

Diocesan Protocols

Holy Week/Easter Under 'Red' Tier: March 28 – April 4, 2021

Physical Spaces

Indoor

1. Parishes must continue to follow all COVID protocols for indoor worship, previously distributed and approved by State Department of Public Health pursuant to the ruling of the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) and past Diocesan policy for indoor services. *Contact EOC if replacement copies of these indoor directives are required.*
2. Systematic COVID protocols of masks, sanitizing, social distancing etc. are most important as interior attendance levels are permitted to increase.
3. Present capacity limits permit 25% of maximum building occupancy, *with the caveat that all seating must be spaced a minimum of six (6) feet apart. Churches that cannot accommodate this spacing requirement, must reduce 25% capacity allowance until the six (6) feet spacing standard has been met.*
4. Singing/chanting is now permitted, with certain COVID protocol criteria, in 'red' tier, during Holy Week. Please refer to Diocesan addendum to guidelines, distributed earlier this week, for specific instructions in this regard. *Contact EOC if replacement copies of these indoor directives are required.*
5. All other protocols for indoor worship services remain unchanged.

Outdoor

1. Parishes must continue to follow all COVID protocols for outdoor worship, previously distributed and approved by State Department of Public Health and past Diocesan policy for outdoor services. *Contact EOC if replacement copies of these outdoor directives are required.*
2. Systematic COVID protocols of masks, sanitizing, social distancing etc. are most important, as exterior attendance levels no longer require a 25% cap on attendees.
3. Outdoor attendance is limited *only* by the ability to maintain six (6) feet separation between seating, in compliance with social distancing requirements, still in effect.
4. Do not allow seating on sidewalk or in walkways to ensure safety and security of larger attendance levels during Holy Week.
5. Use of parish parking lots is permitted for the seating and spacing of congregants; attendees may not remain in vehicles while attending Mass; Holy Communion must not be given to parishioners in their parked vehicles.
6. Carefully balance parking lot seating with the demand for on-site vehicle parking during various Holy Week services. Ensure that seating and parking are each carefully marked with traffic tape, traffic cones or other markers, to avoid any accidents.
7. All other protocols for outdoor worship services remain unchanged.

Pastoral Directives

Specific Pastoral protocols for Holy Week and Easter are provided below. For all liturgical celebrations, prudent decisions should be made by each pastor, with respect to the unique configuration of parish facilities and its congregation.

In celebrating Holy Week and Easter, parishes should be mindful of the fact that while COVID-19 data is improving within both counties of Diocese, nonetheless care must be taken to protect one another. A safe and healthy worship environment must be maintained for all those who participate in the liturgies.

In addition to the specific Pastoral Directives provided below, the rubrics of the Roman Missal should be followed as modified by the Vatican Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, dated March 23, 2020, and the Note to Bishops and Episcopal Conferences on the Celebration of Holy Week 2021 (attached), including the Diocesan Pastoral directives enumerated below.

Palm Sunday

1. Commemoration of the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem may be celebrated indoors or outdoors, consistent with COVID safety protocols referenced above.
2. The Third Form of the Entrance (Simple entrance), as found in the Roman Missal is to be used at all Masses, per the Vatican.
3. Celebrant approaches the altar and venerates it.
4. Celebrant makes the sign of the cross, greets his people, and Mass proceeds in accordance with directives for the Celebration of the Eucharist, in accordance with Diocesan directives previously issued.
5. Third Form does not include the Gospel of Palm Sunday or the blessing of palms, but it does include the act of penitence before the Collect.
6. Celebrants wishing to distribute palms to the faithful, may do so by blessing the palms, outside of Mass, either before or after, using the prayer for the blessing of palms as found in the Roman Missal for Palm Sunday.
7. Blessed palms may be distributed by ushers/volunteers wearing gloves, face masks and face shields as attendees enter or exit the church/outdoor worship space, subject to the discretion of the parish. Six (6) feet distancing should be maintained and monitored by ushers/volunteers during this process.
8. The Gospel may be read by three (3) readers; the celebrant reads the part of Jesus. Microphones and reading stands must be spaced a minimum of six (6) feet apart with all readers wearing masks or face shields.
9. If spacing permits celebrant and reader to be spaced a minimum of 27 feet apart from each other and the congregation, then no face mask or face shield is required. Face shields or face masks should be replaced at the conclusion of the readings.
10. The shorter form of the reading of the Passion of the Lord may be used. No face shield or mask is required of reader, if spaced twelve (12) feet from other individuals.
11. Homilies, announcements, greetings should be as brief as possible. Incorporating period of silence at appropriate key moments may also be included.
12. Singing may be incorporated, per previous amended directives under revised State COVID requirements, *but only by cantors/singers, a maximum of ten (10), spaced six (6) feet with masks or face shields, or twelve (12) feet without masks or face shields; replacement of masks or face shields at conclusion of singing.* No congregation singing nor group recitation is permitted, at this time.

