



Guidelines for Lent, Holy Week, The Sacred Paschal Triduum & Easter Season 2018

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, #249

REGULATIONS FOR FAST AND ABSTINENCE

The following may be reproduced in parish bulletins for the purpose of reminding the faithful of the regulations for fast and abstinence:

**Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018 and Good Friday, March 30, 2018,
are days of fast and abstinence.**

All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.

I FASTING is to be observed 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.

I 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. When in doubt concerning fast and abstinence, the pastor or pastoral administrator should be consulted.

- Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018 and Good Friday, March 30, 2018 are days of fast and abstinence. All the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.
- Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are the three traditional disciplines of Lent. The faithful, the Elect and those Candidates preparing for Reception into Full Communion in the Catholic Church 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.

For those involved in the *RCIA*, the *Rite of Election* and the *Call to Continuing Conversion* will be celebrated on Saturday, February 17, 2018 at 7:30 pm (the Vigil of the First Sunday of Lent) at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish, Saginaw, and on Sunday, February 18, 2018 at 2:30 pm (the First Sunday of Lent) at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish, Saginaw. Further questions can be directed to the Office of Liturgy (989.797.6665).

- Bishop Cistone will call those preparing for Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion to the Easter Sacraments which will be administered at the coming Easter Vigil. (*CB 250, 408-419 and RCIA 118-127*).
- The *Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election* may be celebrated in parishes (*RCIA 106 – 117; consult the Memorandum published by the Office of Liturgy and sent to parishes on January 19th*). Once again this celebration will be the Rite of Election of Catechumens and the combined rite involving the calling of the candidates for Reception into Full Communion.
- The Readings for the First Sunday of Lent (Year B) will be used.

The *Penitential Rite* for baptized candidates preparing for *Reception into Full Communion* during the Easter Season may be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent, February 25, 2018 (*RCIA 459-472*).

The *Scrutinies* for the Elect are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the texts from the *Ritual Mass for the Celebration of the Scrutinies* found in the Roman Missal. The Readings for Year A are used in these Masses (*RCIA 146, G: RCIA C: 1-4*).

▪ 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 Penance to be celebrated during Lent in a more solemn form, as described in the *Rite of Penance* (*CB 251*). 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 so that all may be served adequately. Ideally, the faithful would celebrate the Sacrament of Penance before the Sacred Paschal Triduum begins; however, it is also now permitted to offer this sacrament on Good Friday. Efforts should be made to educate and plan accordingly (*RP 13*). Priests are encouraged to make the Sacrament of Penance generously available to our people.

NB: A sample Penance Liturgy is presently being prepared by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) and will be sent out to each parish upon its arrival in the Office of Liturgy.

▪ 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. The season of Lent may also reflect a change in the color of vesture and employ the option to use violet (*OCF 39*).

On Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, a Funeral Mass may not be celebrated. 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 are not to be encouraged. However, if a marriage does take place, there should be 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 Sacred Paschal Triduum (consult *RM III*).

▪ **Communion for the Sick and Viaticum**

Communion may be brought to the sick on all days of Holy Week **except** Holy Saturday. On Holy Saturday Communion may be given only as viaticum. Please see the new pastoral instruction in the *Roman Missal, 3rd Typical Edition* (#33) for the dismissal of those taking Communion to the sick after the Mass of the Lord’s Supper.

▪ **Anointing of the Sick**

The sick may be anointed on any day of Lent and throughout the Sacred Paschal Triduum in response to pastoral need.

LENT AND THE WORSHIP ENVIRONMENT

During Lent the altar should not be enhanced with flowers. The Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare Sunday*), solemnities and feasts are exceptions to this norm. On the Fourth Sunday of Lent rose-colored vestments may be used (*CB 252* and see *Ordo*).

The practice of covering statues, images and crosses during the season of Lent is no longer suppressed in the United States. Crosses are uncovered following the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday. Sacred images in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the beginning of the Easter Vigil (see *Ordo*.) The cross is covered on Good Friday (*Roman Missal: 5th Sunday of Lent and CL 26* and *Ordo*).

LENTEN LITURGICAL PREPARATIONS

During Lent, a “season of penance,” the Penitential Act takes on a significant character during the celebration of the Eucharist. The *Roman Missal* offers three (3) different forms during The Introductory Rites:

- The *Confiteor* (“I confess...”) which is a powerful communal confession of sin;
- The *Litany* with invocation addressed to Christ (many models in both the “Order of the Mass” and in “Appendix VI”); and
- The *Dialogue* between the priest and the people.

