



Celebration of Holy Week in Parish Churches of the Archdiocese of Sydney during COVID-19 Pandemic, AD 2020

- The Holy See has, by decrees of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments dated 19th and 25th March 2020, given instructions as to how the liturgies of Holy Week may be celebrated this year taking into account the significant restrictions on gatherings currently in force in many places due to the worldwide Coronavirus emergency.
- The effect of the decrees from the Holy See are to permit certain simplifications to the rites of Holy Week, so that a priest who must, due to restrictions around the assembly and movement of people, celebrate these liturgies in the parish church by himself or with the assistance of only one or two other people, can more readily do so. These liturgies are to be celebrated in Parish Churches only and not other churches or chapels.
- Many priests are planning to live-stream the Holy Week liturgies. Even if live-streaming is not possible, priests should try to notify their parishioners of the times they will be celebrating the liturgies, so that the people may unite themselves with their parish in prayer at those times.
- Priests are reminded of the government's and the Archbishop's directives regarding closure of churches, size of gatherings (even indoors), distancing, hygiene etc. Priests must not only observe these directives scrupulously but also, where they are live-streaming, be seen to be observing them.
- In the celebration of these liturgies certain elements are presumed to be sung. Nevertheless, what cannot be sung due to the lack of a capable priest or minister may be said.

Palm Sunday - 5th April

Mass of Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

The church may appropriately be decorated with palms. Given the very small number of ministers possible, and the absence of a congregation to process or receive blessed palms, it may be best that the Mass begins **within the church** with the Third Form of Commemoration of the Lord's entry into Jerusalem, **the "Simple Entrance"** (*Roman Missal* pg. 309). In this case there is no blessing of palms or Gospel of the Entry into Jerusalem. The Entrance Antiphon (Cf. Jn 12.1, 12-13; Ps 24(23): 9-10) serves as the commemoration of the Lord's entry. If the Solemn Entrance takes place instead, it too **must take place entirely inside the church**, and if at the Solemn Entrance palms are blessed for later distribution to the faithful, it is very important that nothing is done to cause people to gather outside the church for the palms. Blessed palms should be kept aside for people to receive at some future time.

The procedure is for the Mass of Palm Sunday this year, using the Simple Entrance, is:

- Entrance Antiphon.
- Veneration of the Altar.
- Sign of the Cross, Greeting.

- Penitential Act, Kyrie.
- Collect.
- First Reading.
- Responsorial Psalm.
- Second Reading.
- Gospel Acclamation.
- Gospel of the Passion (either long or short version)
- The Mass continues as usual for Palm Sunday.

Holy Thursday - 9th April

Mass of the Lord's Supper

The Washing of Feet is omitted. The procession to the Altar of Repose at the end of Mass is omitted and the Blessed Sacrament kept in the tabernacle. In places where there are several priests, it is especially permitted this year that each priest may celebrate individually a Mass without the presence of the people, which is not usually the case on Holy Thursday.

The procedure for the Mass of the Lord's Supper this year is therefore:

- Entrance Antiphon.
- Sign of the Cross, etc.
- Penitential Act, Kyrie, Gloria (church bells rung).
- Collect.
- Liturgy of the Word as usual.
- Liturgy of the Eucharist as usual for this Mass until after the reception of Holy Communion.
- After the reception of Holy Communion, and allowing a suitable time for silent thanksgiving, the Prayer After Communion is said and the ciborium with hosts for Communion on the following day and for the sick may simply be placed in the tabernacle. The usual procession to an altar of repose is not necessary.
- The priest may of course spend further time inside the closed church in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.

Good Friday - 10th April

Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

At this liturgy, there is to be a special intention inserted into the Universal Prayer (Solemn Intercessions). This is being prepared and will be forwarded as soon as it is approved.

At the Adoration of the Holy Cross, even if there is someone else present, veneration of the Cross by kissing it is limited to the Celebrant only.

The procedure for this liturgy is therefore:

- The altar is completely bare, without cloths or candles.
- The priest goes to the altar in silence, reverences it, and prostrates or kneels and prays for a while.
- Standing, omitting "Let us pray", priest says with hands extended the prayer, "Remember your mercies..." or "O God, who by the Passion of Christ"
- First Reading
- Responsorial Psalm
- Second Reading

- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel - narrative of the Lord's Passion
- A brief homily.
- Silent prayer for a while.
- The Solemn Intercessions, as given in the *Roman Missal* (pg. 348) with the addition of the special intention:
 - For Holy Church
 - For the Pope
 - For all orders and degrees of the Faithful
 - For Catechumens
 - For the unity of Christians
 - For the Jewish people
 - For those who do not believe in Christ
 - For those who do not believe in God
 - For those in public office
 - For those in distress
 - For those in tribulation
 - Special intention for those who find themselves in distress, the sick, and the dead from the COVID19 virus. **(Text to be advised)**
- The Adoration of the Cross
 - The Showing of the Cross: the First Form of the unveiling will probably be the most practical and appropriate given the absence of the people.
 - Then the priest Celebrant approaches the Cross, (having removed the chasuble and his shoes if appropriate), and reverences it. Only the Celebrant kisses the Cross. Others present reverence the Cross but without kissing or touching it.
 - The Cross is then placed at the altar and lighted candles are placed around or on the altar or near the Cross. In the present circumstances it will be better for the candles to be placed at the altar, as there will not be candles carried accompanying the Blessed Sacrament at Holy Communion.
- Holy Communion follows (as per pg. 371 of the *Roman Missal*), adapted for a lack of ministers:
 - A cloth and corporal are unfolded upon the altar
 - The Missal is placed on the altar
 - The priest brings the Blessed Sacrament from the tabernacle, places it on the altar, uncovers it and genuflects
 - "At the Saviour's command..."
 - "Our Father..." and "Deliver us, Lord..." etc.
 - Priest's prayer of preparation, "May the receiving..."
 - "Behold the Lamb of God.." etc
 - Holy Communion is received
 - After Communion, the Blessed Sacrament is put back in the tabernacle.
- The Prayer After Communion is said.
- The blessing prayer, "May abundant blessing, O Lord..." is prayed.
- After genuflecting to the Cross, the priest leaves the sanctuary. Afterwards, the altar is stripped but the Cross remains with candles.

Holy Saturday - 11th April

Catechumens

As per the Archbishop's instructions issued previously, Baptisms are to be delayed except in emergency. Therefore the rites proper to the Catechumenate on Holy Saturday will not be performed.

The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

Preparation and blessing of a fire is omitted. There is no procession. Instead, the Paschal Candle is lit, simply from a convenient source, and the Easter Proclamation is sung or said according to either the longer or shorter form (Cf. Roman Missal pg. 382 to 396.) The Liturgy of the Word follows its usual special form for this liturgy, including at least three Old Testament readings with their Psalms and Prayers, and including the Exodus 14 passage and its canticle. The directives from the Holy See indicate that the "Baptismal Liturgy" section of the Easter Vigil in these circumstances maintains only the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises." The Litany, Blessing of the Font and the Blessing of Baptismal Water are therefore omitted. The Renewal of Baptismal Promises might include the (non-baptismal) Blessing of Water found on pg. 414 of the Australian edition of the *Roman Missal*. If water is blessed, some may be set aside for the use of the faithful at a later time. It is very important that nothing is done to cause people to gather outside the church to obtain the blessed water.

The procedure for the Easter Vigil will therefore be:

- The Easter Candle is lit and incensed
- The Easter Proclamation is sung (or said)
- The Liturgy of the Word takes places according the proper pattern for the Easter Vigil, i.e.
 - O.T. Reading
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Prayer
 - O.T. Reading
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Prayer
 - O.T. Reading
 - Responsorial Psalm
 - Prayer
 - Etc.
- After the final Old Testament reading, the altar candles are lit and the Gloria is sung or said during which bells may be rung.
- The Collect is prayed.
- The Epistle is read.
- The triple Alleluia is intoned and Psalm 117(118) is proclaimed.
- Gospel.
- Homily.
- Blessing of Water, pg. 414 of Roman Missal, not of Baptismal Water, may take place
- Renewal of Baptismal Promises pg. 418-419 of Roman Missal.
- Sprinkling with Water, only if there is somebody present to be sprinkled.
- Universal Prayer ("Prayer of the faithful") could be omitted if there is no-one else present and if not live-streaming.
- The Priest goes to the altar and begins the Liturgy of the Eucharist in the usual way pg. 421 of Roman Missal.
- Remainder of the Mass as usual for the Easter Vigil.

- Double Alleluia at the dismissal and throughout the Octave of Easter.

Easter Sunday - 12th April

Mass during the Day

The Mass follows the usual form for Easter Sunday. Even at a Mass without a congregation present in the church, the Archbishop advises the **Renewal of Baptismal Promises** may take the place of the Creed, with the Celebrant inviting those watching online to join in.

Approved by (Most Rev.) Anthony Fisher O.P., Archbishop of Sydney, 30 March 2020

(Very Rev.) Don Richardson

Director of the Archdiocesan Office for Liturgy