Holy Thursday

1. The Celebration of the Eucharist for the Lord's Supper begins with the tabernacle entirely empty. All other pastoral protocols for Celebration of the Eucharist apply, for both indoors and outdoors.
2. A sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated during the Mass for congregation on this day and the following day. (Roman Missal, Mass of the Lord's Supper, 5).
3. The use of incense is discouraged during this Liturgy; however, if elected to do so, incense should be limited and directed solely at the altar, and not surrounding areas.
4. The washing of the feet shall be omitted, per the Vatican.
5. After distribution of Holy Communion, according to COVID directives, the Blessed Sacrament may be placed on the altar by the Celebrant for a period of silent devotion, for an appropriate period of time.
6. At the conclusion of silent devotion, the Prayer after Communion is to be read and the Blessed Sacrament placed directly in the tabernacle by the Celebrant.
7. The customary procession to the altar of repose is to be omitted, per the Vatican.
8. Celebrant, attending priests, deacons and eucharistic ministers genuflect to the tabernacle and return to the sacristy.
9. There is no blessing, at this point.
10. For services held outdoors, only Celebrant, deacons, necessary ministers, and two candle bearers may process with the Blessed Sacrament to the church and place the Blessed Sacrament in a secure, locked cabinet or temporary locked tabernacle with a lighted Vigil candle. The Congregation may not join in this procession to the church.

NOTE: Parishes wishing to distribute blessed bread to the faithful may do so, if it is pre-packaged and distributed in accordance with COVID protocols, by ushers/volunteers wearing masks, face shields and gloves.

Good Friday

1. Diocesan protocols for indoor and outdoor worship apply in the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, except as noted herein.
2. This liturgy may NOT be celebrated in the absence of a priest, per Roman Missal.
3. A special intercession is to be included as the 11th of the Solemn Intercessions as follows:

Let us pray also for those who suffer consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health for the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

Prayer in silence; then, the Celebrant says:

Almighty ever-living God, only support of our human weakness, look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children who suffer because of this pandemic; relieve the pain of the sick; give strength to those who care for them; welcome into your peace those who have died and, throughout this time of tribulation, grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

4. Adoration of the Cross by kissing shall be limited solely to the Celebrant, per Vatican. The people do not touch or kiss the cross.

5. Celebrant, after adoration of the Cross, may hold the Cross elevated for a brief time, for the faithful to adore in silence. The congregation may recite aloud only the *three* responses, traditionally used at this time, in this Liturgy. No other prayers should be recited aloud by the congregation beyond these three responses.
6. The Communion rite should occur as usual: the altar is covered with cloth and candles, and then the Blessed Sacrament is carried to the altar, from its place of reservation.
7. Following distribution of Communion, the Blessed Sacrament is returned to the tabernacle or to a place of reservation within the Church. There is no procession.
8. At the conclusion of the liturgy, the altar candles are removed, and the altar is stripped. The Cross is removed after the service. The congregation is dismissed.

Easter Vigil

First Part: The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil

The Blessing of the Fire and Preparation of the Candle

1. The Easter Vigil begins, 7:30 pm or later, according to custom, with the tabernacle empty.
2. The Blessed Sacrament which remains from Mass on Holy Thursday (and the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Friday) is generally reserved outside the main body of the church, usually in the sacristy, where a light/enclosed candle burns adjacent to it.
3. The Celebrant begins the Vigil in the usual way with greeting, blessing of fire, and preparation of the candle. Only the Celebrant and three (3) to five (5) ministers may gather around the altar; no other members from the assembly.
4. All those gathered around the fire must wear masks, social distance and space six (6) feet from each other, at all times.
5. The attending faithful must be seated according to distancing requirements, *prior to the service*, in their respective places, including those to be baptized.
6. Open flame tapers/candles may not be used indoors, due to exhaling when extinguishing flames, in order to comply with COVID mask requirements amid the danger of airborne particles. LED or other battery candles are permitted.
7. All other indoor/outdoor protocols for Celebration of the Eucharist apply.