To highlight the penitential character of Lent you may consider chanting (or having the cantor sing) the *Kyrie* (or Lord, have mercy).

+ The Roman document *Paschale Solemnitatis* strongly recommends that, during the entire Season of Lent, the Faithful have a responsibility to pray for sinners and to include this intention in the Prayers of the Faithful. Likewise, whether there are Elect or Candidates in the parish or not, it is also good to pray for those who, throughout the entire Church – and most especially here in the Diocese of Saginaw – are preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil and throughout the Easter Season.

+ The use of the 3rd option for The Mystery of Faith during the Eucharistic Prayer (“Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free”) may be the more appropriate choice for Lent.

PARTICULAR LITURGIES DURING THE SEASON OF LENT & HOLY WEEK

† **ASH WEDNESDAY, February 14, 2018**

The blessing and distribution of ashes may take place at either a celebration of the Eucharist or at a Liturgy of the Word (see *Ordo*).

- The blessing and distribution of ashes follow the homily.
- The Penitential Act is omitted in all celebrations of the Eucharist on this day.
- The Season of Lent begins at MIDNIGHT on the morning of Ash Wednesday. It is not possible to anticipate Ash Wednesday with a Vigil Mass (or a Liturgy of the Word with the Distribution of Ashes) on Tuesday evening.

† **rites of Election, February 17 and 18, 2018**

Each year on the 1st Sunday of Lent, Bishop Cistone “elects” the catechumens from our parishes here in the diocese to their final preparation for reception of the Easter Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) at this year’s Easter Vigil. It is the custom in our local diocese to also celebrate the *Call to Continuing Conversion* for the candidates within our parish communities who will be received into full communion in the Roman Catholic Church with the reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

NB: Please see Appendix I of these guidelines for the scheduling of parishes to attend the Rites of Election on either Saturday, February 17th at 7:30 pm or Sunday, February 18th at 2:30 pm.

† **solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Monday, March 19, 2018**

Since the 1870’s, Saint Joseph was declared by Pope Pius IX as the Patron of the Universal Church. As such, it ranks as a Solemnity on the Liturgical Calendar and has its own Mass prayers and preface, along with the recitation of both the Gloria and Creed. As per the *ORDO*, white vestments are worn this day.

† **solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, transferred to Monday, April 9, 2018**

In the gospel assigned to this date, the angel announces that Mary was chosen to be the Mother of Jesus, the Mother of God. Thus, this is a Solemnity on the Liturgical Calendar and has its own Mass prayers and preface, along with the recitation of both the Gloria and Creed. As per the *ORDO*, white vestments are worn this day when the Solemnity is celebrated.

† **Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, March 25, 2018**

On this day the Church remembers Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish the Paschal Mystery. The commemoration on this day, with the blessing of palms and the procession, and like all the Church’s liturgy, is not an historical re-enactment (of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem), but rather a ritual action that marks our entry into Holy Week and the celebration of the Christian Passover (see the *Ordo*).

- 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 penitential rite.
- The Passion proclaimed on this day is essential to the liturgy and cannot be omitted. It may be proclaimed (either read or chanted) using one, three, or more readers. Lay persons are allowed to do any of the parts.
- Red Mass Vestments are worn for both the Procession and the Eucharist which follows.

† **THE CHRISM MASS (with the Renewal of Priestly Promises), Tuesday, March 27, 2018**

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Tuesday, March 27, 2018, at 10:30 a.m. at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish. No other parochial services that may conflict with the Chrism Mass should be scheduled that morning in the Diocese of Saginaw.

NB: Further information and instructions regarding the Chrism Mass will be forthcoming from the Office of Liturgy.

PARTICULAR LITURGIES DURING THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

† **THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (at the Evening Mass), Thursday, March 29, 2018**

Lent ends with the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, which is the principal Liturgy of the day. The tabernacle is empty (and open) before the Liturgy begins. Communion under both forms is highly recommended. Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for the Liturgy of Good Friday as well (see *Ordo*).

