



Memo

Date: March 30, 2020
To: Chancery and Catholic Charities Lake Park staff
From: The Most Reverend Joel M. Konzen, Diocesan Administrator
Re: Sacraments, Liturgies, RCIA, PSR

The Most Rev. Joel M. Konzen, SM, released the following instructions about Holy Week to pastors and parish leaders on Friday, March 27.

As we come closer to the blessed culmination of the Lenten season, I want to update our timetables relative to the sacred liturgies and the conduct of Palm Sunday and the Triduum, as well as to offer further comment on the administration of sacraments during this time.

PUBLIC MASSES

We will extend the suspension of public Masses in the Archdiocese through the First Sunday after Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday), hence through April 19, with another update to be offered prior to that weekend. If we should be granted the ability to return to public gatherings sooner, we will, of course, alter this plan accordingly.

SACRAMENTS

Reconciliation

It is no longer appropriate, given the local emergency accommodations, to hear confessions in confessional boxes or confined rooms. This is in keeping with the direction of both the Apostolic Penitentiary (See attached “Note from the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the current pandemic”) and USCCB (See: “The Care of Souls and the Forgiveness of Sins During This Pandemic” at the USCCB website). Individual confessions may be celebrated in a well-ventilated area, which can provide for social distancing and the confidentiality of the confession. The sacrament of Reconciliation is to be celebrated within spaces of the church or parish school buildings which have been prepared for the worthy celebration of the sacrament. If it can be done, it would be good to provide for the anonymity of the penitent for those who desire it. Spaces for confession should minimize the likelihood of multiple people

touching surfaces which the next penitent might contact. Additionally, some of you are under local restrictions that make it impractical to offer an indoor encounter of any kind.

The provision for general absolution is reserved in the Note from the Sacred Penitentiary to very special circumstances, e.g., a hospital ward in which a number of coronavirus patients are sequestered.

Note the guidance from the USCCB Secretariat of Doctrine and Canonical Affairs in “The Care of Souls and the Forgiveness of Sins During This Pandemic,” reminding of the ability to instruct souls regarding the opportunity to use the Church’s provision of an Act of Perfect Contrition:

“Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by *votum confessionis*, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no. 1452).” Perfect contrition requires:

- the love of God
- the sincere desire for forgiveness
- the ardent commitment to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as soon as possible, when available

Sacrament of the Sick and Viaticum

For the celebration of the “Last Rites,” Viaticum may be given along with the Anointing of the Sick with the observance of the special protocols (e.g., use of fresh oil, cotton balls/Q-tips, and medical gloves and masks).

To prevent the contamination of the Blessed Sacrament, the priest should bring only the amount of Holy Communion necessary for Viaticum.

Hospital chaplains are to be especially attentive to the directions of their medical institution and use prudence in moving from room to room in pastoral visits, if such visits are allowed.

All priests are reminded to offer the Apostolic Pardon (#265, small green *Pastoral Care of the Sick*) with or without a celebration of Anointing of the Sick.

Regarding the anointing of someone who has been diagnosed with the coronavirus, follow the instructions of the health care facility, if the person is under such care, and ask the facility to provide necessary protective garments and face masks. The priest is also allowed by Canon Law to use, in cases of necessity, an “instrument,” which could allow for the use of protective gloves in carrying out the anointing.

First Holy Communion and Confirmations

These will need to be rescheduled once we are able to return to the celebration of regular Masses.

Weddings, Funerals

Weddings and funerals, if they are to be held, should be limited to immediate family and should conform to the stipulations of the local health authority.

RCIA-RELATED PROVISIONS

There will be no Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil this year in the Archdiocese of Atlanta due to the Coronavirus restrictions and precautions in place.

- Regarding the Period of Purification and Enlightenment in the Rite of Christian Initiation, the Elect are dispensed from two of the three scrutinies. If the Elect participated in the First Scrutiny, prescribed for the Third Sunday of Lent, they are dispensed from the latter two. If none of the scrutinies were celebrated, permission is granted for the celebration of Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances, celebrating an abbreviated form of the rite including appropriate adaptations as noted in nos. 333 and 334 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. This option would preclude a separate celebration of a scrutiny.
- Given there will be no initiation sacraments during the Easter Vigil, please plan for either of these options: a) tentatively, if Coronavirus restrictions are lifted, permission is granted to celebrate the initiation of the Elect by the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist at a Pentecost Vigil Mass on May 30, 2020; or b) priests may celebrate the initiation rites on the first available Sunday in the Easter season when both the local/state/federal government have lifted restrictions and the Office of the Archbishop permits. If necessary, a Sunday outside of the Easter season can be utilized, at the discretion of the pastor.
- Likewise, in accordance with Church law, priests may celebrate the Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church at any time for those adults and children of catechetical age who have a valid baptism in another Christian community. Priests may schedule receptions at the earliest opportunity after civic restrictions on gatherings have been lifted and the Office of the Archbishop permits.