The Easter Proclamation

1. Once all candles are lit, the Deacon asks for the Celebrant's blessing to announce the Easter proclamation.
2. The Deacon or another minister carries the Easter candle from the priest's chair to its stand and places it there. (As an alternative, it may be more convenient for the Celebrant to begin the Vigil, prepare the candle, and light it while standing next to its stand, either near the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary, before arriving at the chair.)
3. In the absence of a Deacon, the celebrant, a concelebrant, or a cantor may sing the proclamation, strictly adhering to the revised COVID guidelines for 'singing', previously issued, for 'red' tier.
4. All other instructions from the Roman Missal should be followed for the Easter Proclamation.

Second Part: The Liturgy of the Word

1. All instructions from the Roman Missal should be followed for the Liturgy of the Word.
2. The use of incense is discouraged during this Liturgy; however, if elected to do so, incense should be limited and directed solely at the altar not surrounding areas.
3. All other protocols for Liturgy of the Word, as previously included for indoor worship, remain unchanged.

Third Part: Baptismal Liturgy

1. After the Homily, the Baptismal liturgy begins.
2. Give considerable attention to the length of homily, given the length of time necessary to complete the other portions of the Easter Vigil, acknowledging that the service will exceed normal Celebrations of the Eucharist maintained at one hour. However, do not be constricted by the time in sacrificing the full message necessary at this difficult time.
3. The Litany is sung by the Cantor, or a maximum of ten (10) singers, both indoor and outdoor, without masks, subject to twelve (12) feet distancing from each other and from congregation. Masks must be replaced after singing is completed.
4. The Litany of the Saints may be sung or chanted, but the faithful must be reminded that there is *no* congregational singing or chanting for this litany, given its length.
5. There is no lowering of Paschal Candle into the water during the blessing of Baptismal water.
6. Baptism should be done by a pouring on the head, not immersion. The water used for baptizing should afterward be given to the ground (via the sacrarium or other appropriate vessel.). Water should not be “re-used” for subsequent baptisms.
7. No use of baptismal water pools or tanks is permitted.
8. Sprinkling with holy water is discouraged.
9. Holy water fountains, at the entrances of the church, and baptismal fonts are to remain empty.
10. For health safety, an instrument (e.g., cotton swab or cotton ball) is to be used for Confirmation. All such instruments should be burned after Mass.

Fourth Part: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. The priest approaches the altar and begins the Liturgy of the Eucharist, in accordance with Diocesan protocols previously issued for indoor and outdoor worship.
2. Celebrants, assisting ministers, ushers etc. must wear masks *and* face shields when distributing the Eucharist to numerous congregants, processing in front of them, given recent virus strains detected in both counties.
3. Only priests and deacons may receive the Blessed Sacrament from the cup, at this time; not the newly baptized nor members of the congregation.
4. Mass concludes; congregants depart in the usual way, monitored for social distance by ushers.

Easter Sunday

1. Celebration of the Eucharist should be conducted in accordance with standard protocols and directives for indoor/outdoor Masses.
2. The Roman Missal should be used for any particular Easter Sunday rubric.
3. The use of incense is discouraged during this celebration; however, if elected to do so, incense should be limited and directed solely at the altar and not surrounding areas.
4. Cantors/singers are permitted in accordance with previously issued directives, limited to no more than ten (10) cantors/singers; spaced six (6) feet with masks or face shields, or twelve (12) feet without masks or face shields; replacement of masks or face shields at conclusion of singing.
5. Non-singing musicians must wear masks at all times; no brass instruments allowed; only woodwind, percussion or pre-recorded music that can be broadcast, per previously issued directives.
6. Priests/deacons/eucharistic ministers may distribute communion on the tongue if and only if each has been fully vaccinated. Care should be taken to avoid skin-to-skin contact. Sanitizing the hands pre and post distribution is required.
7. Congregation may bring small, individual water bottles for blessing by Celebrant, if desired.

NOTE: Parishes wishing to distribute Easter baskets, Easter bags of decorated eggs, candy etc. to families/children may do so, if items are pre-packaged or self-contained, and distributed as attendees exit the church. All required COVID protocols for ushers/volunteers distributing these treats must be followed i.e. double masks, gloves, distancing etc.

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE



BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLIS

BOLLETTINO

SALA STAMPA DELLA SANTA SEDE

Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 25.03.2020

DECREE

In time of Covid-19 (II)

Considering the rapidly evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and taking into account observations which have come from Episcopal Conferences, this Congregation now offers an update to the general indications and suggestions already given to Bishops in the preceding decree of 19 March 2020.

Given that the date of Easter cannot be transferred, in the countries which have been struck by the disease and where restrictions around the assembly and movement of people have been imposed, Bishops and priests may celebrate the rites of Holy Week without the presence of the people and in a suitable place, avoiding concelebration and omitting the sign of peace.

