

**Diocese of Harrisburg  
Office for Divine Worship**

**Liturgical Notes for Lent and Easter 2022**

**I. Lent**

- a. Color for the season is violet since it is a penitential season. Its principle theme is Baptism (leading up to the Easter Vigil).
- b. Flowers are not to be used (“Laetare Sunday” being the exception).
- c. Minimal use of musical instruments, only to sustain the singing.
- d. Regulations for Fasting and Abstinence should be published and announced in bulletins and before Ash Wednesday.
  - i. See Canons 1249-1253
  - ii. Abstinence from meat binds those who have completed their 14<sup>th</sup> year.
  - iii. Law of fasting binds those 18-60 years.
- e. Prayers over the People are included in the Roman Missal.

**II. Sacred Paschal Triduum**

**a. Holy Thursday**

- i. **Context:** The *Ceremonial of Bishops* sets the context in no. 297: “With this Mass, celebrated in the evening of the Thursday in Holy Week, the Church begins the sacred Easter Triduum and devotes herself to the remembrance of the Last Supper. At the supper on the night he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus, loving those who were his own in the world even to the end, offered his Body and Blood to the Father under the appearance of bread and wine, gave them to the apostles to eat and drink, then enjoined the apostles and their successors in the priesthood to offer them in turn. This Mass is, first of all, the memorial of the institution of the Eucharist, that is, of the Memorial of the Lord’s Passover, by which under sacramental signs he perpetuated among us the sacrifice of the New Law. The Mass of the Lord’s Supper is also the memorial of the institution of the priesthood, by which Christ’s mission and sacrifice are perpetuated in the world. In addition, this Mass is the memorial of that love by which the Lord loved us even to death...”
- ii. **Number of Masses:** The rubrics, by way of exception, allow for the local Ordinary to permit another Mass in churches and oratories to be celebrated in the evening, and, in the case of genuine necessity, even in the morning. Such Masses are provided for those who are in no way able to participate in the evening Mass and not for the advantage of individuals or (newly added) *special small groups* (*Missale Romanum*, “Rubrics for The Evening Mass” (EM, no.3).
- iii. **Liturgical Decoration:** The rubrics then make a mention of the liturgical decoration. “The altar may be decorated with flowers with a moderation that reflects the character of the day” (EM, no.5).

- iv. **Church Bells and Music:** The Church bells are rung during the singing of the *Gloria* and then remain silent unless the “diocesan Bishop, as circumstances suggest, decides otherwise” (EM, no.7). The decision about this matter no longer involves the conference of bishops. A further musical specification is provided: “the organ and other musical instruments may be used only to support the singing” (EM, no. 7)
- v. **General Intercessions and the Creed:** “After the washing of the feet, the priest washes and dries his hands, puts the chasuble back on, and returns to the chair, and from there he directs the General Intercessions. The Creed is not said” (EM, no. 13).
- vi. **Holy Communion to the Sick or Homebound:** In a new rubric it is noted that “at an appropriate time during Communion, the priest may entrust the Eucharist from the table of the altar to the deacons or acolytes or other extraordinary ministers, so that afterwards it may be brought to the sick who must communicate at home” (EM, no. 33). This may require that parishes do some preliminary planning for this to successfully happen.
- vii. **Procession of the Blessed Sacrament:** The order of procession is more carefully described for the transfer of the Blessed Sacrament to the place of reposition. Newly added is the description : “A lay minister with a cross between two others with lit candles follow. Before the priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament comes the censer bearer with a smoking censer” (EM, no. 38).
- viii. **Incensation and Reposition:** The directions for what the priest should do once he reaches the place of reposition have been supplemented. “...the priest, with the help of the deacon if necessary, places the ciborium in the tabernacle, the door of which remains open” (EM, no.39). He then incenses the Blessed Sacrament while *Tantum Ergo Sacramentum* or **another Eucharistic song** is sung. Then the “deacon or the priest himself places the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle and closes the door” (EM, no. 39).
- ix. **Stripping the Altar:** The previous *Missale Romanum* seemed to indicate that the stripping of the altar followed immediately whereas the new *Missale Romanum* notes that “at an appropriate time” the altar is stripped (EM. no. 41).
- x. **Time of Adoration:** The faithful are “invited” in the new *Missale Romanum* to spend time in adoration. It was formerly indicated that the faithful “should be encouraged” (EM, no. 43). Parishes are encouraged to leave a substantial amount of time for personal prayer and adoration.

