

LENT AND THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM, 2012

Fasting and Abstinence Regulations

All Catholics 14 years and older must abstain from meat on the Fridays of Lent, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

All Catholics between ages 18¹ and 59 are to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

To fast means to eat one full meal; the other two meals that day should be less than the normal amount unless they are already at a minimum for good health. Eating between meals is not permitted; however, liquids including coffee, milk and fruit juices are allowed.

Wednesday, March 21 is an Archdiocesan Ember Day. Traditionally, Ember Days are days of prayer and fasting. The intention of this Ember Day is for effective faith formation of children and adults.

To fast means to eat one full meal; the other two meals that day should be less than the normal amount unless they are already at a minimum for good health. Eating between meals is not permitted; however, liquids including coffee, milk and fruit juices are allowed. Observance of the Ember Day is encouraged but not obligatory.

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE LITURGICAL SEASON

Lent and the Sacrament of Reconciliation

The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Penance during Lent. The Archbishop has asked the priests of the Archdiocese to make the Sacrament of Reconciliation generously available throughout Lent.

¹In 1983, the Code of Canon Law was amended and changed the age from 21 to 18.

Pastors should arrange an expanded schedule of confessions in preparation of Easter. The hours scheduled by any parish should not be so limited that an unreasonable burden would fall on neighboring parishes. It is suggested that parishes, in their respective clusters, arrange their schedules cooperatively so that all the faithful in their area are served adequately. Communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance are most appropriate during a season of penance. Please do not schedule a group penance service for the purpose of conferring general absolution without individual confessions.

Ideally, the faithful would celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation before the Triduum begins and efforts should be made to educate people about the liturgical reasons for this. However, many people, for devotional or practical reasons, will want to receive the sacrament during the Triduum. It would be helpful if there could be some opportunities for private confessions.

Sacraments of Initiation during Lent

Because Lent—in its liturgies, its scriptures, its place in parish life, and its history—is oriented toward the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism is somewhat incongruous during Lent itself. It is certainly inappropriate to celebrate adult baptism, except in danger of death, during Lent. The baptism of infants is also far more fitting on Easter and during the Easter season. The Sacrament of Confirmation – also an initiation sacrament – should be celebrated if possible during the Easter season or at another time of year rather than during Lent.

Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)

The Church today celebrates Christ's entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery. The memorial of this event is to be included in every Mass. The Roman Missal provides three forms for this: the Procession (before the principal Mass), the Solemn Entrance (before other well-attended Masses), and the Simple Entrance. If the Procession cannot be held, the Solemn Entrance may be used before the principal Mass. The Roman Missal should be studied carefully as ministers, planners and musicians prepare the liturgy. The prayers for the blessing of the palms are used whenever the Procession is celebrated; the penitential rite is omitted.

The Conclusion of Lent

Lent ends as the Church begins the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday night. That liturgy is the first moment of the Paschal Triduum.

The Liturgies of the Easter Triduum

The rites for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil as found in the Roman Missal and Lectionary are to be used in all parishes and institutions of the Archdiocese of Portland. Clergy, planners and musicians should study both texts and rubrics carefully.

The ideal is to have only one parish celebration on each of these days. Services for small homogenous groups or religious communities are generally discouraged and, in some cases, not permitted. When a parish has more than one language group, a second service in the other language is permitted and even encouraged, although in some situations it may be possible and beneficial to have a single service making use, in text and song, of both languages. This could give witness to the unity of the Church.

"Under no circumstances may perpetual exposition take place during the Easter Triduum." (Responses, July 1995)

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 to the church for the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass.

These days – from Thursday evening until Sunday afternoon – are to be a time apart: "The Easter Triduum of the passion and the resurrection of Christ is thus the culmination of the entire liturgical year." (*General Norms for the Liturgical Year, #18*). As far as possible, all preparation should be done beforehand so that for all – clergy, liturgical ministers, sacristans, and musicians – these may be days of peace, of prayer and vigil. Those responsible for liturgy should see to it that the liturgies of these days are characterized by care and dignity, by simplicity, by that deep joy which is announced in the entrance antiphon of Holy Thursday: "We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection."

