



## ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

Cardinal Rigali Center  
20 Archbishop May Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63119

Office of Sacred Worship  
p) 314.792.7231  
f) 314.792.7239  
worship@archstl.org

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All priests, deacons, and parish liturgical coordinators  
**FROM:** Father Nicholas Smith  
**DATE:** 16 February 2023  
**RE:** Sacred Triduum Reminders

As we prepare for Holy Week, the Office of Sacred Worship would like to call your attention to the following liturgical items and reminders:

- **Communion Chalice.** The distribution of the Communion Chalice during Holy Communion continues to be at the discretion of the pastor and what is best for the parish community.
- **Foot-washing (*Mandatum*).** At the discretion of the pastor, the *Washing of the Feet*, which is already optional, may be omitted. If it is decided to have the *Washing of the Feet*, select 3-11 people as representatives of the parish. These representatives 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. The small group of the faithful selected should not just be from one category or condition. A **separate** container of water, basin, and towel is to be provided for each person. The priest may choose to pour water over the foot only and have the participant dry his/her own foot, or the priest may wash and dry the foot and proceed to the next participant. This is at the discretion of the pastor and whatever manner is determined for this ritual, it should be relayed to those participating so the volunteers can decide if they are comfortable participating.
- **The Adoration of the Holy Cross.** The adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited SOLELY to the celebrant. During The Adoration of the Holy Cross, the ministers and faithful come forward and will venerate the Cross either with a bow, touch, or genuflection. The ministers and faithful are not to kiss the Cross. This is at the discretion of the pastor. Should the decision be made for those faithful who feel comfortable adoring the Cross with a kiss, there should be plenty of cloths available to wipe the Cross after each kiss.
- **The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night.** As the *Roman Missal* states that the Vigil must begin in true darkness, parishes should not schedule the start of the Easter Vigil until at least 8:00 PM this year.

Below are the Sacred Triduum reminders regularly sent from the Office of Sacred Worship.

## **SACRED TRIDUUM REMINDERS**

### **The Proclamation of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday**

*The Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* published by the Congregation for Divine Worship on 20 February 1988 notes the following:

The passion narrative occupies a special place. It should be sung or read in the traditional way, that is, by three persons who take the part of Christ, the narrator and the people. The Passion is proclaimed by deacons or priests, **or by lay readers; in the latter case, the part of Christ should be reserved to the priest.** The proclamation of the Passion should be without candles and incense, the greeting and the sign of the cross on the book are omitted” (33) (emphasis added). **The insertion of hymn texts, acclamations, or dividing/altering the reading is not envisioned by the rubrics.**

### **Thursday of the Lord’s Supper At the Evening Mass (Holy Thursday)**

**Bells**—During the singing of the *Gloria in excelsis* (*Glory to God in the highest*), bells are rung, and when it is finished, they remain silent until the *Gloria in excelsis* of the Easter Vigil.

#### **Foot-washing (*Mandatum*)**

As recently decreed by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (December 2015), the optional foot-washing rite as part of the Thursday of the Lord’s Supper At the Evening Mass (Holy Thursday) is no longer restricted only to male participants. Rather, “pastors may select a small group of the faithful to represent the variety and the 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” (*In Missa cena Domini*). There is no requirement that the group of persons having their feet washed be twelve in number.

**The Washing of Hands**—Hand-washing on Holy Thursday is not part of the prescribed ritual, nor is it permitted by the liturgical norms. The foot-washing ritual is symbolic of the command of Jesus found in John 13:12-15. Within the context of the Roman-rite liturgy, the

washing of hands is usually of a penitential nature, such as the priest washing his hands at the Presentation of the Gifts. The washing of hands should not be given as an option.

**Multiple foot-washing**—The rubrics for the foot-washing are clearly stated in the *Roman Missal*: “...who have been chosen are led by ministers to seats provided....Then the priest...goes to each one, and ...pours water over each one’s feet and then dries them. After the washing of Feet, the Priest washes and dries his hands...he directs The Universal Prayer” (*Mass of the Lord’s Supper, The Washing of Feet* 11, 13).

The practice of multiple foot-washings is not in keeping with the rubrics for the foot-washing. As Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy and dean of theology at Regina Apostolorum University in Rome, notes, “such Practices...tend to convert a meaningful, but optional, rite into the focal point of the celebration. And that detracts attention from the commemoration of the institution of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, the principal motive of the celebration.”

### **Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)**

Although the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion appears to be a service of the Word with the distribution of Holy Communion, the *Roman Missal* does not permit a deacon to officiate at the celebration. The *Roman Missal* specifies that “this liturgy by its very nature may not, however, be celebrated in the absence of a Priest (*The Celebration of The Passion of the Lord* 4).

The celebration of the Lord’s Passion takes place at about three o’clock in the afternoon, unless pastoral reasons suggest a later hour. The bishop may permit the liturgy to be repeated later for pastoral reasons.

The parts of the liturgy which should always be sung include *The Solemn Intercessions* (the deacon’s/priest’s invitation and acclamation of the people) and the chants for *The Showing of the Holy Cross*.

Either a plain cross or a crucifix may be used for the Veneration of The Cross during the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord (*Built of Living Stones* 83).

Only a single cross or crucifix should be used for the veneration as this contributes to the full symbolism of the rite of the Cross as

the sole instrument of humanity's salvation.

### **Sacraments during the Triduum**

The Sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick are the only two sacraments celebrated during the Triduum (*Friday of the Passion of the Lord [Good Friday]* 1).

Holy Communion may be given to the sick and homebound on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. Holy Communion may only be given on Holy Saturday as Viaticum (*Holy Saturday* 3).

### **The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night**

**Scheduling of the Easter Vigil**—The Easter Vigil, by its very nature, must take place at night. It is not begun before nightfall and should end before daybreak on Easter Sunday (*The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night* 3). On Saturday, April 8, 2023, the end of civil twilight will take place at approximately 7:31 PM in the St. Louis area. **As the Roman Missal states that the Vigil must begin in true darkness, parishes should not schedule the start of the Easter Vigil until at least 8:00 PM this year.**

**Readings at the Easter Vigil** – The *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary* list seven Old Testament readings for the Easter Vigil. These are to be read in their entirety. “Nevertheless, where more serious pastoral circumstances demand it, the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced, always bearing in mind that the readings of the Word of God is a fundamental part of this Easter Vigil. At least three readings should be read from the Old Testament, both from the law and from the Prophets, and their respective Responsorial Psalms should be sung. Never, moreover, should the reading of Chapter 14 of Exodus with its canticle be omitted. (*The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, Second Part: The Liturgy of the Word* 21).

**Conferring the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil**—During the Baptismal Liturgy, the priest questions the adults individually, about the faith....When the interrogation is concluded, the priest baptizes the adult elect and the children” (*The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night, Baptismal Liturgy* 49-50). The minister who baptizes must be the minister who confers the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is not permitted for a deacon to baptize because the deacon cannot confer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

By virtue of his office, a priest is able to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation for a non-Catholic (unbaptized or baptized) who has fully participated in the process and catechesis of the RCIA (See Canon 883.2). However, a priest must receive delegation to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on baptized Catholics who have participated in the RCIA process.

All priests seeking delegation to confirm a baptized Catholic at the Easter Vigil should submit their request to the Archbishop ASAP.