#### **b. Good Friday**

- i. **Other Sacraments:** The very first rubric for Good Friday indicates that only the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and Penance are celebrated on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (*Missale Romanum*, “Rubrics for Good Friday” (GF,) no.1.)
- ii. **Bowing to the Altar and Prostration:** “After making a reverence to the altar, they [the priest and deacon] prostrate themselves or, according to circumstances humble themselves on their knees and pray for a while. All

others humble themselves on their knees” (GF, no. 5). The “Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts” describes the significance of this action as “the abasement of ‘earthly man’ and also the grief and sorrow of the Church” (no. 65).

- iii. **Collect:** The new rubric in the *Missale Romanum* makes it explicitly clear that the celebrant says the opening prayer with hands outstretched “omitting the invitation, *Let us pray*” (GF, no.6).
- iv. **Silent Prayer:** The rubrics indicate that at the end of the homily, “the faithful may be invited to spend a brief period of time in prayer” (GF, no. 10).
- v. **General Intercessions:** The General Intercessions come down to us in a form derived from ancient tradition and they reflect the full range of intentions. In case of serious public need, the diocesan Bishop may either permit or decree the addition of a special intention (GF, no. 13).
  1. The previous rubrics spoke of the deacon as giving the introductions to the General Intercessions. The *Missale Romanum* indicates that a “lay minister” may do this in the absence of a deacon (GF, no. 11).
  2. The deacon’s invitation *Let us kneel- Let us stand* may be used as an invitation to the priest’s prayer. The *Missale Romanum* notes that when the deacon’s invitations are used then the prayer is sung in a solemn tone by the priest (GF, no. 13). These tones are given in the *Missale Romanum* in the Appendix.
- vi. **Adoration of the Holy Cross:**
  1. The rubrics for this section begin immediately with the first form of Showing the Cross. The deacon or another suitable minister goes to the sacristy and obtains the veiled cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, the veiled cross is brought to the center of the sanctuary in procession. The priest accepts the cross and the standing before the altar (not “at the altar” as previously indicated) and facing the people, uncovers the upper part of the cross, the right arm and then the entire cross. Each time he sings *This is the wood of the cross...* (GF, no. 15).
  2. The second form of the adoration of the cross which takes place at the door of the church, in the middle of the church and before entering the sanctuary has not changed (GF, no.16). The priest or deacon may then carry the cross to the entrance of the sanctuary or another suitable place (GF, no.17).
  3. The first person to adore the Cross is the priest celebrant. If circumstances suggest, he takes off his chasuble and his shoes. The clergy, lay ministers and the faithful then approach (GF, no.18).
  4. The personal adoration of the cross is an important feature in this celebration and every effort should be made to achieve it. The rubrics remind us that “only one cross” should be used for adoration. If the numbers are so great that all cannot come forward, the priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored the cross, can take the cross and stand in the center before the altar. In a few words he invites the people to adore the Cross. He then elevates the cross higher for a

brief period of time while the faithful adore it in silence (GF, no. 19). Pastorally, it should be kept in mind that when a sufficiently large cross is used even a large community can reverence it in due time. The foot of the cross as well as the right and left arm can be approached and venerated. Coordination with ushers and planning the flow of people beforehand can allow for this part of the liturgy to be celebrated with decorum and devotion.

