



**UPDATE ON LITURGICAL DIRECTIVES
AND INFORMATION FOR THE CELEBRATION
OF PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD,
THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM
AND EASTER TIME 2021**

**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021**

The public worship of Almighty God that takes place with the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy is the duty and privilege of the Church in all her members. Although the pandemic endures, it is now possible to celebrate the Sacred Liturgy with very few accommodations in light of the civil restrictions that remain in place in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As always, it is most important to maintain the balance between proper worship and safety. Pastors, especially, are encouraged to follow these directives without imposing further limits that are not necessary nor are truly for the pastoral benefit of all.

GENERAL POINTS

- The faithful continue to be dispensed by the Archbishop from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice.
 - *The faithful are to be encouraged persuasively to return to in-person Sunday Mass and the celebration of all the Sacraments, especially for those who are in good health. It is safe to go to church! At this time, pastors and their staffs should consider ways to reach out to all parishioners with an invitation to return to the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. Plans are in progress for an archdiocesan invitation to support the parishes in this regard.*
 - *For the spiritual and pastoral benefit of the faithful, several weeks notice will be provided as to when the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will be reinstated by the Archbishop. Even when the obligation is restored, the faithful, as always, are excused legitimately from the obligation when they are seriously sick or caring for someone who is.*
- Live stream services may continue for Mass and other sacramental celebrations and devotions. *Live stream celebrations, Masses celebrated in real time, are always preferred over*

recordings. Pastors should begin to plan now on the gradual reduction of live stream services in favor of encouraging the irreplaceable need for the faithful to participate in the Sacred Liturgy in-person. The Holy See recommends that the faithful be directed to the live streamed celebrations of the Bishop for Holy Week, especially as a sign of unity in the local church. Not every parish is expected to provide live stream or recorded services. However, those parishes that do not have this service, should direct the faithful to this possibility at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, Philadelphia. *All live streaming information for Palm Sunday, the Chrism Mass and the Sacred Paschal Triduum at the Cathedral Basilica will be published on the Archdiocesan website.*

- In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in accord with the repeated directives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Centers for Disease Control, the mitigating standards of sanitation, social distancing and numbers of occupancy, as already presented in the directives published on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 continue to be in force.
 - As far as sanitation, in addition to routine general cleaning, high-touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected regularly. The faithful should have available at the entrances to church the possibility for hand sanitation.
 - As far as social distancing, typically several feet are to be observed between people who are not usually together as a group or of the same family or of the same household when seated in the nave.
 - Face coverings/masks are strongly encouraged for everyone (except those 2 years of age and younger and those who for health or other reasons cannot wear a face covering/mask) in the nave throughout the celebration of Mass and other Sacraments. *People are not to be banned from the Sacraments if they are not wearing a face covering/mask.* However, they are to observe social distancing in the nave if they are not wearing a face covering/mask.
 - As far as numbers of occupancy, up to 75% of the church or place where Mass and the Sacraments are celebrated may be occupied. In general, seating should be at least in every other pew in the nave. This percentage also applies to the County of Philadelphia.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

Individual confession is the ordinary way of celebrating this Sacrament (see *Rite of Penance*, Chapter One) and should be available at published times. Confessions may also take place during the celebration of Mass, especially on Sundays. Priests may hear in the confessional as usual. Since the Sacrament involves a sustained period of time with the penitent, the priest and penitent are encouraged to wear a face covering/mask.

- Priests may choose to hear confessions in a ventilated place outside the confessional and adopt suitable distance. If this is the case, then the option for the penitent to confess anonymously, which belongs to the priest, is to be maintained. In every instance the inviolability of the sacramental seal is to be safeguarded.

- The faithful, who desire to celebrate the Sacrament but are inhibited for one reason or another should be catechized about the benefit of perfect contrition for sins and the gift of special indulgences at this time. For convenience sake, here is a description of perfect contrition:

Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by votum confessionis, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no. 1452).

