



Lent and Easter Guidelines 2022

Diocese of Scranton

Regulations on Fasting and Abstinence

All faithful of the Diocese of Scranton are reminded of Diocesan Statute No. 41, which addresses the penitential aspect of Lent:

“The season of Lent is penitential in nature and during Lent penance should be not only internal and individual, but also external and social (Sacrosanctum Concilium, No. 5, 109). Pastors are obliged to avoid scheduling activities in the parishes which in any way could possibly detract from the external and social penance required by Lent.”

Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022, marks the beginning of Lent. The following fast and abstinence regulations are observed:

- **FASTING** is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, April 15, 2022, by all Catholics over 18 years of age to the beginning of their 60th year. On days of fasting, one full meal is allowed. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to one’s needs, but together should not equal another full meal, unless dispensed or excused.
- **ABSTINENCE** from meat is to be observed by all Catholics who are 14 years of age or older. Ash Wednesday, all of the Fridays of Lent, and Good Friday are days of abstinence.

(NOTE: This year, the Feast of the Annunciation falls on Friday, March 25, 2022. Because it is considered a solemnity by the church, the law of abstinence from meat and meat products does not apply specifically on Friday, March 25, this year (per Canon 1251))

Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022

First and foremost, the reception of ashes is not mandatory nor required. Parishioners should be reminded it is their own internal disposition and intention to repent and start over that is the best fruit of Ash Wednesday and the ashes are an external sign of that internal reality.

Individuals may enter into Lent with a repentant heart even if they decide that receiving ashes is not the right thing for them this year.

Because of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, parishes should not impose ashes by thumb on the forehead of parishioners. Ashes can be distributed to the faithful, as long as there is no direct contact. Parishes are encouraged to follow one of two options. Above all else, ashes may not be self-imposed; a minister always gives them.

- **Option 1 – Swab/Cotton Ball Application**

Use an individual cotton swab for each recipient to distribute ashes. This would be done by use of a Q-tip type of cotton swab. With the cotton tip, trace a cross on the recipient's forehead. The minister must wear masks – and recipients are strongly encouraged to wear masks as well. A new Q-tip/swab or cotton ball must be used for each person. After the use, each swab should be placed in a receptacle for burning.

- **Option 2 – Sprinkled over the Crown of the Head**

In much of the world, the normal way of distributing ashes is to sprinkle ashes on top of the head, with no contact, rather than imposing them on the forehead. In this method of distribution, the priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel,” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him, or if appropriate, goes to those who are standing in their places. The priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.

The blessing and distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday normally takes place during the celebration of Mass, following the homily and general intercessions. When circumstances require, the blessing and distribution of ashes may take place apart from Mass, during a celebration of the Word of God. (Book of Blessings #1656)

Any individual who is accustomed to distributing ashes at another location, for example, a long-term care facility, is reminded that they must adhere to the safety guidelines of those facilities.

Rite of Election, March 6, 2022 (First Sunday of Lent)

Plans are in place to celebrate the Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion as a diocesan event on Sunday, March 6, 2022 (First Sunday of Lent) at 2:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton.

It is strongly recommended that all those attending the Rite of Election wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status. All information and the participation form can be found on the Diocese of Scranton website [here](#). All forms are to be submitted to the Diocese of Scranton Office for Parish Life by Friday, February 18, 2022.

Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation should remain available to the faithful throughout the Season of Lent.

“The Light is On For You,” an initiative in the Diocese of Scranton in which churches are open for quiet prayer and Confession throughout Lent will continue. Now more than ever, it is important to allow the faithful an opportunity to experience the healing grace of God’s mercy.

Beginning on March 7, the Monday of the First Week of Lent and continuing through April 4, the Monday of the Fifth Week of Lent, confessions will be held on each Monday from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in each parish, unless a parish already has a different established weeknight tradition and that exception is published widely in the parish.

Communal Reconciliation Services with Individual Confessions are allowed but careful planning and consideration should be initiated, including making sure there are adequate areas for confessions and plenty of priest confessors.