PARISH SCHOOLS OF RELIGION

The Office of Formation and Discipleship announces that in-person Parish Schools of Religion are recessed until Monday, April 20. Prior to that date, notice will go out regarding the resumption of these classes.

PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK

Palm Sunday of the Passion of Our Lord

The pastor or another priest should celebrate Mass for the intentions of the people privately with other priests and those necessary for the celebration of the liturgy (e.g., deacon, lector, server, musician), not to exceed ten persons.

The first form of the entrance (Procession) will not be used. The second form (Solemn Entrance) will be used at the cathedral only. The third form (Simple Entrance) will be used in parish churches.

Palms are not to be blessed at this time but to be kept, blessed, and distributed at an acceptable time in the future.

Holy Week

Chrism Mass

Archbishop-designate Hartmayer has asked that the Chrism Mass be postponed this year until after his installation, allowing him to celebrate the Mass with the priests of the Archdiocese. When a date is selected, you will be notified right away. In the meantime, those needing consecrated oils from 2019 may obtain an additional supply from the Cathedral of Christ the King.

The Sacred Triduum

The bishops will celebrate the liturgies of the Sacred Triduum at the Cathedral of Christ the King, to be broadcast in live stream to all who would avail themselves remotely. Some parishes will have the ability to do something similar. The following are guidelines that are in keeping with the recent statement from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (“Decree in Time of COVID-19”):

The faithful should be informed of the times of the private celebration of these liturgies so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes. The means of live televised or internet/live streamed broadcasts are recommended.

Separate provisions are being sent to monastic, religious, and consecrated communities within the Archdiocese.

Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord’s Supper

The Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments has granted the exceptional faculty to each priest to celebrate Mass, without the people present, on this day in 2020. As above, the pastor or another priest should celebrate Mass privately with other priests and those necessary for the celebration of the liturgy (e.g., deacon, lector, server, musician), not to exceed ten persons.

The foot washing option is to be omitted.

At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle.

Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers/Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours.

Good Friday, Passion of the Lord

As above, the pastor or another priest should conduct the liturgy with other priests and those necessary for the celebration of the liturgy (e.g., deacon, lector, server, musician), not to exceed ten persons.

In the Universal Prayer, a petition is to be added to the Solemn Intercessions referring to the current pandemic. The USCCB has provided the following for use, as an example:

XI. For an end to the pandemic

Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end to the Coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world, that our God and Father will heal the sick, strengthen those who care for them, and help us all to persevere in faith.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty and merciful God, source of all life, health and healing, look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease; protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us and in your fatherly providence grant recovery to the stricken, strength to those who care for them, and success to those working to eradicate this scourge. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

During the Adoration of the Holy Cross, the customary kissing or touching of the cross is to be omitted. A genuflection or profound bow would be an appropriate sign of reverence.

Easter Vigil

As above, the pastor or another priest should celebrate Mass for the intentions of the people privately with other priests and those necessary for the celebration of the liturgy (e.g., deacon, lector, server, musician), not to exceed ten persons.

At "The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium," the preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted.

The Paschal Candle is lit; the procession is omitted.

The Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*) follows.

The Liturgy of the Word takes place according to the rubrics.

For the “Baptismal Liturgy,” the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” alone is necessary (cf. *Missale Romanum*, pg 371, n. 55).

The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows.

All priests and religious who have no possibility of uniting themselves to the Paschal Vigil celebrated in a church should pray the Office of Readings for Easter Sunday in the Liturgy of the Hours. Others are likewise invited to pray the Office of Readings in union with Church universal.

Easter Sunday

As above, the priest may celebrate privately or have up to four additional asymptomatic adults assisting in the vital ministries.