- Only the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper is permitted. All efforts should be made that there be only one Mass of the Lord's Supper which would include the many languages and cultures of a particular parish community. If pastoral needs of a particular ethnic group in a parish so dictate, another Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated in their language.
- During the singing of the *Glory to God* the church bells, both outdoors and indoors, are rung. The bells remain silent until the *Glory to God* at the Easter Vigil.
- The "Washing of the Feet" (mandatum) should be celebrated in a way that allows for people to participate visually. Fuller instructions are provided in the *Ordo*.
- The reception of the Holy Oils may take place in individual parishes either before the celebration of Mass or at another time that seems more appropriate.
- Following the *Prayer After Communion*, the *Blessed Sacrament* is transferred to the place of Reservation. This may be the usual tabernacle if it is in a separate chapel or area removed from the sanctuary. The place of reservation should be noble yet simply decorated.
- Under no circumstances is the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed in a monstrance or ciboria. (CL 55, 56)
- 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).
- After Mass, the altar is stripped. It is fitting that any crosses in the church be covered with a red or purple veil.
- Votive candles should not be lit before the images of saints (CL 57).

† **FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (Good Friday), March 30, 2018**

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

The celebration of the Lord's Passion, the principal celebration of this day, should take place about 3:00 pm. If pastoral need dictates, there may be another celebration later in the day, especially in another language for pastoral necessity (see *Ordo*).

- The Passion may be proclaimed or chanted using one, three, or more readers. Lay persons are allowed to do any of the parts.
- During the veneration of the cross, only one cross should be used. However, if the number of people is too great to permit individual veneration, other crosses may be used.
- Red Mass Vestments are worn for all liturgical celebrations on this day including Morning Prayer and the Stations of the Cross.
- This Liturgy, by its very nature, may not be celebrated in the absence of a priest.

NB: See Appendix II on the “Stations of the Cross”

† **EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD (the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night), Saturday, March 31, 2018**

The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer (with the incorporation of preparatory rites of the *RCIA*), is strongly encouraged.

According to custom, the **Blessing of Food** may take place before or after the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday or on Easter morning for consumption at the first meal of Easter, when fasting is ended and the Church is filled with joy. The rite, found in the *Book of Blessings* (Chapter 54), is to be followed replacing all other variations of this customary blessing. According to Liturgical Norms, it is not appropriate to sing Easter Hymns or verses containing the “Alleluia” before its solemn intonation at the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

The Easter Vigil should begin at a time that allows for new fire to break the darkness of night.

NB: Therefore, by way of reminder, in the Diocese of Saginaw the Easter Vigil may not be scheduled before 8:30 pm.

- Questions on scheduling and multiple celebrations should be directed to the Office of Liturgy.
- The Lucernarium calls for a “blazing fire” to be prepared outside of the Church. Prudence dictates that this fire must be supervised, that there be a fire extinguisher in the vicinity of the fire, that there be a responsible person who is capable of extinguishing the fire, and that there be a means of readily contacting the fire department if the fire gets out of control.
- The Preparation of the Easter Candle is no longer optional. The Easter Candle must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size, 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*).

Considerations and Clarifications Regarding the Paschal Candle(s) at the Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord (The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night)

[Issued from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship 2014]

1. What considerations should be given for the paschal candle used at the Easter Vigil?

This candle should be made of wax, never be artificial, be replaced each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. The paschal candle is the symbol of the *light of Christ, rising in glory*, scattering the darkness of our hearts and minds. Above all, the paschal candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choice of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed.

2. In the case of mission churches and cluster parishes, can multiple paschal candles be used for the Service of Light?

The *Roman Missal*, not envisioning the pastoral situation of mission churches or cluster parishes, specifies that only one paschal candle is used. To accommodate the particular circumstances, the Secretariat of Divine Worship might suggest that the candles from the mission churches or other parish churches could be present at the Easter Vigil, having been prepared in advance, and blessed alongside the main candle (perhaps having deacons or other representatives holding them). In keeping with the rubrics, for the lighting and procession only one candle should be lit (the principal one, or the one which will remain in that particular church). As the other candles in the congregation are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. Once all the candles are extinguished after the singing of the *Exsultet*, the other paschal candles are put aside. On Easter Sunday morning, those candles could be taken to each of the missions and carried [lit] in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary.

- The Exsultet (Easter Proclamation) should be sung by one who can do so with grace and beauty at the Ambo.
- At least three of the seven Old Testament readings must be proclaimed.
- The reading from Chapter 14 of the Book of Exodus with its canticle may never be omitted.
- The Glory to God should be sung. The ringing of the Church bells accompanies this hymn.
- The Elect (adults and children of catechetical age) being baptized during the Easter Vigil (RCIA 562-594) are to be confirmed by the presiding priest (RCIA 588).
- Only those Candidates for Reception Into Full Communion (with natural connections to the Elect to be baptized) should be Received Into Full Communion at the Easter Vigil. All questions regarding this should be addressed to the diocesan Office of Liturgy.

