



Diocese of Scranton Directives for Holy Week 2021

GENERAL NOTES

- All prevention protocols for signage, distancing of six feet, mask wearing, sanitization, and restricting persons with COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms must be followed without exception for all of the liturgies of Holy Week.
- Any processions during Holy Week should be minimized with appropriate physical distancing between those ministers participating.
- Attention should be paid to the length of these liturgies, considering options, especially those provided by the *Roman Missal*, to shorten the duration that the faithful will be gathered in church. Please plan on the time required to properly sanitize in between liturgies.
- Parishes are encouraged to take great care and carefully consider the best way to welcome the faithful on Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Reservation systems may be utilized, but are not required. Each parish should ensure that parishioners are not turned away. Overflow areas, with livestream broadcast opportunities are just one option that parishes may consider.
- If it answers a pastoral need, additional Masses may be scheduled on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Priests are also reminded that they already have the faculty from the Bishop to celebrate two Masses of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and an additional service of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, but note that there may only be one Easter Vigil Mass that takes place after sunset.
- Weather permitting, parishes may consider holding outdoor Masses on Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday if this has already been parish practice in the fall.
- Altar servers are still not to be used at this time but, as noted in specific liturgies below, an adult server/attendant may assist the priest at specific times during Holy Week only.
- Liturgical music is to be done simply with attention paid to the length of the liturgies during Holy Week. No choirs are permitted at this time, but a cantor or a small group of singers is allowed provided they can be spaced apart by at least 10 feet from any other persons. The assembly should be advised that singing is not recommended at this point, even with a mask.

PALM SUNDAY

- The Diocese of Scranton will resume the practice of providing blessed palms to the faithful this year. Having learned a lot more about COVID-19 over the last year, we believe parishes can develop a safe and effective method that works best in their individual churches.

- Some potential methods in which to safely offer palms include:
 - Setting up palms on one (or more) tables outside of the church, or in a narthex, so that individuals can pick up the palms as they enter while remaining physically distant. Potentially, several tables containing palms could be set-up on the approach to the church's entrance.
 - Leaving palms in pews that have been pre-determined as seating areas for the faithful.
- No matter the method of offering palms, it is imperative that a parish communicates to the faithful the importance of maintaining a proper six-foot physical distance during any potential method of receiving palms.
- The third form of the Entrance (the Simple Entrance) as found in the *Roman Missal* is to be used at all Masses.
- The Passion should be proclaimed in a format that does not require the use of missalettes by the assembly. Pamphlets or bulletins that include the readings may be distributed, but must be taken by the faithful after Mass or discarded and not reused for another Mass. Inviting the assembly to listen prayerfully to the proclamation of the Passion without following along in a handout is encouraged. If reading the Passion in parts without providing the text to assembly, the lector taking the part of the Voice can also read the part of the Crowd.
- Consider using the short form of the Passion to shorten the duration of the liturgy.

CHRISM MASS

- It is the desire of Bishop Bambera to celebrate the Chrism Mass on Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter. More details regarding this liturgy are to follow.

HOLY THURSDAY

- The Washing of the Feet (*Mandatum*) is to be omitted.
- Because the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper ends with the transfer of the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose, the reception of Holy Communion should take place within Mass at the normal time.
- At the end of Mass, a simple transfer of the Eucharist may take place. The simple transfer should remain indoors and not involve movement of the assembly. The transfer should only involve the priest and an adult attendant carrying incense. The Blessed Sacrament should not be transferred to another place outside of the church.
- Adoration by the faithful at the place of reposition may follow. Parish leaders must ensure that all safety precautions (wearing masks, socially distancing, no congregating, sanitization of pews etc.) are followed.

GOOD FRIDAY

- The Passion should be proclaimed in a format that does not require the use of missalettes by the assembly. Pamphlets or bulletins that include the readings may be distributed, but must be taken by the faithful after Mass or discarded. Inviting the assembly to listen prayerfully to the proclamation of the Passion without following along in a handout is encouraged. If reading the Passion in parts without providing the

text to assembly, the lector taking the part of the Voice can also read the part of the Crowd.

- A special intercession for the health crisis is to be added to the Solemn Intercessions. The text for this intercession can be found on the diocesan website at [this link](#).
- The faithful are not to approach the Cross for adoration. The *Roman Missal* allows for the priest, after physically venerating it himself, to hold the Cross before the assembly and to invite them to adore the Holy Cross in silence (see rubric #19 for Good Friday).
- Following the liturgy, the Cross should be placed in the sanctuary near the altar so that it is not accessible for physical veneration by anyone visiting the church for private prayer.

HOLY SATURDAY

- The Blessing of the Fire and Preparation of the Paschal Candle may take place. Only a small representative parish group such as the RCIA catechumens/candidates may gather around the fire and not the whole assembly. Even though outside, all participants around the fire must be masked and socially distanced, and six foot spacing is required when processing inside the church.
- An adult altar server/attendant may be used to assist with the preparation of the Paschal Candle and carrying incense.
- The congregational tapers are not to be used as blowing them out requires everyone to lower their masks and exhale at the same time.
- Consideration should be given to the length of the liturgy when choosing the number of readings proclaimed that night. Note that a period of sacred silence may be observed in place of the Responsorial Psalms at the Easter Vigil.
- If catechumens and candidates are being fully initiated/received into the Church and confirmed, care must be taken that the priest celebrates these rites safely including the use of fresh water for each baptism and the use of an instrument to anoint with Chrism.
- The faithful can be sprinkled with fresh holy water following the Renewal of Baptismal Promises. Congregational tapers are not to be used for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises. Holy water fonts are to remain empty.

EASTER SUNDAY

- The faithful can be sprinkled with holy water following the Renewal of Baptismal Promises. Fresh water in a separate container should be used and blessed for this sprinkling.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Blessing of the Easter Foods**--These blessings may take place this year. Given the numbers of parishioners that participate, multiple opportunities for the blessing may need to be offered or a large space used to ensure proper social distancing. Parishes may even consider organizing the food blessings in parking lots.