Thus, perfect contrition requires • the love of God • the sincere desire for forgiveness • the ardent commitment to receive the sacrament of reconciliation when available.

- The third form in the *Rite of Penance (Chapter Three)*, frequently called general absolution, is not permitted in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, most of all because it requires both a grave necessity and a gathering of people. In addition, this form of absolution cannot take place without the explicit permission of the Archbishop.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRED LITURGY

The Schedule of Masses

- Keeping in mind the observance of social distancing, pastors and their staffs may add additional Masses, including overflow Masses in other suitable parish facilities, on Easter Sunday.
- Monitors can be set up in facilities adjacent to the church for overflow crowds with arrangements made for the reception of Holy Communion.
- *Permission is to be requested of the Archbishop for any outdoor celebrations of Mass and other liturgical celebrations through the Office for Divine Worship.*
- A template for announcements will be provided by the Archdiocese, similar to those provided at Christmas, for use in all parishes before Mass for Palm Sunday and Easter with instructions for social distancing and the reverent reception of Holy Communion.

- **Liturgical Ministers**

- All liturgical ministers—altar servers (vested), lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (if needed) - should be exercising their ministries in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

- **Liturgical Singing**

- It is possible to sing all the parts of the Mass as well as to have liturgical singing for the celebration of all the Sacraments.
- A preference should be given to singing antiphonally the Entrance and Communion, avoiding loud and forceful selections.

- Instrumental music may be used for preludes and postludes, for the Offertory and the Recessional.
 - For Palm Sunday and the Sacred Paschal Triduum, the chants provided in the *Roman Missal* should be given first consideration for use before others.
 - In addition to the use of cantors and instrumentalists, quartets and choirs, maintaining social distance, are permitted.
 - In addition to the organ and the keyboard, string, brass, and woodwind instruments may be used at this point.
 - Hymnals and worship aids may be used at this point.
 - Please check the website of the Office for Divine Worship for additional information on copyright regulations for live streaming the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.
- **For Mass**
 - Holy Water may be restored to the fonts with a plan for regular cleaning.
 - Incense may be used without any concern.
 - Priests, deacons and liturgical ministers are not expected to wear masks or gloves throughout the celebration of the Eucharist and other Sacraments.
 - The procession with the Gifts during the Offertory is omitted.
 - Ushers and Greeters do not need to wear gloves as they carry out their duties, especially with regard to the collections during Mass.
 - The Invitation and the use of the Sign of Peace and the distribution of the Precious Blood continue to be suspended.
 - Alternate signs of peace should not be introduced.
 - Priest concelebrants and assisting deacons receive the Blood of Christ typically by intinction.
 - Holding hands during the Lord's Prayer is not to take place.
 - Holy Communion:
 - Holy Communion is not to be distributed wearing gloves.
 - Holy Communion is to be distributed during the Communion Rite of each Mass and not at any other time.
 - The Communion procession should be single file.
 - The faithful are to be instructed to keep some distance in the Communion procession and when returning to their places.
 - Holy Communion in the hand continues to be the preference. However, no one is to be denied Holy Communion on the tongue. Purification/sanitation during Holy Communion is at the discretion of the Communion minister.
 - The face covering/mask should be removed for the reception of Holy Communion.

PALM SUNDAY, HOLY WEEK AND THE SACRED PASHCAL TRIDUUM

The celebrations for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and the Sacred Paschal Triduum are to be carried out as directed in the *Roman Missal*. The options provided in the *Roman Missal* that best suit the local pastoral circumstance are to be freely employed. The only exceptions to what is directed in the *Roman Missal* are the following:

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

- The Second or Third Form in the *Roman Missal* is to be used for the Entrance.
 - The First Form, the Procession, may be used if there is no civil restriction and the faithful can easily maintain some distance as they assemble and process.
- Palm is to be distributed as described in the *Roman Missal*.