† **EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD** (at the Mass During the Day), Sunday, April 1, 2018 and EASTER TIME

The fifty days from Easter Sunday (April 1, 2018) to Pentecost (May 20, 2018), audibly and visually, are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better, as one "great Sunday." 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 and see *Ordo*).

- At all Masses on Easter Sunday the *Renewal of Baptismal Promises* and its accompanying *Rite of Sprinkling* replace the Creed (*RMIII* #72). A *Rite of Sprinkling* may appropriately replace the more usual *Penitential Act* during the Easter Season, at the very least on the Sundays of Easter including Pentecost.
- The **Ordo** reminds us that the Easter Sequence is to be sung or recited during the entire *Octave of Easter* (Easter Sunday through the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive).
- Instead of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, especially during Lent and Easter Time, the Baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church, known as the Apostles' Creed, may be used. (*OM*)
- The double *Alleluia* is added to the *sung* dismissal during the octave (Easter Vigil through the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive) and the Vigil of Pentecost and on Pentecost (*CB* 373).

Easter Liturgical Preparations

The only approved text for the Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*) is from the **Roman Missal III**. However, you may wish to explore the newly created musical arrangements which now use this approved text from various liturgical composers.

The use of the 1st option for *The Mystery of Faith* during the Eucharistic Prayer (“We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again”) may be the more appropriate choice for Eastertide.

Particular Liturgies During the Easter Season

† **The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Sunday, May 13, 2018**

In the Province of Michigan, the *Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord* has been transferred to Sunday and will be celebrated on Sunday, May 13, 2018. The *Solemnity of the Ascension* has a Vigil Mass with proper orations assigned for use (see **Ordo** and *RMIII*, pg. 431).

NB: Thursday, May 25, 2016 in the Province of Michigan is celebrated as Thursday of the 6th Week of Easter.

† **The Solemnity of Pentecost, Sunday, May 20, 2018**

- The Solemnity of Pentecost has a proper (“extended”) Vigil Mass. As many as four Old Testament readings (with Responsorial Psalms and proper orations) may be used before the intonation of the Glory to God.
- The Sequence of Pentecost is sung or recited at all Masses, both of the vigil and the day. [Consult **Ordo** for specific instructions].
- After Pentecost, the Easter candle is returned to its place near the baptismal font. It is not extinguished after the Gospel of either the Ascension or Pentecost.
- The double *Alleluia* is added to the sung dismissal during Masses of Pentecost and its Vigil (see **Ordo**).

CELEBRATIONS, COMMEMORATIONS & ANNIVERSARIES

Chrism Mass	Tuesday, March 27, 2018, 10:30 am, the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish
Mystagogia Mass & Adult Confirmation	Sunday, April 15, 2018, 5:30 pm, the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish
Mission Mass	Sunday, April 22, 2018, 5:30 pm, the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish
Religious Jubilee Mass	Wednesday, April 25, 2018, 5:30 pm, the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish
8th Grade Mass	Friday, May 4, 2018, 10:30 am, the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish
Priests' Jubilee Mass	Monday, June 18, 2018, 4:00 pm, the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish

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	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
OM	Order of Mass
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
RM	Rite of Marriage
RMIII	Roman Missal (3 rd Typical Edition)
RP	Rite of Penance

RESOURCES

- *Lectionary for Mass* (Cf: "Introduction")
- *The Roman Missal, 3rd Typical Edition* (Cf: "GIRM")
- *The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours & Celebration of the Eucharist 2018 (Ordo)* [Province of Michigan]
- *Sourcebook for Sundays, Seasons and Weekdays* (The Almanac for Pastoral Liturgy) [LTP, Chicago, IL] © 2018
- USCCB/Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship [Washington, DC]

AS OF THIS WRITING, THIS IS THE SCHEDULE FOR THE RITES OF ELECTION:

Parishes Scheduled for the Rite of Election
Saturday, February 17, 2018, 7:30
p.m.
at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption Parish

