



Guidelines for Holy Week and Easter, Diocese of Dallas

April, 2020

Given current directives from public health officials, the following information is being provided to guide your planning for Holy Week and Easter. The guidelines issued March 24 remain in force through April.

The following areas are addressed:

- Holy Week and Easter Liturgies
- Sacrament of Reconciliation

Guidelines for Holy Week and Easter Liturgies

Palm Sunday: There is not to be any distribution of blessed palms; however, if a priest blesses palms privately, those palms may be reserved for distribution at a later date to be determined by the diocese.

RCIA: Easter sacraments for RCIA candidates and catechumens are to be postponed. Guidance will be provided later on when they might be celebrated after this crisis subsides. Pentecost (May 30-31) will be a suitable date to consider.

The Chrism Mass will not be celebrated on the Tuesday of Holy Week, April 7. The period of reflection beforehand and dinner after for the priests will not occur. A later date for the Mass will be announced. Until new oils are blessed, oils blessed last year are to be used.

Easter Triduum: This is not a feast that can be postponed. However, there are not to be any public celebrations during the Triduum. This includes events that occur outdoors such as Stations of the Cross in parking lots or other spaces. Keeping within guidelines given by the *Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments* and the USCCB, the liturgical mysteries of the Paschal Triduum can be celebrated by the Bishop and by parish priests, without the physical participation of the faithful. The times of the celebrations should be announced so that all can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes and participate via television and/or internet.

Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated but without the washing of the feet, and without the presence of the faithful. At the end of the Mass, 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 unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers of the day.

Good Friday Liturgy of the Lord's Passion may be celebrated with the inclusion of a special intention in the Universal Prayer for the sick, the dead, for those who feel lost or sorrowful.

The Easter Vigil is to be celebrated only in the Cathedral and parish churches where possible without the physical presence and participation of the faithful. 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 and the Easter Proclamation (Exultet) follows. The Liturgy of the Word then takes place. For the Baptismal Liturgy the Renewal

of Baptismal Promises alone is necessary. The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows. Those who have no possibility of participating in the Easter Vigil should participate through social media or pray the Office of Readings for Easter Sunday.

Popular Devotions during Holy Week, expressions of popular piety, Stations of the Cross, processions can be transferred to other suitable days during the year, such as the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14, or the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows on September 15.

Communion Services: There are to be none currently nor during Holy Week until clearance is given by public officials to return for public liturgies.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Scheduled Confessions at the church are not to be held given the current guidelines issued by public health officials. Individual requests in person can be responded to at your discretion, understanding that the Shelter in Place Order does not envision individuals traveling to churches, or priests visiting homes outside of an emergency situation.

Perfect Contrition: Please be available by telephone or by email to explain to parishioners the nature of Perfect Contrition, which, as articulated by the Catechism (paragraph 1452) and most recently by the Holy Father, “arises from a love by which God is loved above all else” and “obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible.” Remain especially encouraging to the Faithful, who may feel despair without access to the Sacrament of Confession. (see full reflection at this [Link](#))

Guidance for Expressing Sorrow for Sin in Absence of Confession

If anointing and confession are not possible, then over the phone or through a healthcare worker, the following guidance can be given to the penitent for the purpose of seeking perfect contrition, which also obtains forgiveness of mortal sins if it includes the firm resolution to have recourse to sacramental confession as soon as possible. (*See Vatican document at link below.)

- i) Speak to God, express your love for him and his Son, Jesus;
- ii) Pray for genuine, loving contrition for your sins;
- iii) Enumerate your sins silently;
- iv) Ask for forgiveness for your sins;
- v) Say an [Act of Contrition](#);
- vi) Promise with true intention to confess your sins to a priest, whom God has placed here for you, as soon as you are able, so that you might be healed and fully reconciled

Bishop Greg Kelly, VG

Link to Vatican Document on Reconciliation

*<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/03/20/200320d.html>