Those who participate in these liturgies – lectors, musicians, acolytes, homilist and all ministers – should be selected because of excellence in their ministry. Planners, musicians and clergy should give first attention to the liturgy of the Vigil, then to the liturgical services of Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

Extra-liturgical services, such as concerts, should in no way detract from the preparation of music and liturgy for the Vigil, for Thursday's Mass of the Lord's Supper and Friday's Celebration of the Lord's Passion.

Lent and Eastertime are centered by and in the Triduum. The very heart of the Triduum is the Vigil; for these the fasting, prayer and scripture reading culminate in the celebration of initiation: baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. This celebration by the local Church is possible only when faithful and catechumens have journeyed together toward this night. Parishes which have not yet begun the full practice of the catechumenate (as found in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*) are reminded that the RCIA is now mandated for use in the dioceses of the United States.

Throughout the Triduum, parishes are encouraged to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours.

Holy Thursday

The evening Mass of the Lord's Supper should be celebrated at the most suitable evening hour. There may be a liturgy on Thursday morning only "for those who are *in no way* able to take part in the evening Mass." This would discourage school Masses, but it would be appropriate for children to take part in other services marking the end of Lent and the approach of the Triduum. It would be appropriate to pray Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. Thus the ideal is a single Holy Thursday Mass in a parish, and only the inability of the space to accommodate those who wish to attend should suggest the possibility of a second Mass. In no way should the scheduling of a second liturgy cause either liturgy to be rushed. The private offering of any Mass is strictly forbidden.

The washing of the feet or mandatum is encouraged in all parishes. This rite should be characterized by its simplicity, allowing the powerful gesture of the servant Christ to model for us the charity and humility required of all Christ's disciples. In the washing of feet we see our commitment to one another and the extent of that commitment.² Parish staffs should strive to carry out the mandatum reverently and graciously and avoid other rites and statements of commitment which are inappropriate at the liturgy of Holy Thursday. The renewal of priestly commitment from the Chrism Mass is not to be used at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, nor should there be any attempt to imitate the Jewish Seder on Holy Thursday or, in fact, on any other occasion. Teaching about the Passover supper is more appropriately done by a Jew.

² "It has become customary in many places to invite both men and women to be participants in this rite in recognition of the service that should be given by all the faithful to the Church and to the world." Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, 1987.

It is not necessary that the number of persons whose feet are washed be twelve.

The Roman Missal instructs that the collection of gifts and money today be for the poor.

The tabernacle should be empty before the liturgy today. Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for communion today and tomorrow. Though Holy Communion may be brought to the sick today, communion may be distributed at the church itself only within the Mass.

Communion under both kinds is strongly encouraged. This calls for care in planning whenever it is done. A sufficient number of communion ministers should be used and the whole of the communion rite should be carefully practiced so that it can be done with great dignity.

Following the prayer after communion, the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the place of reposition. This may be the usual tabernacle if it is in an area removed from the sanctuary. The rite for this procession is described in the Roman Missal.

“The faithful should be encouraged to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable period of time during the night, according to local circumstances, but there should be no solemn adoration after midnight.” (Roman Missal) In fact, the nature of the Triduum before the Easter Vigil is that of prayer and vigil and anticipation. Fasting is one expression of this. Another is private and communal prayer. Thus even after the formal period of adoration on Thursday night, the faithful may be invited to come at any and all hours to watch and pray between Thursday’s liturgy and the Easter Vigil.

Good Friday

The celebration of the Lord’s Passion should take place about 3:00 p.m. but for pastoral reasons may be at a later hour or as early as 12 noon. The service may be repeated only when the number wishing to attend would be too large for the church. The parish priest is the appropriate minister for this solemn liturgy. The liturgy for Good Friday makes no provision for any form of concelebration.

Holy Communion is distributed only within the liturgy of the Lord’s Passion, but may be taken to the sick at any time of the day.