The faithful should be informed of the beginning times of the celebrations so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes. Means of live (not recorded) telematic broadcasts can be of help. In any event it remains important to dedicate an adequate time to prayer, giving importance above all to the Liturgia Horarum.

The Episcopal Conferences and individual dioceses will see to it that resources are provided to support family and personal prayer.

1 - **Palm Sunday.** The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated within sacred buildings; in Cathedral churches the second form given in the Roman Missal is to be adopted; in parish churches and in other places the third form is to be used.

2 – **The Chrism Mass.** Evaluating the concrete situation in different countries, the Episcopal Conferences will be able to give indications about a possible transfer to another date.

3 – **Holy Thursday.** The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the procession is also omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. On this day the faculty to celebrate Mass in a suitable place, without the presence of the people, is exceptionally granted to all priests.

4 – **Good Friday.** In the Universal Prayer, Bishops will arrange to have a special intention prepared for those who find themselves in distress, the sick, the dead, (cf. Missale Romanum). The adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant.

5 – **The Easter Vigil:** Is to be celebrated only in Cathedral and parish churches. For the “Baptismal Liturgy” only the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” is maintained (cf. Missale Romanum).

Seminaries, houses of clergy, monasteries and religious communities shall follow the indications of this decree.

Expressions of popular piety and processions which enrich the days of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum can be transferred to other suitable days in the year, for example 14 and 15 September, according to the judgement of the Diocesan Bishop.

De mandato Summi Pontificis pro hoc tantum anno 2020.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 25 March 2020, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Robert Card. Sarah

Prefect

✠ Arthur Roche

Archbishop Secretary

[General Audience](#)

[Resignations and Appointments](#)

[Introduction of the Holy Father Francis to the Lord's Prayer at midday
\(#Preghiamolnsieme - 25 March\)](#)

[Indications of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches for the Paschal
Celebrations in the Eastern Catholic Churches](#)

[Decree Quo magis of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith approving seven
Eucharistic Prefaces for the forma extraordinaria of the Roman Rite](#)

[Note for the presentation by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the
Decree Quo magis approving seven Eucharistic Prefaces for the forma
extraordinaria of the Roman Rite](#)

[Decree Cum sanctissima of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the
liturgical celebration in honour of Saints in the forma extraordinaria of the Roman
Rite](#)

[Note for the Presentation of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the
Decree Cum sanctissima on the liturgical celebration in honour of Saints in the forma
extraordinaria of the Roman Rite](#)



CONGREGATIO DE CULTU DIVINO
ET DISCIPLINA SACRAMENTORUM

Prot. N. 96/21

NOTE TO BISHOPS AND EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES
ON THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY WEEK 2021

The intention of this Note is to offer some simple guidelines in order to aid Bishops in their task of judging concrete situations and providing for the spiritual welfare of pastors and faithful in living this Great Week of the liturgical year.

We are still facing the drama of the COVID-19 pandemic which has brought many changes, even to our normal way of celebrating the liturgy. The norms and directives contained in the liturgical books, drawn up with normal times in view, are not entirely applicable in exceptional moments of crisis such as these. For this reason, the Bishop as moderator of the liturgical life of his Church, is called upon to make prudent decisions in order that the liturgy can be celebrated fruitfully for the People of God and for the good of the souls entrusted to his care, while respecting the safeguarding of health and what has been prescribed by the authorities responsible for the common good.

Once again we remind Bishops of the Decree issued by this Dicastery by mandate of the Holy Father on 25 March 2020 (Prot. N. 154/20) in which some guidelines were offered for the celebration of Holy Week. That statement is also valid this year. We therefore invite you to re-read it in view of the decisions that Bishops will have to make about the upcoming Easter celebrations in the particular situation of their country. Many countries still have strict lockdown conditions in force rendering it impossible for the faithful to be present in church, while in others a more normal pattern of worship is being resumed.

- The use of social media has greatly aided pastors in offering support and closeness to their communities during the pandemic. Alongside these positive results problematic aspects were also observed. For the celebration of Holy Week it is suggested that media coverage of the celebrations presided over by the Bishop be facilitated and favoured, encouraging the faithful who are unable to attend their own church to follow the diocesan celebrations as a sign of unity.
- In all celebrations, in conjunction with the Episcopal Conference, attention should be paid to some particular moments and gestures, in accordance with healthcare requirements (cf. Letter of the Cardinal Prefect to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences *Let us return to the Eucharist with joy!*, 15 August 2020, Prot. N. 432/20).
- The Chrism Mass can be moved to another more suitable day, if necessary; a significant representation of pastors, ministers and faithful should participate.

