Toward the Sacred Triduum

The sacred Paschal Triduum of the Lord’s Passion and Resurrection marks the high point of the entire liturgical year of grace since it commemorates in a supreme way the redeeming work of Jesus Christ accomplished for humanity. Great care should be given to the celebration of the various liturgical rites, recognizing that their character and order exemplify the fullest expression of the Church’s liturgy. Care should be taken in preparation and execution of the rites as well as preparing for the full and active spiritual participation of the worshipping community.

Preliminary Considerations

- The Paschal Fast begins on Good Friday and the Roman Missal encourages that it be extended through Holy Saturday “as a way of coming, with spirit uplifted, to the joys of the Lord’s Resurrection.” It is helpful to remind the Faithful to keep the spirit of the fast throughout these holy days.
- The freedom to enter into the liturgical celebrations of these holy days for clergy and people comes in a particular way through good planning in the weeks which precede the Triduum. A parish plan might well be in place and distributed to the clergy and lay ministers assisting in the celebrations a few weeks prior to the Triduum.
- In a special way, the Roman Missal points out that “the singing of the people, the ministers, and the Priest Celebrant has a special importance in the celebrations of these days, for when the texts are sung, they have their proper impact.” Therefore, those places where music is provided in the Roman Missal indicate a preference for singing these liturgical texts according to the tones provided and the ancient chants handed on through the centuries. Celebrants are encouraged to sing the orations, particularly the Collect and Preface, during these days. In a distinct way, these days are to look and sound differently from our typical parish celebrations—marked by solemn music and chant that gives glory to God and assists in the sanctification of God’s People. To help you, check out www.npm.org/Chants/ for recordings of the chants contained in the Roman Missal.
- The days of the Triduum are wonderful opportunities for the parish to make use of the various celebrations of the Liturgy of the Hours, encouraging the communal recitation or chanting of the psalms. Resources for these can be found online in various places such as divineoffice.org.
- During these celebrations, particularly on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the role of silence in these celebrations speaks as clearly as the sacred words and actions when properly employed. Care should be taken to observe silence and to avoid any sense of rushing through these rites.

Mass of the Lord’s Supper

- This one celebration of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper is to take place in the evening at a time convenient for the full participation of the local parish community with all the priests and ministers exercising their proper offices.

“Pastors should, therefore, not fail to explain to the Christian faithful, as best they can, the meaning and order of the celebrations [of the Sacred Triduum] and to prepare them for active and fruitful participation.”

- The Roman Missal,

“The Sacred Paschal Triduum,” 2
• Parishes with parishioners of different language groups and cultures are encouraged to plan this celebration in a manner that is bilingual and representative to the whole parish community.
• The environment for this celebration calls for decorating the altar moderately with flowers reflecting the character of the day. Don’t anticipate Easter!
• The tabernacle is to be completely empty at the beginning of the Mass. Remember to tell ministers that this affects the entrance procession. A sufficient amount of bread is to be consecrated for the evening Mass as well as for distribution of Holy Communion on Good Friday.
• Bells are to be rung during the singing of the Gloria in excelsis. At the conclusion of the hymn, the bells are to remain silent until the Gloria of the Easter Vigil. Parishes may choose to employ the ancient "crotaulus" or clapper.
• Use of the organ and other musical instruments during this period are to be used to support the singing.
• Regarding the new rubric concerning The Washing of Feet, see page 4 for a comprehensive explanation.
• It is fitting that "gifts for the poor" may be presented with the bread and wine, particularly during this Jubilee Year of Mercy.
• The Roman Canon is expected to be said this evening, particularly since it is printed in the Roman Missal for Holy Thursday with the proper inserts already included. Those priests skilled with chanting are encouraged to sing the Eucharist Prayer, reprinted with musical text in the Roman Missal after the Solemn Blessings and Prayers Over the People.
• Immediately, at the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, a ciborium with the remaining hosts for Communion on Good Friday is left on the altar with a corporal beneath it. Then, the priest says the Prayer after Communion at the chair.
• After incensing the Blessed Sacrament, a humeral veil is placed on the Priest and the procession for the transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament begins. The procession is arranged: cross with two candles, others carrying candles (liturgical ministers or a portion or the entirety of the assembly), thurible with incense, and the Priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament.
• The place of repose may be a chapel or another portion of the church. Some parishes have successfully used historic churches on their property or a perpetual adoration chapel for this purpose. It should not be the main altar and tabernacle of the church. It is to be suitably decorated.
• The traditional chant for this procession is “Pange, lingua” which is available in its original Latin chant, an English translation, as well as various paraphrases. It is fitting to use this music provided by the Church for this very occasion. The “Tantum Ergo” is not sung, even if this chant is repeated, until the moment when the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle and incensed by the Priest. After this, the door of the tabernacle is closed.
• After a period of silence, the priest and ministers genuflect and return to the sacristy. The tradition of “keeping watch” with the Lord is to be encouraged until midnight. Many parishes conclude this period with the praying of Compline or Night Prayer.
• At an appropriate time after the procession, the altar is stripped and the sanctuary is made bare. If possible, crosses are to be removed from the church or, at least, veiled completely.

