



# Memo

**Date:** March 15, 2021

**To:** Priests, deacons, brothers, sisters, principals and presidents, men and women religious, parish communicators, parish life coordinators and chancery staff

**From:** The Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.

**Re:** Instructions for Lent, Holy Triduum and Easter

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Dear Pastors & Ministry Leaders:

As we approach the season of Lent and the anniversary of the date we had to shutter our churches, let us give thanks for the researchers and healthcare workers who have helped us better understand and protect ourselves and our communities from COVID-19. We recognize that this pandemic is far from over, but we are happy to say we will be able to offer modified liturgies during Lent, the Holy Triduum and Easter this year with the people present. Let us pray that by this time next year, we will not have to be concerned about extra protocols and precautions as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. While the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass remains in place, Lent is a good time for those who are healthy to return to liturgy and sacraments. Parishes have added liturgies and numerous safety protocols so they can welcome people back safely.

The following guidelines are based upon the [Vatican's directives](#) issued in March 2020. Should the Vatican revise these guidelines for this year, you will receive a new memo.

## **Reconciliation**

Large Penance services should be avoided, but parishes should offer additional opportunities for people to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent. Priests may NOT offer a general absolution to their congregations.

## **Palm Sunday**

In accordance with instructions sent from the Vatican for Easter 2020, the Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated

within sacred buildings; in cathedral churches the second form given in the Roman Missal is to be adopted; in parish churches and in other places the third form is to be used. Parishes can distribute palms after Mass, but distribution should be arranged in such a way as to avoid crowding at the exit. Extra volunteers could be stationed in the narthex or outside the church to carefully hand out individual palms. Even those distributing palms outside should wear masks and clean their hands before and after distribution.

### **Chrism Mass**

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral of Christ the King on Tuesday, March 30, at 4:30 p.m. All priests are invited to the Chrism Mass and should RSVP [here](#). Priests in the archdiocese who decide not to attend the Chrism Mass in person are encouraged to join the livestream of the Chrism Mass.

### **Holy Thursday**

The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the procession is also omitted, and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle.

### **Good Friday**

In the Universal Prayer, Bishops will arrange to have a special intention prepared for those who find themselves in distress, for the sick and for the dead (cf. *Missale Romanum*). The adoration of the Cross by kissing shall be limited solely to the celebrant, but the congregation can reverence the Cross by a bow or genuflection, following the processional rubrics for communion in the parish.

### **Easter Vigil**

The Elect are to be baptized by sprinkling or by pouring water over their heads. Baptism by immersion is not allowed this year. For the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" by the faithful, the Sprinkling Rite is to be omitted.

The tradition of bringing food to church to be blessed at Easter should be discouraged.

### **Holy Water**

Holy water fonts should remain empty, but parishes can provide a container of holy water from which families can dispense some into their own container to take home.