



MEMO TO: All Pastors  
FROM: Bishop Oscar Cantú  
RE: Chrism Mass and Holy Week Guidelines  
DATE: March 24, 2020

As of now, the Shelter in Place Order is effective until further notice. Originally it was through April 7, 2020, that is, Tuesday of Holy Week. Although we do not have certitude, I anticipate that the order will be extended. Thus, I believe it is prudent to plan on Holy Week and Easter Sunday liturgies to be celebrated without a congregation. I appreciate some of the research and recommendations that the Diocesan Liturgy Commission has offered me.

**Chrism Mass:** I will plan to celebrate the Chrism Mass on the morning of Holy Thursday, April 9, at St. Joseph Cathedral, with the deans, Msgr. Willie Manrique, and Fr. Hao Dinh. It will be live-streamed. We will plan to conduct the Renewal of Promises of Priests at our Fall Convocation, perhaps during Daytime Prayer.

**Palm Sunday:** Acknowledging that many parishes already ordered palms and cannot cancel the order, I suggest blessing the palms at your (live-streamed) liturgy without a congregation and allowing the palms to dry. Once completely dried, they can be burned, the ashes to use next year on Ash Wednesday.

Regarding the celebration of the **Sacred Triduum** during this time of pandemic, the Vatican Decree of March 19, 2020, states the following:

**“Holy Thursday:** In Cathedral and parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one responsible, the priest(s) of the parish can celebrate the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper. The faculty to celebrate Mass on this day in a suitable place, without the people, is granted in an exceptional manner to all priests. **The washing of feet, which already is optional, 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 of the day (cf. *Liturgia Horarum*).

**“Good Friday:** in Cathedral and parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one responsible, the Bishop/Parish Priest will celebrate the Passion of the Lord. In the Universal Prayer, the Bishop will see to it that there is a special intention for the sick, the dead, for those who feel lost or dismayed (cf. *Missale Romanum*, pag. 314, n. 13).



**"The Easter Vigil:** Is to be celebrated only in Cathedral and parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one responsible. At "The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucenariurn" the preparation and lighting of the **fire is omitted**, the Paschal Candle is lit, the **procession is omitted** and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) follows. The "Liturgy of the Word" then takes place. For the "Baptismal Liturgy" the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" alone is necessary (cf. *Missale Romanum*, pag. 371, n. 55). The "Liturgy of the Eucharist" then follows. Those who have absolutely no possibility of uniting themselves to the Paschal Vigil celebrated in a church should pray the Office of Readings for Easter Sunday ( cf. *Liturgia Horarum*)."

**Catechumens (Elect):** Delay the Sacraments of Initiation until the Vigil or Sunday of Pentecost. Emphasize to the faithful that this does not replace or repeat the Easter Vigil, but rather is a transfer of the date of the Sacraments of Initiation, per RCIA 34.2.

Finally, I have asked Chris Wemp, in our Liturgy Office, to compile a list of **all of the livestreamed liturgies and devotions during Holy Week**. Therefore, I ask that you send Chris the listings of the parish Holy Week events that you plan to live-stream so that we can post on our diocesan website.

The following is sent from the USCCB:

"On **Good Friday** the Roman Missal says that the Diocesan bishop may "permit or order the addition of a special intention" to the Solemn Intercessions. What follows is offered as a sample petition modelled on the liturgical prayers of Good Friday:

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.*

"Also on Good Friday, for the Adoration of the Holy Cross it will surely be best, if more than one person is assisting, to express reverence to the Cross without kissing or touching it. A genuflection or profound bow would be appropriate."