Friday of the Passion of the Lord

On Good Friday and Holy Saturday, “by most ancient tradition,” the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments excepting Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Holy Communion is only distributed to the faithful within the celebration of the Lord’s Passion; but may be brought to the sick who cannot participate.

• The altar is completely bare from the evening before. The sanctuary should be unadorned and empty.
• The time noted in the Roman Missal “about three o’clock” gives indication of the sacramentality of the time and the traditional hour of the Lord’s death. However, a pastoral note is included, “unless a later hour is chosen for pastoral reasons.”
• Music should be employed with great care, avoiding the use of instruments except to sustain voices if necessary. Silence marks the beginning of this liturgy with the profound moment of prostration by the priest and deacon. The assembly kneels.
• Without the sign of the cross, greeting, or invitation to prayer, the priest “goes to the chair where, facing the people, who are standing,” prays one of the two options.
• The homily is to be brief. This allows the liturgy to speak for itself through words and sacred actions.
• There are many options for the execution of The Solemn Intercessions. Care should be taken not to rush through these, but to allow for the appropriate silence that engenders a true intercessory spirit among the assembly.

• For the Adoration of the Holy Cross, a crucifix should be used with the corpus of Christ upon it unless the cross employed has a relic of the True Cross embedded in it. Although expedient, the use of more than one cross is highly discouraged.
• After one of the forms of The Showing take place, care should be taken that the assembly understands the acceptable forms of veneration through genuflection or kissing the Cross. The many texts found in the Roman Missal, particularly The Re-proaches, are set to music and available in a variety of forms from the major publishers.
• At the conclusion of veneration, the Cross is placed at the altar. Candles are placed around or on the altar or near the cross.
• In most parishes, although not prescribed by the Roman Missal, a collection is taken up for the Holy Land. An appropriate Passiontide hymn may be sung or a choir anthem. At the same time, the altar is prepared with cloth, corporal, and the Missal.
• The Blessed Sacrament is brought from the repository by the shortest path accompanied by candles to be placed at the altar.
• After a genuflection at the altar, the Priest continues with the rite of distribution of Holy Communion after which the Prayer after Communion is said and all depart in silence.

Holy Saturday

• This is a day of prayer and silence while the Church abstains from the celebration of the Eucharist, waiting for the Vigil. The Liturgy of the Hours is fittingly celebrated communally with the faithful. Wherever possible, the Office of Readings and Lauds can be a great spiritual experience offered to the Faithful.
COME, LET US ADORE

My people, what have I done to you? Or how have I grieved you? Answer me! I put in your hand a royal scepter, and you put on my head a crown of thorns. I exalted you with my glory, and you hung me on the scaffold of the Cross.

