



ARCHDIOCESE of BALTIMORE

LITURGICAL GUIDANCE IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC HOLY WEEK/EASTER 2021

General Considerations

1. The usual COVID-19 protocols for the celebration of Mass should be followed in all liturgies—for example, sanitizing hands, wearing face coverings, remaining physically distanced (six feet of separation between households)—with due regard for the reverent enactment of the rites and texts. Ministers who assist with preparing for liturgies, such as sacristans and others who assist with sacred spaces, should follow the usual COVID-19 protocols, such as wearing masks, sanitizing hands frequently, and observing physical distancing.
2. Previous guidelines for music remain in force. Small ensembles (4-5 individuals) may sing or play as long as they remain further than six feet apart, wear facial coverings when not singing, and observe other COVID-19 protocols. Regarding instrumentalists, non-wind instruments are preferable to wind instruments (except for the organ). If brass players are used, they should use a slitted face mask while playing as well as a “mask” for the instrument. The slitted mask is replaced with the regular mask when not playing an instrument.

Palm Sunday—Distribution of the Palms

Distribution of the palms may occur as normal on Palm Sunday at all Masses. We recommend the following:

The blessing of the palms will take place in the usual manner at the beginning of Mass. Palms may be laid out on tables near the entrance/exit doors of the church or in the gathering space. Stations with hand sanitizer should be placed before the tables with palms. The faithful must sanitize their hands before taking palms. At the end of Mass, ushers should release the assembly from their pews from the back of church first. Maintaining the appropriate six-foot physical distancing, parishioners who did not pick up palms before Mass should first sanitize their hands prior to picking up the palms from the table. After obtaining the palms, parishioners should then exit the church. It is recommended that an announcement be made reminding the faithful to remove their palms from the pews if they took them as they entered the church.

The Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem--Entrance Procession

Only the *Third Form: The Simple Entrance* may be used at the beginning of the Palm Sunday liturgy this year.

Chrism Mass

Archbishop Lori will celebrate the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen on Monday, March 29, 2021 at 7:30 pm. Similar to last year, attendance is limited to clergy (priests and deacons, deacons' wives, and religious. If a member of the clergy or religious are not available to pick up the Holy Oils at the Chrism Mass, parish representatives may do so. Parish representatives may be individuals or family groups of four or fewer.

Holy Oils will be distributed in the same manner as last year. Pastors/administrators are asked to go to <https://archbalt.regfox.com/2021-chrism-mass> to register and order the quantity of oil your parish/pastorate needs this year. Holy Oils will be distributed in boxed sets after the Chrism Mass. It is not necessary for parishes to provide their own containers for the Holy Oils.

Holy Thursday: Mass of the Lord's Supper**Mandatum**

As a reminder, the Washing of Feet at the Mass of the Lord's Supper is always optional. However, the Washing of the Feet is permitted this year with some limitations. Those to have their feet washed must wear masks and be seated at least six feet apart. Hand sanitizer must be available for the celebrant between each station. For churches that do not have sufficient space to distance 12 people in the sanctuary, the ritual allows for a representative number of people fewer than 12.

Extending the Washing of the Feet to members of the assembly is not permitted.

Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament

The Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament to the place of reposition should take place with the addition of the usual COVID-19 protocols: maintaining physical distancing if processing, wearing masks, etc. We suggest that only the liturgical procession (clergy and servers) proceed to the place of reposition, while the assembly remains in prayer. Members of the assembly would then be invited to keep vigil at the place of reposition while maintaining COVID-19 protocols. However, specific guidelines for this celebration are left to the prudential judgment of the pastor.

Friday of the Passion of the Lord**Solemn Intercessions**

For the Solemn Intercessions, Archbishop Lori directs that the same intercession "*For an end to the pandemic*" offered in 2020 as the final intercession be prayed again in 2021 as the final intercession.

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 prays:

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.

Adoration of the Cross

The Showing of the Holy Cross may be celebrated in either of the two forms provided in the *Roman Missal*.

Adoration of the Cross is permitted on Good Friday 2021. Use the same considerations as those used for the Communion procession, e.g. six-foot social distancing between individuals, etc. Kissing the cross is NOT allowed. Those who adore should do so only with a bow or genuflection.

Easter Vigil**The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium**

Distributing and lighting candles for the assembly is permitted. Basic COVID-19 protocols—such as sanitizing hands and wearing face coverings—should be followed when preparing and distributing candles. The manner of preparation and distribution is left to the judgment of the local pastor. To carry out the lighting during the liturgy, it is permissible for different households to stand momentarily closer than six feet because face coverings are worn and the action is brief. Care should be taken when extinguishing the candles to minimize airborne particulates.

The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil is to be celebrated as indicated in The Roman Missal. When the local pastor discerns that, because of the COVID-19 pandemic or other pastoral reasons, a fire cannot be lit outside the church, the blessing of fire is adapted as indicated in no. 13 of the rubrics for the Easter Vigil:

“When the people are gathered in the church as on other occasions, the Priest comes to the door of the church, along with the ministers carrying the paschal candle. The people, insofar as is possible, turn to face the Priest. The greeting and address take place as in no. 9 above [i.e., Sign of the Cross, greeting in the usual manner, instruction “Dear brethren...”]; then the fire [burning on a candle or taper] is blessed and the [paschal] candle is prepared, as above in nos. 10-12 [i.e. blessing ‘O God...’, ‘Christ yesterday...’, and ‘By his holy...’].”

The Sacraments of Initiation may be celebrated at the Easter Vigil this year assuming all usual COVID restrictions are observed. For Baptisms, fresh water should be poured over each elect. Submersion Baptism is not advised this year. Observation of COVID-19 safety protocols should be implanted at the discretion of the pastor. Anointing at Confirmation should be done as previously advised with a cotton ball to avoid direct physical contact.

Sprinkling with Holy Water

Sprinkling with Holy Water at the Easter Vigil as indicated at (56) in the *Roman Missal* is permitted using fresh holy water. The pastor may continue this safe practice throughout Easter or when liturgically appropriate.

Pentecost Confirmation at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen

Archbishop Lori will not celebrate Group Confirmation at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen at Pentecost 2021. Neither will pastors be granted faculty to Confirm baptized Catholics as they were in 2020. However, the bishops will celebrate parish youth Confirmations at the parishes/pastorates as scheduled. Adult *confirmandi* should participate in the parish Confirmation with the youth. For questions about scheduling parish/pastorate Confirmations, please contact Aziza Kayani, Administrative Assistant, Office of the Urban Vicariate at akayani@archbalt.org.