5. The *Missale Romanum* gives specific directions as to the music used during the adoration. The antiphons We worship you, Lord, the reproaches, the hymns Faithful Cross, or other suitable songs are sung. Totally new is the indication: “According to local circumstances or traditions of the people and pastoral appropriateness, the Stabat Mater may be sung, according to the *Graduale Romanum*, or another appropriate chant in memory of the compassion of the Blessed Virgin Mary” (GR, no. 20).
6. The cross is then carried by the deacon or other suitable minister to its place at the altar. Lighted candles are then placed around or on the top of the altar or near the cross (GF, no. 21).

vii. **Holy Communion:**

1. The rubric is specific that either the deacon or priest bringing the Blessed Sacrament to the altar puts on a humeral veil. Rather than indicate there is no procession, the rubric says the deacon or priest brings the Blessed Sacrament back from the place of reposition “by a shorter route”. All stand in silence. The rubric for the priest has been shortened, indicating that “the priest goes to the altar and genuflects” (GF, no. 22).
2. The priest communicates after *This is the Lamb of God*. There is a new rubric that notes the priest is to say privately, *May the Body of Christ bring me to everlasting life*. (GF, no. 27).
3. Mention is made that Psalm 22 (21) may be sung during the distribution of communion or another appropriate chant (GF, no. 28).
4. After Communion either the deacon or another suitable minister takes the ciborium to a place prepared outside the church, or, if circumstances require, may place it in the tabernacle (GF, no. 29).
5. The priest then says *Let us pray* and, “after observing, according to circumstances, some period of sacred silence, says the prayer after Communion” (GF, no. 30). The *Missale Romanum* in this instance emphasizes the period of silence after *Let us pray*.
6. Before the *Prayer Over the People* the priest, if there is no deacon, may say the invitation: *Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing* (GF, no. 31).
7. The previous rubric mentioned only that all depart in silence. The new rubric notes “after genuflecting toward the Cross,” all depart in silence (GF, no. 32).
8. It is then indicated that the altar is stripped after the celebration. “The cross remains upon the altar with two to four candles” (GF, no. 33).

c. **Easter Vigil**

- i. **Time:** The Vigil, by its very nature, “ought to take place at night” (EV, no. 3). It is not begun before nightfall and should end before daybreak on Easter Sunday.
- ii. **Office of Readings:** The celebration of the Easter Vigil takes the place of the Office of Readings (EV, no. 5).
- iii. **The Service of Light:**
  1. In a suitable place outside the Church, a “blazing fire” (*rogus ardens*) is to be prepared so that the people may gather around it and experience the flames dispelling the darkness and lighting up the night. Thus do the beauty of the fire, its warmth and its light, draw the liturgical assembly together. The rubrics, however, acknowledge that when this cannot be done adaptations may be made.
  2. The *Missale* also states that cross and candles are not to be carried in this procession (EV, no. 8).
  3. Having reached the fire, the celebrant and faithful sign themselves with the sign of the cross while the priest says: *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit* (EV, no. 9). After this new beginning, he greets the people and then gives the instruction (EV, no. 9). As the celebrant blesses the fire he says the prayer “with hands outstretched” (EV, no. 10).
  4. The Paschal Candle is brought forward. This candle should be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. This description is developed in no. 94 of *Built of Living Stones* which reminds us that the Paschal Candle is the symbol of the “light of Christ, rising in glory,” scattering the “darkness of our hearts and minds.” “Above all, the Paschal Candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choice of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed...” (Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* [1988], no 82).
  5. The candle is then prepared in rites which are no longer optional. The celebrant cuts a cross into the candle with a stylus. Then he makes the Greek letter Alpha above the cross, the letter Omega below it, and the four numerals of the current year between the arms of the cross, saying the words indicated. After these rites, the priest lights the candle from the new fire and says: *May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.* (EV, no.14)
  6. The organization of the procession is more clearly described in the new *Missale Romanum*. One of the ministers takes burning coals from the fire and places them in a censer (thurible) and the priest, in the usual way, places incense into it. The deacon, or in his absence another

appropriate minister accepts the Easter candle from the celebrant and a procession is formed. The order of procession is the thurifer with smoking thurible, preceding the minister holding the candle, followed by the ministers and the priest and the people. All hold unlit candles (EV, no.15). Just as the children of Israel were guided at night by the pillar of fire, so Christians follow the risen Christ.