– The Reproaches

- Holy Saturday also is a preparation day for those preparing for Initiation: the Recitation of the Creed, Ephphetha Rite, and Choosing a Baptismal Name are all provided in the RCIA ritual text. These can be connected with the Liturgy of the Hours in parishes.
- Any blessing of Easter foods should be done in such a way as to avoid obscuring the solemn tone of the day. This blessing is found in the Book of Blessings. In many places, the Faithful anticipate the use of holy water, which needs to be set aside.
- Viaticum is the only form of Holy Communion permitted until the celebration of the Easter Vigil.

The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

- These ancients rites are some of the most beautiful of the Church when celebrated properly and with full engagement and participation. As the Roman Missal states, this is “the greatest and most noble of all solemnities.” Our celebrations should reflect as much.
- This celebration is to take place in the night, after sunset, without exception. And, undoubtedly not a problem for most of us, it is to end by sunrise.
- With the Blessing of the Fire and the Preparation of the Candle, the Vigil begins as a lucernarium. The fire should be safely constructed outside, if at all possible. Yet, it should also be large enough to signify “the fire of God’s glory” and “the light of Christ rising in glory dispelling the darkness of our hearts and minds.” A new Paschal Candle must always be used.
- The interpretation of rubric #17 conjures many questions: “And lights are lit throughout the church, except for the altar candles.” Does this mean all the lights in the church? Some say it does, signifying that we can only wait for the Resurrection and journey through the Old Testament in the light of Christ. Others interpret this in a different way, since the qualifier “all” does not precede the rubric. Pastoral reasoning suggests that enough lights ought to be employed to allow for the adequate participation of all assembled. There does not seem to be a prohibition against leaving some lights to be illuminated at the Gloria.
- The Exultet is to be sung using the text found in the Roman Missal. Paraphrases are not permitted. However, musical settings which are faithful to text but deviate from the prescribed chants are not forbidden but discouraged.
- How many readings? The Roman Missal is clear: for serious pastoral circumstances the number of readings may be reduced. This is not a night for minimalism but exceptionalism in our liturgical practice. Pastors should not simply lessen the number of lessons because of expediency. This damages the integrity of the Liturgy of the Word for this evening and deprives those assembled of the faithul celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. In those places where such serious pastoral circumstances demand it, at least three readings must be read from the Old Testament and one of them must be Exodus 14.
- The Baptismal Liturgy forms one of the central themes that have led us through Lent and the Vigil itself. Note, in those places where Baptisms are not occurring, there is an alternate form of the Blessing of Water which precedes the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.
- For those receiving Holy Communion for the first time, there is a strong preference for them to receive under both kinds, along with their godparents, parents, spouses, and catechists. In those parishes where Holy Communion is not usually provided under both kinds, provisions should be made for this to happen at the Easter Vigil.
- The dismissal includes the double Alleluia beginning this evening and lasting through the Octave of Easter. This is not a practice throughout the entire Easter season. It repeats again at Pentecost.

Sunday the Resurrection

- Elements from the Vigil may be repeated on Easter Sunday. It is recommended that the Renewal of Baptismal Promises take place of the Creed on Easter Sunday. The Roman Canon has proper texts to be inserted in two locations. The Solemn Blessing from the Mass of the Easter Vigil may be used. And the dismissal with double Alleluias is repeated.

The Octave of Easter

- Whenever possible, the entire eight-day Octave should reflect as much of the Easter celebration as possible with singing of hymns and acclamations and chants. Parishes may consider having Mass at a convenient time for the parishioners to attend in larger numbers, bringing together the newly initiated for the ongoing liturgical experience of mystagogy.
Holy Thursday Mandatum

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BACKGROUND
The washing of feet, in imitation of the Lord on the night before he died, has a very long and remarkable history. Through the centuries, this practice did not take place in the context of the Sacred Liturgy. Rather, in the tradition, it often occurred in monasteries of monks and nuns as a devotional practice. There is also evidence that the Elect had their feet washed in anticipation of their Easter Vigil Baptism. Popes and Bishops during different periods, on occasion, carried out the washing of feet in a non-liturgical setting. The Roman Missal (1570) that followed the Council of Trent called for the washing of feet when convenient. The liturgical reform of Holy Week in 1955 (Maxima Redemptionis nostrae mysteria, November 30, 1955) called for the washing of feet of twelve men during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, after the reading of the Gospel of John, if opportune, to show the humility and charity of Christ to his chosen Twelve. The editions of the Roman Missal that have followed the Second Vatican Council, including the most recent 2000/2008 third edition, continued with the 1955 provision for selected men (viri selecti) to have their feet washed during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, but without specifying a number.