CHRISM MASS

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Holy Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 10:00 AM in the Cathedral Basilica. The Holy Oils will be available following the Chrism Mass for use at the Easter Vigil. Separate directions have already been sent to the clergy. The Chrism Mass is not open to the public this year due to capacity limitations. However, it will be live streamed.

HOLY THURSDAY EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

- The washing of feet, which is always optional, is to be omitted in all instances.
 - *On Holy Thursday, Holy Communion may only be distributed to the faithful during Mass but it may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day.*

GOOD FRIDAY CELEBRATION OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

- The following is to be added as the 11th Solemn Intercession as suggested by the USCCB with the permission of Archbishop Perez:

XI. For an end to the pandemic

Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end to the coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world, that our God and Father will heal the sick, strengthen those who care for them, and help us all to persevere in faith.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty and merciful God, source of all life, health and healing, look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease; protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us and in your fatherly providence grant recovery to the stricken, strength to those who care for them, and success to those working to eradicate this scourge. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

- The veneration of the cross should take place with a genuflection or a bow. There is no need to touch or kiss the cross this year.

- *On Good Friday, Holy Communion is distributed apart from the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord only to the sick. On Holy Saturday, Holy Communion is only given as Viaticum.*
- Outdoor processions on Good Friday, such as for the Way of the Cross, may take place as usual as long as there is no civil restriction and the faithful can easily maintain some distance as they assemble and process.

THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT

- The Blessing of the Fire and Preparation of the Candle may take place outdoors as indicated in the *Roman Missal* if there is no civil restriction and the faithful can easily maintain some distance as they assemble and process.
 - As previously published, the Easter Vigil should not begin before nightfall. It may be helpful to know that sunset, according to a variety of models, occurs approximately at 7:30 PM on April 3, 2021. In general, given the variable date for Easter, it seems best to schedule the Easter Vigil each year for 8:00 PM or later.
 - Only full Christian Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist—for adults and school age children takes place at the Easter Vigil. The Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church with Confirmation and Communion, and the Confirmation and Communion of Baptized Catholics, takes place apart from the Easter Vigil.

SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

- The full sacramental initiation of adults is to take place at the Easter Vigil as usual. If for some reason, an adult cannot be present at the Easter Vigil for Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist, then permission is needed from the Archbishop for the Sacraments to take place at another time. Please contact the Office for Worship for this permission.
- The full sacramental initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist for school age children, can take place at the Easter Vigil or at any time mutually convenient for all.
- The Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church can take place at any time mutually convenient to all except at the Easter Vigil.
- The Archbishop grants the faculty to priests of the Archdiocese to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for baptized adult Catholics even beyond Pentecost 2021 until further notice.
- The Archdiocesan celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation that typically takes place on Pentecost Sunday at the Cathedral Basilica will not take place this year. These candidates should be confirmed by the Bishop when he visits the parish, or by the pastor. The 2016 edition of the *Order of Confirmation* must be used for the Conferral of the Sacrament.

BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN

- The Baptism of children can be celebrated without any adjustments to what is found in the *Order of Baptism of Children* (revised edition in use since Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020).

CONFIRMATION FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

- The August 17, 2020 directives for Confirmation for school age children are still in force. These can be found on the website of Arise and the Office for Divine Worship.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

- The directions, especially with regard to no processions and seating, found in the August 17, 2020 directives for Confirmation for school age children are to be followed.

FIRST PENANCE FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

- The directions, especially with regard to no processions and seating, found in the August 17, 2020 directives for Confirmation for school age children are to be followed. The additional norms for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation as stated above are also to be observed.

Please see the website of the Office for Divine Worship for the complete listing of liturgical updates during the COVID-19 Pandemic, for information on the ARISE initiative of the Archdiocese, and other resources, at <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/home-page/news/>.

Thank you so very much for your continued generous assistance throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at fr.dgill@archphila.org.

In Christ,
Father Dennis Gill
Director
Office for Divine Worship