



ARCHDIOCESE of BALTIMORE

LITURGICAL GUIDANCE IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC – WINTER/SPRING 2021

Sunday of the Word of God (Third Sunday in Ordinary Time)

- [Archbishop Lori's Letter](#)
- [Papal Letter](#)
- [USCCB Resources](#)
- [Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commission Resource](#)

Blessing of Throats on the Feast of Saint Blaise

The Order for the Blessing of Throats on the Feast of Saint Blaise is found in Chapter 51 of the *Book of Blessings*. To minimize individual contact, please use the option for a blessing of the entire assembly from the sanctuary. Refer to [BB 1628]:

If, for pastoral reasons, each individual cannot be blessed in the manner described in no. 1627 (individual blessing) ... a priest or deacon may give the blessing to all assembled by extending hands, without the crossed candles, over the people while saying the prayer of blessing. A lay minister says the prayer proper to lay ministers without making the sign of the cross.

LENT AND HOLY WEEK 2021

Ash Wednesday—Distribution of the Ashes

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has published a note detailing how Catholic priests are to distribute ashes.

After blessing the ashes and sprinkling them with holy water in silence, the priest addresses those present, reciting once the formula found in the Roman Missal: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.

At that point, the priest cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask, and distributes ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places.

He then sprinkles the ashes on each person's head “without saying anything.”

As modeled by Pope Francis, the ashes are sprinkled above the individual's head so that immediate contact is avoided. As is customary, a priest may employ a deacon and/or the laity to assist with the distribution of ashes.

Rite of Election (and the Call to Continuing Conversion)—First Sunday of Lent

Due to the ongoing public health concern, the Rite of Election (and Call to Continuing Conversion) will NOT take place at the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen or in other large archdiocesan celebrations on the First Sunday of Lent, February 21, 2021.

Archbishop Lori, therefore, has delegated to pastors and priests/deacons who are Parish Administrators the faculty to celebrate this liturgy in their parishes ([Decree attached](#)), with preference being that the pastor celebrate the rite, if possible (cf. *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* #12, 34, 121).

This celebration may take one of these forms:

1. Rite of Election ONLY: If the adults and children of catechetical age preparing for initiation at the Easter Vigil this year are unbaptized (catechumens), use the rite found in *RCIA* #129ff. This rite may also be used if you choose NOT to include baptized adults and older children in a call to continuing conversion (which is optional).

2. Combined Rite of Election AND Call to Continuing Conversion: This rite may be used if you have adults and older children preparing for Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist AND adults and older children who are baptized but uncatechized (candidates) preparing to complete their initiation at the Easter Vigil this year. Use the rite found in *RCIA* #547ff. You may also choose to celebrate only the Rite of Election with the unbaptized (form 1 above).

3. Call to Continuing Conversion ONLY: If the adults and older children preparing for reception into full communion or the sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion are baptized but uncatechized, use the rite found in *RCIA* #450ff. This rite is optional.

Forms 1 and 2 should normally take place at a parish Mass for the First Sunday of Lent, with the pastor presiding.

Form 3 (optional) may take place on the First Sunday of Lent, or some other time at “the beginning of Lent” (cf. *RCIA* #448).

Resources for Rite of Election at the Parish

- **Free webinar on Celebrating the Rite of Election (and/or Call to Continuing Conversion) in your Parish:** The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions is hosting a webinar about the Rite of Election and best practices for its celebration on Tuesday, January 19 at 2:00 PM. In particular, this is aimed at pastors and parish staffs who had never prepared this rite (or the combined rite) in the parish setting. The webinar will examine the history of the rite, the structure of the rite, and practical suggestions (including music). There is no cost for the webinar. Register at: www.fdlc.org/formation.
- The ritual texts for the Rite of Election in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) are attached.

Although we are not celebrating the Rite of Election at an Archdiocesan liturgy, we still need to know the number of individuals, and their names, coming into the Church in 2021. Please go to: <https://archbalt.regfox.com/2021-rcia-reporting> to report RCIA 2021 data from your parish.

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 social distancing, parishioners who did not pick up palm 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.

Chrism Mass

Currently the Chrism Mass is anticipated to occur on the annual date of the Monday before Easter 2021 with limited attendance. More details will be forthcoming.

Holy Thursday (Mandatum)

Washing of the feet is permitted. Those to have their feet washed must be seated six feet apart from one another.

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.

As a reminder, the washing of feet at the Mass of the Lord's Supper is always optional.

Good Friday (Veneration of the Cross)

Veneration 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 venerate should do so only with a bow or genuflection.

Easter Vigil

The Sacraments of Initiation may be celebrated at the Easter Vigil this year assuming all usual COVID restrictions are observed.