In the United States, even with the introduction of the Roman Missal following the Second Vatican Council, and the rubric that only selected men have their feet washed, the practice in many places for many years has been to have both men and women participate in this rite. In fact, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in 1987, in light of the developing practice of both men and women having their feet washed, acknowledged the legitimacy of an inclusive interpretation of “selected men” so that the more eminent sign of Christian charity among all disciples might be more fully expressed on Holy Thursday.

READJUSTED RUBRIC TO THE ROMAN MISSAL
On January 6, 2016, Cardinal Robert Sarah, the Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, issued a decree in response to a request of Pope Francis to vary the existing rubric found in the current Roman Missal. This rubric for the washing of feet, “The men who have been chosen are led by the ministers...,” is now changed to read, “Those who are chosen from amongst the people of God are led by the ministers...”. According to the above mentioned decree, “pastors may select a small group of the faithful to represent the variety and unity of each part of the people of God. Such small groups can be made up of men and women, and it is appropriate that they consist of people young and old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated men and women and laity.” Those chosen should offer themselves freely. Sound instruction on the meaning of the washing of feet should be provided for the full participation of all.

FULLER MEANING
The washing of feet on Holy Thursday, especially following the reading of John’s Gospel with its vivid description of this scene, is a many-layered sacramental gesture. One of the meanings of the sign is the example that Jesus gives to his own disciples, the Twelve, to offer themselves in sacrificing service, an offering expected of them especially as sharers in his unique Priesthood. Another meaning, and one emphasized by the adjust-

“The Mass of Holy Thursday has a very special significance as the memorial of the Last Supper. There something very touching and moving about this service. Tonight, if ever, we should take an active part in the great drama and not rest content as mere spectators. We should regard ourselves as disciples gather about the Master in the Upper Room, a Master who serves us, speaks consolingly to us and feeds us with His own Body and Blood.”

-from Dr. Pius Parsch,
The Church’s Year of Grace.

MASS PARTS

For all Diocesan Masses this year we will be employing Richard Proulx’s “Community Mass” Gloria and Sanctus from GIA Publications, Inc. The Kyrie and Agnus Dei will come from the Missa de Angelis.
Processions

“Our relationship with God needs not only the inward aspect; it needs to be expressed. And as well as speech, singing and silence, standing, sitting and kneeling, expression also calls for this celebratory walking along together in the community of the faithful, together with the God in whom we believe. ... The liturgy of the ‘Great Week’, in which the Church reenacts the drama of the last week of Jesus’ life, presents two ‘processional’ paths found in the sacred events themselves, namely the procession of palms and Jesus’ ascent to the Mount of Olives after the institution of the Eucharist. In the one he enters the Holy City in triumph; in the other he goes from it in prayer, into the darkness of night, into betrayal and death. There is a close relationship between these two processions: Jesus enters the city to cleanse the Temple, symbolically destroying it and thus incurring his death. This is turn is the inner precondition for his giving of himself in instituting the Eucharist and thus opening the new Temple of his love. ... Essentially, the Holy Thursday procession is an accompanying of the Host, a walking with the Lord as he goes to deliver himself up for us.”


ed rubric, is the example of Jesus himself in offering his life in “limitless charity” for the salvation of all. No one is excluded from the saving love of Christ which becomes the new Commandment of the Teacher for all of us. Following the example of the One who has loved us, all followers are bound to love one another without distinction or exception.

PASTORAL PRACTICE

The washing of feet may be included wherever the Mass of the Lord’s Supper is celebrated. However, it is not obligatory. If pastoral considerations suggest it, then it should be carefully carried out to reflect the example and commandment of Christ and not be seen as the central action of the Mass. The washing of feet cannot be substituted with the washing of hands or any other gesture.

