



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

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March 20, 2020

Dear Father,

May God bless you during this holy season of Lent! Since I anticipate the likelihood that Holy Week will not be able to be celebrated publicly this year, please observe the following for Holy Week and Triduum liturgies. I thank the Office of Worship for their assistance in providing this information for all of you.

Palm Sunday

- According to the rubrics, the Introductory Rites of the Mass consist of the Entrance Antiphon, followed by the Sign of the Cross, Greeting, Prayer, Sprinkling of Palms, Gospel reading, and (optional) procession. After the veneration of the altar, the Collect concludes the Introductory Rites.
- Palms or similar branches may be used. (For parishes that order palms through Tonini Church Supply, these are already in stock, and the orders cannot be cancelled at this time. Please call the store at 502-879-7100 for more information. This may be the case with other distributors as well.)
- Some parishes are preparing to deliver blessed palms to the doorsteps of parishioners.
- Once blessed, palms are holy objects and should be disposed of by burning or burial.

Chrism Mass

- The Chrism Mass will be held at the usual time (Tuesday, April 7th at 7:00 p.m.) with a minimum number of ministers present.
- The invitation to attend the Chrism Mass for the presbyterate, diaconate community, and the general public is cancelled.
- All are invited to participate in the Chrism Mass via live-stream on the Cathedral of the Assumption web page: <https://www.cathedraloftheassumption.org/>. Priests of the Archdiocese are invited to renew their priestly promises via this live-stream also.
- Distribution of Holy Oils will be suspended until a later date. Continue to use the oils blessed and consecrated in 2019 until further notice. If you need an exception, please contact the Office of Worship at 502-471-2148.
- In case of necessity, a priest may bless the Oil of the Sick within the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick (*Pastoral Care of the Sick #21*)

Triduum Liturgies

Attached is the “Decree in Time of COVID-19” from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. Key items and directives for the Archdiocese of Louisville are summarized below.

General Notes:

- The celebration of the Triduum may not be transferred to other dates.
- Because of the importance of these liturgies, it would be preferable for the priest to celebrate them with at least one other person, perhaps a deacon. This may not be possible in all parishes.
- In parish communications, it may be helpful to suggest at-home activities surround the Mandatum on Holy Thursday, Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday, Light, Water, Oil, and Eucharist on the Easter Vigil.
- If you intend to live-stream these liturgies, inform parishioners of the times so that they may participate via technology. The times should correspond to the instructions given in the *Roman Missal* (e.g. the Easter Vigil occurs after nightfall). The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments instructs that these liturgies should be live and not pre-recorded.

Holy Thursday

- Washing of the Feet is omitted.
- The procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose is omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle.
- Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Evening Prayer.
- Communion may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day, but any other distribution of Holy Communion is inappropriate on this day.

Good Friday

- The following intention is added to the Solemn Intercessions:

Let us pray also for all those suffering from illness, especially the Coronavirus, that our God may relieve the sufferings of all the sick and give them strength to persevere in faith.

Period of Silent Prayer

Almighty ever-living God,
you raised your Son's cross as the sign of victory and life.
May all who share in his suffering through illness
find in him a source of courage.
Transform their weakness by the strength of your grace
and confirm in them your covenant
so that they may grow in faith and love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

- Communion may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day, but any other distribution of Holy Communion is inappropriate on this day.

Easter Vigil

- The Vigil is celebrated only in the Cathedral and parish churches.
- At “The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium,” 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 proceeds according to the rubrics.
- For the Baptismal Liturgy, the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” alone is necessary, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist follows.
- Rites of Initiation:
 - Any Elect or Catechumen who is in danger of death would follow *RCIA* Part II no. 3 “Christian Initiation of a person in danger of death”. Also note *Pastoral Care of the Sick* Chapter 8: Rite for Exceptional Circumstances includes the Christian Initiation of the Dying.
 - Because of these “unusual circumstances and pastoral needs” I allow for the initiation of the Elect (i.e. those receiving all three initiation sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Holy Eucharist) to take place at a time outside the Easter Vigil. I delegate to pastors the responsibility to pick a date for their parish after public Masses resume. This later date should allow for the Period of Enlightenment and Scrutinies to be celebrated prior to initiation. (*RCIA* #26)
 - For the Candidates (i.e. those baptized in other faith traditions, who will receive Confirmation and First Holy Communion and profess membership in the Catholic Church): these individuals can be brought into the Church at any time once they are ready and public Masses resume. Use *RCIA* Part II no. 5. “Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church.”

Thank you for your careful attention to these directives. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have questions. You are in my prayers.

Fraternally yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph E. Kurtz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J'.

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.
Archbishop of Louisville

Cc: Deacons
Parish Liturgical Ministers