All Saints Parish, Bay City

St. Brigid of Kildare Parish, Midland

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Parish, Midland

St. Catherine of Siena Parish, Bay City

Blessed Sacrament Parish, Midland

St. Dominic Parish, Saginaw

Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption

St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Parish, Vassar

Christ the Good Shepherd Parish, Saginaw

St. Francis de Sales Parish, Bridgeport

Corpus Christi Parish, Bay City

St. Gabriel Parish, Auburn

Holy Family Parish, Saginaw

St. John XXIII Parish, Hemlock

Holy Spirit Parish, Saginaw

St. John Paul II Parish, Carrollton

Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish, Bay City

St. John Vianney Parish, Saginaw

Our Lady of Grace Parish, Sanford

St. Jude Thaddeus Parish, Essexville

Our Lady of Peace Parish, Bay City

St. Peter Parish, Chesaning

Prince of Peace Parish, Linwood

St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Saginaw

Sacred Heart Parish, Gladwin

St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Shepherd

St. Athanasius Parish, Harrison

**Parishes Scheduled for the Rite of Election
Sunday, February 18, 2018, 2:30
p.m.
at the Cathedral of Mary of the
Assumption Parish**

Annunciation of the Lord Parish,
Port Austin

Ave Maria Parish, Lexington

Blessed Trinity Parish, Frankenmuth

Good Shepherd Parish, Ubly

Holy Apostles Parish, Ruth

Holy Family Parish, Sandusky

Holy Name of Mary Parish, Harbor Beach

Holy Trinity Parish, Pinconning

Mary of the Immaculate Conception Parish,
St. Charles

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish,
Mt. Pleasant

Nativity of the Lord Parish, Alma

Our Lady Consolata Parish, Cass City

Our Lady of Hope Parish, Clare

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Caseville

Resurrection of the Lord Parish, Standish

Ss. Francis and Clare Parish, Birch Run

St. Agnes Parish, Freeland

St. Christopher Parish, Caro

St. Cyril Parish, Bannister

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Parish, Reese

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Saginaw

St. Hubert Parish, Bad Axe

St. Isidore Parish, Parisville

St. Joseph Parish, Saginaw

St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Beal City

St. Mark Parish, Au Gres

St. Mary University Parish, Mt. Pleasant

St. Michael Parish, Maple Grove

St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Ithaca

THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS**A Brief Description:**

By definition, this is a popular Catholic devotion accomplished by meditating on the Passion of Christ in front of depictions of various scenes originating from the ancient City of Jerusalem in following Christ's *Via Crucis*.

Traditionally, they are inscribed:

- I. Jesus Is Condemned to Death*
- II. Jesus Bears His Cross*
- III. Jesus Falls the First Time*
- IV. Jesus Meets His Mother*
- V. Jesus Is Helped by Simon*
- VI. Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus*
- VII. Jesus Falls a Second Time*
- VIII. Jesus Consoles the Women of Jerusalem*
- IX. Jesus Falls a Third Time*
- X. Jesus is Stripped of His Garments*
- XI. Jesus is Nailed to the Cross*
- XII. Jesus Dies on the Cross*
- XIII. Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross*
- XIV. Jesus is Laid in the Tomb*

If each station is identified with an individual cross (and not simply the number of the Station), a plenary indulgence is gained (once a day) for making the "Way of the Cross" by simply moving and meditating on the Passion and Death of Christ from one Station to the next. This devotion is customarily performed on First Fridays of each month and throughout the Season of Lent either individually or communally.

It is essential to also note that both biblically and liturgically speaking, the various devotional formats and booklets for the Stations of the Cross – because they follow the venerable *Via Crucis* and expansion of traditions throughout the ages – are not equivalent to the authentic scriptural accounts in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

A Liturgical and Pastoral Commentary:

Obviously because this is a popular devotional prayer (and not officially liturgical prayer), there are many versions of the Stations of the Cross – from traditional to contemporary intended for private prayer to interactive communal prayer. They are distributed by a variety of publishers (with or without official *Nihil Obstat* and/or *Imprimatur*) suggested for catechetical or individual purposes. We might caution pastors of parishes to preview materials presented for use in any public forum – be it classroom or worship space – to assure its Catholic authenticity.

Often times, parishes inquire about the use of the Stations of the Cross during Lent. While we have no official endorsement of any published product, as mentioned above we encourage the use of materials “officially” endorsed by a diocesan authority (thus the reason for a *Nihil Obstat* and/or *Imprimatur*) given since the Vatican Council II.

As devotional prayer, the Stations may be prayed throughout the entire year – not just during the Season of Lent. However, the scheduling of the Stations during Lent does have a definite popularity. They may be scheduled any day of the week and at any time of the day, which best suits the parish community. Parishes with Catholic Schools often times schedule the Stations and invite the parishioners to join them. Parishes with Faith Formation and/or Youth Ministry Programs likewise do the same.