- For the celebration of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil the indications given last year are valid.
- The preparation of suitable aids for family and personal prayer is encouraged, also by making use of some parts of the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

The Congregation sincerely thanks Bishops and Episcopal Conferences for responding in a pastoral manner to a rapidly changing situation over the course of the year. We are aware that the decisions taken have not always been easy for pastors or the lay faithful to accept. However, we know that they were taken with a view to ensuring that the sacred mysteries be celebrated in the most effective way possible for our communities, while respecting the common good and public health.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Ash Wednesday, 17 February 2021.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

✠ Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary



Prot. N. 96/21

NOTA PARA LOS OBISPOS Y LAS CONFERENCIAS EPISCOPALES SOBRE LAS CELEBRACIONES DE LA SEMANA SANTA 2021

La intención de esta Nota es ofrecer unas sencillas orientaciones con el fin de ayudar a los Obispos en su tarea de valorar las situaciones concretas y procurar el bien espiritual de pastores y fieles para vivir esta gran Semana del año litúrgico.

Estamos afrontando, todavía, el drama de la pandemia del COVID-19 que ha provocado muchos cambios, incluso en la forma habitual de celebrar la liturgia. Las normas y directrices contenidas en los libros litúrgicos, concebidas para tiempos normales, no son enteramente aplicables, en tiempos excepcionales de crisis como estos. Por tanto, el Obispo, como moderador de la vida litúrgica en su Iglesia, está llamado a tomar decisiones prudentes para que las celebraciones litúrgicas se desarrollen con fruto para el Pueblo de Dios y para el bien de las almas que le han sido confiadas, teniendo en cuenta la protección de la salud y cuanto ha sido prescrito por las autoridades responsables del bien común.

Se recuerda de nuevo a los Obispos el Decreto emitido por este Dicasterio, por mandato del Santo Padre, el 25 de marzo de 2020 (Prot. N. 154/20) en el que se ofrecen algunas orientaciones para las celebraciones de la Semana Santa. Tal pronunciamiento es válido también para este año. Se invita, por tanto, a releerlo con vistas a las decisiones que los Obispos tendrán que tomar con respecto a las próximas celebraciones pascuales en la situación particular de su país. En muchos países siguen vigentes estrictas condiciones de confinamiento que imposibilitan la presencia de los fieles en la iglesia, mientras que en otros se está retomando una vida cultural más normal.

- El uso de los medios de comunicación social ha ayudado mucho a los pastores a ofrecer apoyo y cercanía a sus comunidades durante la pandemia. Junto a los resultados positivos, también se han observado aspectos problemáticos. Para las celebraciones de la Semana Santa se sugiere facilitar y privilegiar la difusión mediática de las celebraciones presididas por el Obispo, animando a los fieles que, no pueden asistir a su propia iglesia, a seguir las celebraciones diocesanas como signo de unidad.
- En todas las celebraciones, de acuerdo con la Conferencia Episcopal, se debe prestar atención a algunos momentos y gestos particulares, respetando las exigencias sanitarias (cf. Carta del Cardenal Prefecto a los Presidentes de las Conferencias Episcopales *¡Volvamos con alegría a la Eucaristía!*, 15 de agosto de 2020, Prot. N. 432/20).
- La Misa Crismal, si es necesario, puede trasladarse a otro día más adecuado; conviene que participe una representación significativa de pastores, ministros y fieles.
- Para las celebraciones del Domingo de Ramos, del Jueves Santo, del Viernes Santo y de la Vigilia Pascual, se aplican las mismas indicaciones del pasado año.

- Se anima a preparar subsidios adecuados para la oración en familia y personal, potenciando también algunas partes de la *Liturgia de las Horas*.

La Congregación agradece sinceramente a los Obispos y a las Conferencias Episcopales por haber respondido pastoralmente a una situación en constante cambio a lo largo del año. Somos conscientes de que las decisiones adoptadas no siempre han sido fáciles de aceptar por parte de pastores y fieles laicos. Sin embargo, sabemos que se han tomado para garantizar que los santos misterios se celebraran de la manera más eficaz posible para nuestras comunidades, respetando el bien común y la salud pública.

En la Sede de la Congregación para el Culto Divino y la Disciplina de los Sacramentos, a 17 de febrero de 2021, Miércoles de Ceniza.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefecto

✠ Arthur Roche
Arzobispo Secretario