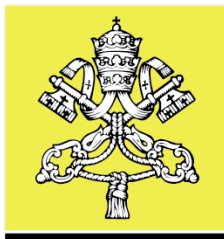
USE OF CHURCH BELLS WITH PRIVATE MASSES

A suggestion has been made that it could be a welcome practice and act of unity during this time for churches to ring their bells to signal that even a private Mass is being offered. For those within earshot, it can be a call to spiritual communion and contemplation of the Eucharistic mystery.

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All of this is truly more than enough. Thank you once more for your stewardship of our Church during this time of challenge and amplified opportunity for personal reflection and renewal. These weeks of confinement may prompt revival of devotions and practices little used or taught in recent times. In whatever ways you are reaching your flock, I am grateful for your efforts at aiding their individual and communal prayer, as well as meeting other needs according to limited ability.

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SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

N. 200320d

Friday 20.03.2020

Note from the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the current pandemic

«I am with you always»

(Mt 28: 20)

The gravity of the present circumstances calls for reflection on the urgency and centrality of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, together with some necessary clarifications, both for the lay faithful and for ministers called to celebrate the Sacrament.

Even in the time of COVID-19, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is administered in accordance with universal canon law and with the provisions of the *Ordo Paenitentiae*.

Individual confession is the ordinary way of celebrating this sacrament (cf. can. 960 *CIC*), while collective absolution, without prior individual confession, cannot be imparted except where there is an imminent danger of death, since there is not enough time to hear the confessions of individual penitents (cf. can. 961, § 1 *CIC*), or a grave necessity (cf. can. 961, § 1, 2 *CIC*), the consideration of which is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop, taking into account the criteria agreed upon with the other members of the Episcopal Conference (cf. can. 455, § 2 *CIC*) and without prejudice to the necessity, for valid absolution, of *votum sacramenti* on the part of the individual penitent, that is to say, the purpose of confessing serious sins in due time, which at the time could not be confessed (cf. can. 962, § 1 *CIC*).

This Apostolic Penitentiary believes that, especially in the places most affected by the pandemic contagion and until the phenomenon recedes, the cases of serious need mentioned in can. 961, § 2 *CIC* above mentioned, will occur.

Any further specification is delegated by law to diocesan bishops, always taking into account the supreme good of the salvation of souls (cf. can. 1752 *CIC*).

Should there arise a sudden need to impart sacramental absolution to several faithful together, the priest is obliged to warn the diocesan bishop as far as possible or, if he cannot, to inform him as soon as possible (cf. *Ordo Paenitentiae*, n. 32).

In the present pandemic emergency, it is therefore up to the diocesan bishop to indicate to priests and penitents the prudent attentions to be adopted in the individual celebration of sacramental reconciliation, such as the celebration in a ventilated place outside the confessional, the adoption of a suitable distance, the use of protective masks, without prejudice to absolute attention to the safeguarding of the sacramental seal and the necessary discretion.

Furthermore, it is always up to the diocesan bishop to determine, in the territory of his own ecclesiastical circumscription and with regard to the level of pandemic contagion, the cases of grave necessity in which it is lawful to impart collective absolution: for example, at the entrance to hospital wards, where the infected faithful in danger of death are hospitalised, using as far as possible and with the appropriate precautions the means of amplifying the voice so that absolution may be heard.

Consideration should be given to the need and advisability of setting up, where necessary, in agreement with the health authorities, groups of “extraordinary hospital chaplains”, also on a voluntary basis and in compliance with the norms of protection from contagion, to guarantee the necessary spiritual assistance to the sick and dying.

Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by *votum confessionis*, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. *CCC*, no. 1452).

Never before has the Church experienced thus the power of the communion of saints, raising to her Crucified and Risen Lord her vows and prayers, especially the Sacrifice of Holy Mass, celebrated daily, even without the presence of the people, by priests.

Like a good mother, the Church implores the Lord that humanity may be freed from such a scourge, invoking the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy and Health of the Sick, and of her Spouse Saint Joseph, under whose patronage the Church has always walked the world.

May Mary Most Holy and Saint Joseph obtain for us abundant graces of reconciliation and salvation, in attentive listening to the Word of the Lord, which he repeats to humanity today: “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps 46: 10), “I am with you always” (*Mt* 28 :20).

Given in Rome, from the seat of the Apostolic Penitentiary, on March 19, 2020,

Solemnity of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Patron of the Universal Church.

Mauro Cardinal Piacenza

Major Penitentiary

Krzysztof Nykiel

Regent