The rite is to be carried out by bishops and priests only, in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, who are in imitation of Christ the Priest. Deacons and others may assist with what is needed for the washing of the feet but do not wash feet.

The proposed chants in the Roman Missal for the washing of feet should be considered seriously for use. If they are not used, then their texts ought to inspire the choice for appropriate alternatives. The provided chants in the Roman Missal, though, speak explicitly to the example of the Lord and his new commandment, the Mandatum, to love one another as he has loved us.

Covering Crucifixes & Statues

The tradition of covering statues and crosses likely has its roots in the medieval usage of a veil to cover the entire sanctuary during the Lenten season. There is evidence of this since the 9th century in Germany where a “Hungertuch” (hunger cloth) was in place throughout Lent until Wednesday of Holy Week when, during the proclamation of the Passion, it was taken down at the words “the veil of the temple was torn in two.”

What has been handed on to us today is a vestige of this practice noted in the Roman Missal for the Fifth Sunday of Lent. This Sunday traditionally brings the Church into the time of “Passiontide” wherein the intensity of our preparation for the Lord’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection is increased. To cover the statues deprives the visual senses of the joy of seeing the fruit of the Paschal Mystery exemplified in the saints. It likewise forces the mind and the heart to focus more intently on the central acts of Christ’s redeeming work of love.

Stained glass windows and Stations of the Cross remain uncovered during this time. And, the processional cross is not veiled since its usage is implied in the rubrics for Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday.

The covering of crosses remains in place until the end of the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday while the statues are to be covered until a convenient time before the start of the Easter Vigil.
Ask Father Brommer

These questions have come across my desk over the last few months. Maybe you’ve been asking them, too! Don’t hesitate to send questions for this column.

Q. Are Marian hymns appropriate to be used during October and May?

A. Yes. It is good to find a place for devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary during those months traditionally set aside to venerate her. In October, the month of the Holy Rosary, and in May, a hymn honoring the Blessed Mother may be used as the Sending Forth.

Advent has a distinctly Marian hue which allows for an appropriate devotional hymn to be used at Offertory or the Sending Forth. During the Easter season, a setting of the Regina Caeli such as “Be Joyful Mary” is appropriate at the end of Mass. And, the “Stabat Mater” is a staple of the Lenten season.

While hymns to the Blessed Mother are not generally not used at Communion, the Missal uses texts which are such as well as the Magnificat, which comes up frequently. At the recent Papal Mass in Philadelphia, “O Sanctissima” was used at Communion. Therefore, former absolute prohibitions of Marian Hymns at Communion are not accurate.

During the Year of Mercy, try to expand your repertoire of hymns to include the traditional chant or a variation of it, “Salve, Mater Misericordiae” - “Hail, Mother of Mercy.” WLP has a nice simple setting of it in English.

Q. Is there a resource of approved psalm paraphrases as mentioned in the following paragraph from Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship (USCCB)?

[158] Because the Psalm is properly a form of sung prayer, “every means available in each individual culture is to be employed” in fostering the singing of the Psalm at Mass, including the extraordinary options provided by the Lectionary for Mass. In addition to the proper or seasonal Psalm in the Lectionary, the Responsorial Psalm may also be taken from the Graduale Romanum or the Graduale Simplex, or it may be an antiphon and psalm from another collection of the psalms and antiphons, including psalms arranged in paraphrase or in metrical form, providing that they have been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the diocesan bishop.

If not, may I conclude that the diocese enforces the rule that all psalms proclaimed at mass (whether the psalm of the day or a seasonal psalm) must be faithful to the translation in the Lectionary regardless of musical setting?

A. The mentioned resource of approved Psalm paraphrases would originate with national conferences of bishops. There is none in the United States. There are only two translations which ought to be used in liturgical settings are the current lectionary psalter and the revised Grail psalter that is not mandated but permitted as of now. The section in hymnals called “Psalter” does not usually contained approved texts since most of them are paraphrased. Just because it is in the Psalter doesn’t necessarily mean it is an approved text. These are intended for use outside of the Liturgy of the Word or Liturgy of the Hours.