pm.

It is recommended that the *Exsultet* (Easter Proclamation) be sung by one who can do so with grace and beauty. At least three of the seven Old Testament readings should be used, including reading number three from Exodus. The Glory to God should be sung. Holy Communion under both kinds is the norm in the Diocese of Richmond.

Adults and children of catechetical age being baptized during the Easter Vigil **are to be confirmed by the presiding priest at that time** (RCIA 588). So too would those who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church (RCIA 562-594), though the USCCB *National Statutes for the Catechumenate* #33 recommend that the reception into

full communion not take place at the Easter Vigil, but at other occasions during the year. Delegation has been given by Bishop DiLorenzo to confirm those baptized uncatechized Catholics who have been part of the Christian initiation process and who will also receive First Eucharist with the others. Questions should be directed to the Office of Worship.

EASTER SUNDAY AND THE EASTER SEASON

The fifty days from Easter Sunday (April 12, 2009) to Pentecost (May 31, 2009), audibly and visually, are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day. The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the Octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord (CB 371, 373).

The Paschal Candle must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size, so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world (CL 82). The Easter candle is lighted for all liturgical celebrations of the season (CB 372). It is not to be extinguished after the Gospel on the solemnity of the Ascension or Pentecost.

At all Masses on Easter Sunday the *Renewal of Baptismal Promises* and its accompanying sprinkling rite replace the Creed. A *Rite of Sprinkling* may appropriately replace the more usual *Act of Penitence (Penitential Rite)* during the Easter Season, at the very least on the Sundays of Easter including Pentecost (Foreword GIRM).

The Ordo reminds us that the *Easter Sequence* is to be sung or recited before the Alleluia at all Masses on Easter Sunday and is optional during the days of the Octave.

The double *Alleluia* is added to the sung dismissal formulary during the octave of Easter.

- ***SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY) - April 19, 2009***

In a way similar to Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) or the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday), the Second Sunday of Easter bears the additional title of Divine Mercy Sunday. This is not a new solemnity or feast, nor does it celebrate a new or separate mystery of redemption, but rather, it leads into the continuing celebration of God's mercy during the Easter season. As the octave day of Easter, the Lectionary readings and prayer texts highlight the mystery of divine compassion that underlies the Church's Easter faith.

The Easter Candle has pride of place in the liturgical environment. Other images of Christ (including the picture of Merciful Jesus associated with the Divine Mercy Chaplet) are not to replace or diminish the Easter Candle. Such displays may be set up in the devotional areas of the church, never in front of the altar or ambo.

While the overwhelming experience of God's divine mercy is the foundation of Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Church, the apparitions of Christ recorded by Saint Faustina remain in the category of private revelation. Members of the faithful may

embrace this devotion and adopt its disciplines of prayer, and devotional prayer times may be arranged on that day, as one would the Stations of the Cross.

The solemn celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours for the Second Sunday of Easter has a special place that day. It is not necessary to celebrate an extra Mass, nor the Sacrament of Penance on that day. No added prayers such as the Divine Mercy chaplet should be joined to the celebration of Mass, but they may be prayed at another time.

- ***ASCENSION OF THE LORD – Sunday, May 24, 2009***

In the Province of Baltimore, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord has been transferred to Sunday; therefore, **for the Catholic churches in the Diocese of Richmond, the Seventh Sunday of Easter is always to be replaced by the solemnity of the Ascension.** For 2009, it will be celebrated on Sunday, May 24, 2009.

- ***PENTECOST – May 31, 2009***

Pentecost is celebrated on May 31, 2009. The Vigil of Pentecost, with its own prayers and readings, may be celebrated at the Saturday Evening Mass. The *Sequence* of Pentecost is sung or recited before the *Alleluia* at all Masses except when the vigil readings are used. After the last liturgy of Pentecost, the Easter candle is returned to its place near the baptismal font. It is not extinguished after the Gospel of either Ascension or Pentecost.

- ***NEOPHYTE MASS – Sunday, May 31, 2009***

A special Mass for Neophytes and other new Catholics will be celebrated at 2:00 pm at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, with Bishop Walter Sullivan presiding. All those who have become Catholics during the past 12 months, either through the Sacraments of Initiation or Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, are invited to attend this liturgy in their honor.

REFERENCE ABBREVIATIONS

- CB *Ceremonial of Bishops*
CL *Circular Letter concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*
(Congregation for Divine Worship, 1988)
GIRM *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*
Norms for the Celebration and Distribution of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the
Dioceses of the United States of America
OCF *Order of Christian Funerals*
RCIA *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*
RM *Rite of Marriage*
RP *Rite of Penance*