7. The places at which the proclamation, *Light of Christ*, are sung now differ from what was in the previous *Missale*.
  - a. The new places are: at the door of the Church (after which the priest lights his candle), in the middle of the Church (after which all light their candles), and before the altar, facing the people. The Missale instructs the deacon to place the candle in a large candle stand prepared either next to the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary (EV, no. 17). The lights of the Church are then lit with the exception of the altar candles which are lit just before the intonation of the Gloria (EV, nos. 17 and 31).
8. Before the Easter Proclamation, the priest gives his candle to one of the ministers and blesses incense as at the Gospel during Mass. Having asked for and received the blessing, the deacon announces the Easter proclamation from the ambo or at a lectern. This poetic text captures the whole Easter mystery placed within the context of the economy of salvation. In the absence of a deacon the priest himself or another concelebrating priest may announce the Easter proclamation. If, however, a lay cantor announces the proclamation, the words, *My dearest friends*, up to the end of the invitation are omitted, along with the greeting, *The Lord be with you* (nos. 18-19). The reference to the Conference of Bishops adapting the text by inserting acclamations is no longer mentioned.

#### iv. Liturgy of the Word:

1. One of the unique aspects of the Easter Vigil is the recounting of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation. These deeds are related in seven readings from the Old Testament chosen from the law and the prophets and two readings from the New Testament, namely from the apostles and from the gospel. Thus, the Lord “beginning with Moses and all the prophets” (Lk 24.27, 44-45) meets us once again on our journey and, opening up our minds and hearts, prepares us to share in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. The faithful are encouraged to meditate on these readings by the singing of a responsorial psalm, followed by a silent pause, and then by the celebrant’s prayer. The *Missale* adds a sentence about the nine readings proposed, saying that **“all of these must be read whenever it can be done, so that the character of a Vigil which takes place over some duration of time can be observed”** (EV, no. 20).
2. The new *Missale* recognizes that “nevertheless, where grave pastoral circumstances demand it, the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced (EV, no 21). At least three readings from

the Old Testament should be read always including Exodus 14 (EV, no. 21). The reference found previously in the *Missale* to the possibility of having only two Old Testament readings in extreme necessity is omitted.

3. The *Missale* is very specific about the priest singing the Alleluia before the Gospel: “After the Epistle has been read, all rise, and the priest solemnly intones the Alleluia three times, raising his voice a step each time. All repeat the Alleluia each time. If necessary, the psalmist intones the Alleluia. Mention is then made of the psalmist or cantor singing Psalm 117 and the people responding, “Alleluia” (EV, no. 34). This psalm is often recited by the apostles in their Easter preaching (Acts 4.11-12; Mt 21.42; Mk 12.10; Lk 20.17).
4. The *Missale* directs explicitly that the homily, even if it is brief, is not to be omitted (EV, no.36). This requires that the homilist carefully prepare and craft the homily so that it captures the tremendous mysteries being celebrated on this most holy of nights.