A collection is taken today for those pastoral, charitable, educational and social works that the Church supports in the Holy Land for the welfare of Christians and local communities as well as the upkeep of the holy places. The suggested time for the collection is before the veneration of the cross. Proceeds

are to be forwarded to the Financial Office of the Archdiocese of Portland by the end of May, 2012.

The general intercessions are to follow the wording and form handed down by ancient tradition, maintaining all full range of intentions, so as to signify clearly the universal effect of the passion of Christ, who hung on the cross for the salvation of the whole world. ("Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts," Congregation for Divine Worship, January 16, 1988).

It is best not to sing the *Reproaches* during the veneration of the cross since they may be perceived as anti-Semitic. A better choice would be the ancient text of the trisagion: *Holy is God, holy and strong, holy immortal one, have mercy on us*" or other music that proclaims the mystery of the cross.

Though parishes may plan other services during the day and evening of Good Friday, it should be clear from the announcement of the schedule and from the care taken for the liturgy that the Celebration of the Lord's Passion has priority.

Holy Saturday

Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours is encouraged today.

Holy Communion may be given on this day only as Viaticum. Ordinary communion visits to the sick should be done earlier in the week and on Easter. Communion visits are not permitted on this day.

Parishes are reminded that the celebration of marriages is not permitted on Holy Saturday.

There is strong encouragement that the fasting prescribed for Friday continue through Saturday until the Vigil.

The Easter Vigil

"The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday." (Roman Missal) This year, sundown is at 7:47 (PDT). Normally, we calculate nightfall as one hour after sundown. The Easter Vigil should not begin until 8:30 p.m.

The Easter Vigil is the only liturgy that may be celebrated this night. All other Easter Masses are to be celebrated on Sunday morning or afternoon. Where overcrowding would be a problem, a parish may ask permission from the Chancery or from the Office of Worship for a second complete celebration of the Vigil. As on Thursday and Friday, a second Vigil liturgy in a second language of the parish is permitted but strong consideration should be given to a bilingual Vigil (using, for example, English for some of the readings and prayers and a second language for others).

The paschal candle should be worthy in size and beauty because of its role in the liturgy this night, throughout the Easter season, and at the celebration of baptism and burial throughout the year. Candles that are metal or plastic forms “refilled” by smaller candles or oil are inconsistent with the candle’s symbolic role and may not be used.

The reading of the Word of God is, in the words of the Roman Missal, “the fundamental element of the Easter Vigil.” Though the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced from seven to three, this is not done lightly. No one should look on this night’s liturgy as simply a “long Mass.” It is a Vigil and should be conducted as such (with appropriate catechesis through the bulletin and elsewhere beforehand). The readings and psalms should be given the greatest care in preparation and execution.

When adults are baptized at the Vigil, the liturgy attains its fullness for there is the paschal mystery of the Lord’s dying and rising present in our midst. When there are no adults to be baptized, the parish is encouraged to have the baptism of infants at the Vigil. The preparation of the baptismal liturgy should provide for its beauty and for the full preparation of the assembly. Planners and clergy will need to work with both the Roman Missal and the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The fullness of the rite of baptism comes when immersion is possible, or at least the pouring of water over the entire body.

Those who are baptized (with the exception of infants) or received into full communion with the Church are to be confirmed immediately afterwards by the priest at the Vigil liturgy. This ordinarily includes children of catechetical age.

For those adults who are being received into full communion during the Vigil Mass, it is most appropriate for them to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at an earlier time before the ceremony itself.

The tabernacle is empty for the Vigil. All bread for Holy Communion is to be consecrated at the Vigil.

Communion under both kinds is strongly encouraged for all the faithful.

The Easter Season

The Paschal Triduum leads us to the Easter season, the fifty days from Easter Sunday until Pentecost. This is the Church's most ancient season and, now that the full rites of Christian Initiation are being restored, it may again be possible for Eastertime to be kept as a special time for Catholics with its music, its customs, and its cycle of scriptures. The Triduum is concluded liturgically with Vespers on Easter evening.

Additional Notes

Baptized adults who have been previously catechized should not be confirmed at the Easter Vigil.

Mary Jo Tully

Chancellor