



Memo

Date: January 21, 2020

To: All priests and deacons

From: Patricia DeJarnett, Ph.D., Associate Director, Office for Divine Worship

Re: Annual Lenten & Easter Vigil regulations

This year, Holy Saturday will occur on April 11. Civil twilight in Atlanta will take place at 8:32 p.m. Civil twilight marks the point where the sun is six degrees below the horizon, and represents the earliest time when the Easter Vigil may begin. However, the sky is not yet completely dark at civil twilight, and so parishes may prefer to wait until nautical twilight, which takes place at 9:02 in Atlanta. The times for twilight will vary slightly elsewhere in the archdiocese.

The Easter Vigil is the greatest and most noble of all solemnities. Therefore it is only to be celebrated once in each parish. Parishes with multiple language groups should make arrangements for a single joint celebration of the Vigil. This directive is liturgical law and is found in the Roman Missal and in the Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Paschal Feasts.

The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on Sunday. The Mass of the Vigil, even if it is celebrated before midnight, is a paschal Mass of the Sunday of the Resurrection.

Anyone who participates in the Mass of the night may receive Communion again at Mass during the day. A priest who celebrates or concelebrates the Mass of the night may again celebrate or concelebrate Mass during the day.

Lent is a season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In order to see that our preparation for Easter has a communal, and not just an individual dimension, the Church gives us certain norms for a common Lenten observance. The Lenten guidelines for the Archdiocese of Atlanta are as follows:

- Abstinence from meat is observed on Ash Wednesday (February 26), Good Friday (April 10) and all the Fridays of Lent by all Catholics 14 years of age and older.
- Fasting is observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59 years of age. Those bound by this rule may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted as necessary to maintain strength according to one's needs, but eating solid foods between meals is not permitted.
- Those who are sick, pregnant or nursing, or whose health would be adversely affected by fasting or abstinence should not consider themselves bound by these norms.
- During the season of Lent, we are all called to embrace penances and to perform works of charity that reflect our desire for conversion of heart. Let us all pray fervently for those catechumens and candidates who will celebrate the Easter sacraments with us this year. May this Lent lead us all to a deeper union in Christ and with one another.