v. **Liturgy of Baptism:**

1. The *Missale* has reorganized the rubrics for this entire section of the Vigil (nos. 37-58). Nevertheless, the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* should always be consulted in conjunction with the rubrics mentioned here in the *Missale*. This is especially true when Baptisms are taking place by means of immersion.
2. Christ’s Passover and ours are given full expression when baptismal water is blessed in the font and when the Christian initiation of adults, or, at least the baptism of infants, takes place at the Easter Vigil. Even if there are no candidates for baptism, the blessing of baptismal water should take place in parish churches. At the very least, baptism should be commemorated by the blessing of water intended for sprinkling upon the people.
3. The rubrics describe two instances of Baptism at the Vigil. If there is a procession to the baptistery or the font, the catechumens are called forward and presented by their godparents. If there are children, they are carried by their parents and godparents to the front of the assembly. Those who are to be baptized, along with their godparents, are led first by a minister with the Easter candle; the other ministers, deacons and priest follow after them. This procession is accompanied by the singing of the Litany of the Saints. The priest then gives the introductory statement.
4. If the Baptisms take place in the sanctuary, the priest makes the introductory statement and this is followed by the singing of the Litany of the Saints.
5. When there are no Baptisms and the font is not to be blessed, the litany is omitted and the blessing of water takes place at once (EV, nos. 39-41).
6. The *Missale* reminds the celebrant that during the blessing of the water his hands are outstretched (EV, no.44).

7. Numbers 48 to 53 of the rubrics for the Easter Vigil of the *Missale Romanum* describe the initiation process. As was mentioned before, it is important to closely consult the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* on this matter. Number 48 of the rubrics for the Easter Vigil mentions that after the renunciation and profession of faith “if the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens did not take place beforehand, as part of the immediate preparatory rites, it takes place at this moment.” Of course no. 33 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* points out: “The National Conference of Catholic Bishops approves the omission of the anointing with the oil of catechumens both in the celebration of baptism and in the optional preparation rites for Holy Saturday. Thus, anointing with the oil of catechumens is reserved for use in the period of the catechumenate and in the period of purification and enlightenment, and is not to be included in the purification rites on Holy Saturday or in the celebration of initiation at the Easter Vigil or at another time.”
8. Number 49 of the rubrics for the Easter Vigil notes that when there are many to be baptized, the priest may ask for the renewal of baptismal promises of all present immediately after the profession of faith made by those to be baptized, along with the godparents and parents.
9. The celebration of Confirmation is to take place in the sanctuary as indicated in the *Pontifical* or the *Roman Ritual*.

vi. **Liturgy of the Eucharist:**

1. Care should be taken that, particularly in regard to this night’s celebration of the Eucharist, the liturgy is not done in haste and that all the rites and words should be given their full force.
2. The *Missale* has incorporated into itself rubrics found in nos. 241-243 of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. These allow for a commemoration of the baptized and their godparents to be made in the Eucharistic Prayer. Proper formulas are found in the Roman Missal for each of the Eucharistic prayers (EV, no.63). *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* indicates that these formulas are found in the section for ritual Masses, “Christian Initiation: Baptism.”
3. The *Missale* reminds the priest that before he says, *This is the Lamb of God*, he may make a brief remark to the neophytes about their first Communion and “about the preciousness of so great a mystery, which is the climax of initiation and the center of the Christian life” (EV, no. 64). In no. 65 the rubrics for the Easter Vigil indicate the desirability for the neophytes as well as all the faithful, if the diocesan Bishop consents, to receive Communion under both kinds.
4. The *Missale* provides a solemn blessing to conclude the liturgy (EV, no.69). It is used in place and can presently be found in the Sacramentary at no. 6, “Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday”. It is also possible to use the formula of the final blessing in the *Order of Baptism for Children*, according to circumstances.

5. The very last rubric reminds us that “the Easter candle is lighted in all of the more solemn liturgical celebrations in the Season of Easter” (EV, no. 70).

**d. Easter Season**

- i. The Octave of Easter should be celebrated in parishes with due solemnity for the good of the faithful. It is also an excellent time to celebrate mystagogy with the neophytes.
- ii. The Paschal Candle is placed by the ambo. No other candles should be used when the Paschal Candle is there.
- iii. Easter Season concludes with Pentecost. The missal contains a Vigil for Pentecost that mirrors the Easter Vigil.