As always, great care should continue to be taken regarding the environment of any confession, including the potential use of masks if needed, in light of the continuing pandemic.

Palm Sunday, April 10, 2022

On this day the Church remembers Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem. This commemoration, with the blessing of palms, is not a historical re-enactment, rather it is a ritual action that marks our own entry into Holy Week.

- The giving out of palms and blessing them during the liturgy may take place as usual.
- Three forms are given for beginning the liturgy: The Procession, the Solemn Entrance, and the Simple Entrance. A parish may select from any of these forms.
- The proclamation of the Passion is essential and may not be omitted. It may be proclaimed using one to three readers. The part of Christ is usually reserved for the priest, but lay persons are allowed to do any of the parts (RM: Palm Sunday #21).

Chrism Mass, April 12, 2022

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint Peter, Scranton, at 4:00 p.m. It is Bishop Bambera's desire to celebrate the Chrism Mass with the presbyterate, permanent deacons and lay faithful present.

- Parishes are to properly dispose of their 2021 oil stocks at the parish, either by burying or burning them.
- The Diocesan Office for Parish Life will provide each parish with pre-poured and packaged bottles of the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of the Sick, and Sacred Chrism. Please, do not bring any empty bottles with you to the Cathedral.

Bishop Bambera is hopeful that the traditional dinner for clergy will be able to take place after the Chrism Mass but that will be dependent on pandemic conditions. Further information will be communicated.

Holy Thursday, April 14, 2022

Lent ends with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the principal liturgy of this day. In the Sacred Triduum, the Church celebrates the greatest mysteries of our redemption, keeping by means of special celebrations the memorial of her Lord, crucified, buried and risen.

- The tabernacle is emptied before the liturgy begins.
- Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for the liturgy of Good Friday as well. There is to be no public reception of the Holy Eucharist under both species – only the sacred host.
- The oils blessed and consecrated at the Chrism Mass may be carried into church either before the Mass or during the entrance procession or at the offertory.
- The washing of feet (“mandatum”) is an act of humility and service which inspires the community to do the same. The washing of the feet may be done safely and with minimal contact. All participants, including the priest, should wear masks and individual towels should be used for wiping and drying feet.
- At the end of Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the place of reposition following the prayer after communion. The faithful should be encouraged to spend time in adoration throughout the remainder of the evening.
- After Mass, the altar is stripped, and the sanctuary is cleared of flowers and adornments. The crosses may be covered in red or violet for Good Friday.

Good Friday, April 15, 2022

On this day, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick.

- The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer is encouraged.
- The altar should be completely bare: without cross, without candles, without cloths
- During the veneration of the cross, only one cross should be used.
- During the continuing pandemic, the faithful may reverence the cross with either a bow or a genuflection. They should not be allowed to kiss or embrace the cross.

Holy Saturday, April 16, 2022

By most ancient tradition, this is the night of keeping vigil for the Lord in which, following the Gospel admonition, the faithful, carrying lighted lamps, should be looking for the Lord when he returns, so that at his coming he may find them awake and have them sit at his table.

- The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer is encouraged.
- The Easter Vigil begins at a time that allows the new fire to break the darkness of night. The end of civil twilight on this evening is 8:19 p.m.; therefore, so that it can begin in total darkness, the Vigil should not be scheduled before 8:00 p.m. Also, the Easter Vigil is to be the only liturgy celebrated on this evening.
- The Blessing of the Fire and Preparation of the Paschal Candle may take place with the assembly. Congregational tapers may be used.
- Adults and children of catechetical age (the Elect) being initiated during the Easter Vigil are to receive all three sacraments (Baptism/Confirmation/Eucharist) together at this liturgy. If there are multiple catechumens and candidates in a parish, care should be taken that the priest celebrates these rites safely including the use of fresh water for each baptism and the possible use of an instrument to anoint with Chrism.
- Due to the continuing pandemic, baptism may be administered by pouring and not immersion.
- The faithful can be sprinkled with fresh holy water following the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

Easter Sunday, April 17, 2022

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 Easter Foods - These blessings may continue to take place as usual this year.