Clearly, the Stations as devotional prayer are never intended to replace nor be in competition with any official liturgical prayer of the Catholic Church (e.g. Eucharistic Liturgy, Liturgy of the Hours, Adoration/Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, etc.). However, they may be offered as an extra devotional in addition to any of our official liturgical prayer. Another pastoral option is to have the parish worship space open and Stations of the Cross booklets available so that parishioners may privately pray them.

That being said, this brings us to the frequently asked question regarding the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday during the Sacred Paschal Triduum. *Paschalis Solemnitatis* (also known as a “Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts” - issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship – 1988) speaks to the importance of the official liturgical celebration on Good Friday (now called on the Liturgical Calendar as “Friday of the Passion of the Lord”) as the premier liturgical celebration of the day (as outlined in the Roman Missal III). In addition, along with the *ORDO*, it highly recommends that “on this day the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer be celebrated with the participation of the people in the churches” (cf. PS, no. 62). Liturgically speaking, this places the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer in higher prominence over any devotional prayer.

According to the USCCB's Committee on Divine Worship, *The Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (2002) further addresses the nature of liturgical prayer and devotional prayer on Good Friday. It states:

Clearly the central celebration of this day is the Good Friday celebration of the Lord's Passion. 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. In recent times, Passion processions, celebrations of the Stations of the Cross, and Passion Plays have become more common. In such representations, actors and spectators can be involved in a moment of faith and genuine piety. Care should be taken, however, to point out to the faithful that a Passion Play is a representation which is commemorative and they are very different from "liturgical actions" which are anamnesis, or the mysterious presence of the redemptive event of the Passion.

While obviously there is no prohibition for the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, we must seriously agree with the indication of these official liturgical guidelines. That is, our "official" liturgical prayer of the Church (e.g. Office of Readings and Morning Prayer) is unquestionably the preferential option for any supplementary communal prayer on Good Friday (in addition to the Friday of the Passion of the Lord – *Roman Missal III*). The *Roman Missal III* likewise indicates that Evening Prayer (Vespers) may be celebrated but not by those who have been present at the solemn afternoon liturgical celebration. In other words, this is a liturgical offering for those who were unable to attend the early celebration of Friday of the Passion of the Lord.

Further, given the directives from the *Roman Missal III* for the celebration of Friday of the Passion of the Lord which indicates that, immediately following the Good Friday liturgy, the Cross (already used for Part II: "The Adoration of the Holy Cross"), is to remain surrounded by lighted candles for on-going veneration. Surely, from both a liturgical and pastoral point-of-view, we therefore should not schedule any other devotional prayer or activity following such a powerful liturgical celebration.

In the case where a parish for pastoral reasons (cf: *Roman Missal III* – "Friday of the Passion of the Lord", no. 4) postpones the celebration of the Good Friday Liturgy until late afternoon or early evening, it appears from the above-mentioned guidelines that an offering of Morning Prayer or the Office of Readings would be best suited as alternative times of liturgical prayer if parishioners are unable to attend the evening Friday of the Passion of the Lord.

Here is one final pastoral consideration. If your parish community struggles with attempting to set a time for the majority of parishioners to gather at a clearly defined time on Good Friday and yet you cannot adequately accommodate all their work schedules, etc., the *Roman Missal III* offers a new pastoral resolve. You may request of the local Ordinary (Bishop) permission be granted to repeat the Friday of the Passion of the Lord at a later time.

Resources for Further Consideration:

- I. *Paschalis Solemnitatis – The Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*; Vatican – Congregation for Divine Worship, 1988.
- II. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal [GIRM]/Roman Missal III*; USCCB Publications.
- III. *“Eighteen Questions on the Paschal Triduum”*; USCCB – Committee on Divine Worship.
- IV. *Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist 2018 [ORDO]*.
- V. *Three Great Days: Preparing the Liturgies of the Paschal Triduum*; Liturgical Press – J. Helmes, 2016.

The Office of Liturgy Staff is here at the Diocese of Saginaw to be of service to you, so please feel free to contact us for any clarifications and/or further information (989) 797-6665:



Father Jim Bessert, Director



Father Pat O'Connor, Associate for Liturgical Art/Environment



Pam Bourscheidt, Associate for Liturgical Music



**Deb Popielarz, Office
Assistant**