



GUIDELINES FOR HOLY WEEK

PSALM SUNDAY:

Notes:

1. Holy Week begins on "Passion (or Palm) Sunday" which joins the foretelling of Christ's regal triumph and the proclamation of the passion. The connection between both aspects of the Paschal Mystery should be shown and explained in the celebration and catechesis of this day.
2. The commemoration of the entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem has, according to ancient custom, been celebrated with a solemn procession, in which the faithful in song and gesture imitate the Hebrew children who went to meet the Lord singing "Hosanna."
3. The procession may take place only once. The congregation should assemble in a secondary church or chapel or in some other suitable place distinct from the church to which the procession will move.
4. In this procession the faithful carry palm or other branches. **The priest and the ministers, also carrying branches, precede the people.**
5. The palms or branches are blessed so that they can be carried in the procession. The palms should be taken home where they will serve as a reminder of the victory of Christ be given which they celebrated in the procession.
6. The Missal, in order to commemorate the entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem, in addition to the solemn procession described above, gives two other forms, not simply for convenience, but to provide for those situations when it is not possible to have the procession.
7. The second form is that of a solemn entrance when the procession cannot take place outside of the church. The third form is a simple entrance such as is used at all Masses on this Sunday which do not have the solemn entrance.
8. During the procession, the choir and people should sing the chants proposed in the Roman Missal, especially Psalms 23 and 46, as well as other appropriate songs in honour of Christ the King.
9. The passion narrative occupies a special place. It should be sung or read in the traditional way, that is, by three persons who take the parts of Christ, the narrator, and the people. The passion is proclaimed by deacons or priests, or by lay readers. In the latter case, the part of Christ should be reserved to the priest.
10. The proclamation of the passion should be without candles and incense, the greeting and the signs of the cross are omitted; only a deacon asks for the blessing, as he does before the Gospel.

HOLY THURSDAY EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER:

Notes:

1. With the celebration of Mass on the evening of Holy Thursday "the Church begins the Easter Triduum, and recalls the Last Supper, in which the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, showing his love for those who were his own in the world, he gave his body and blood under the species of bread and wine offering to his Father and giving them to the Apostles so that they might partake of them, and he commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to perpetuate this offering."
2. Careful attention should be given to the mysteries which are commemorated in this Mass: the institution of the Eucharist, the institution of the priesthood, and Christ's command of brotherly love; the homily should explain these points.
3. The Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the evening, at a time that is more convenient for the full participation of the whole local community. All priests may concelebrate even if on this day they have already concelebrated the Chrism Mass, or if, for the good of the faithful, they must celebrate another Mass.
4. Where pastoral considerations require it, the local Ordinary may permit another Mass to be celebrated in churches and oratories in the evening, and in the case of true necessity, even in the morning, but only for those faithful who cannot otherwise participate in the evening Mass. Care should nevertheless be taken to ensure that celebrations of this kind do not take place for the benefit of private persons or of small groups, and that they are not to the detriment of the main Mass.
5. According to the ancient tradition of the Church, all Masses without the participation of the people are on this day forbidden.
6. The Tabernacle should be completely empty before the celebration. Hosts for the Communion of the faithful should be consecrated during that celebration. A sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated to provide also for Communion on the following day.
7. For the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, a place should be prepared and adorned in such a way as to be conducive to prayer and meditation; seriousness appropriate to the liturgy of these days is enjoined so that all abuses are avoided or suppressed. When the tabernacle is located in a chapel separated from the central part of the church, it is appropriate to prepare the place of repose and adoration there.
8. During the singing of the hymn "Gloria in excelsis" in accordance with local custom, the bells may be rung, and should thereafter remain silent until the "Gloria in excelsis" of the Easter Vigil. During this same period the organ and other musical instruments may be used only for the purpose of supporting the singing.
9. The washing of the feet of chosen men and women which, according to tradition, is performed on this day, represents the service and charity of Christ, who came "not to be served, but to serve. This tradition should be maintained, and its proper significance explained.
10. After the post-Communion prayer, the procession forms, with the crossbar at its head. The Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by lighted candles and incense, is carried through the church to the place of reservation, to the singing of the hymn "Pange lingua" or some other eucharistic song.
11. The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a closed tabernacle or pyx. Under no circumstances may it be exposed in a monstrance.
12. The place where the tabernacle or pyx is situated must not be made to resemble a tomb, and the expression "tomb" is to be avoided. The Altar of repose is not prepared

so as to represent the "Lord's burial" but for the custody of the eucharistic bread that will be distributed in Communion on Good Friday.

13. After the Mass of the Lord's Supper the faithful should be encouraged to spend a suitable period of time during the night in the church in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament which has been solemnly reserved.

From midnight onwards, however, the adoration should be made without external solemnity, because the day of the Lord's passion has begun.

14. After Mass the altar should be stripped. It is fitting that any crosses in the church be covered with a red or purple veil. Lamps should not be lit before the images of saints.

GOOD FRIDAY

Notes:

1. On this day, when "Christ our Passover was sacrificed,"[63] the Church meditates on the passion of her Lord and Spouse, adores the cross, commemorates her origin from the side of Christ asleep on the cross, and intercedes for the salvation of the whole world.
2. On this day, in accordance with ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist: Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful during the Celebration of the Lord's Passion alone, though it may be brought at any time of the day to the sick who cannot take part in the celebration.
3. Good Friday is a day of penance to be observed as of obligation in the whole Church, and indeed through abstinence and fasting.
4. All celebration of the sacraments on this day is strictly prohibited, except for the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Funerals are to be celebrated without singing, music, or the tolling of bells.
5. The Order for the Celebration of the Lord's Passion (the Liturgy of the Word, the adoration of the cross, and Holy Communion), that stems from an ancient tradition of the Church, should be observed faithfully and religiously, and may not be changed by anyone on his own initiative.
6. The priest and ministers proceed to the altar in silence and without any singing. If any words of introduction are to be said, they should be pronounced before the ministers enter.
7. The priest and ministers make a reverence to the altar prostrating themselves. This act of prostration, which is proper to the rite of the day, should be strictly observed, for it signifies both the abasement of "earthly man," and also the grief and sorrow of the Church.
8. As the ministers enter the faithful should be standing, and thereafter should kneel in silent prayer.
9. The readings are to be read in their entirety. The responsorial psalm and the chant before the Gospel are to be sung in the usual manner. The narrative of the Lord's passion according to John is sung or read in the way prescribed for the previous Sunday. After the reading of the passion a homily should be given, at the end of which the faithful may be invited to spend a short time in meditation.
10. The General Intercessions are to follow the wording and form handed down by ancient tradition maintaining the full range of intentions so as to signify clearly the universal effect of the passion of Christ, who hung on the cross for the salvation of the whole

world. In case of grave public necessity, the local Ordinary may permit or prescribe the adding of special intentions.

11. For veneration of the cross, let a cross be used that is of appropriate size and beauty, and let one of the forms for this rite as found in the Roman Missal be followed. The rite should be carried out with the splendour worthy of the mystery of our salvation: both the invitation pronounced at the unveiling of the cross, and the people's response should be made in song, and a period of respectful silence is to be observed after each act of veneration—the celebrant standing and holding the raised cross.
12. The cross is to be presented to each of the faithful individually for their adoration since the personal adoration of the cross is a most important feature in this celebration; only when necessitated by the large numbers of faithful present should the rite of veneration be made simultaneously by all present.
13. Only one cross should be used for the veneration, as this contributes to the full symbolism of the rite. During the veneration of the cross the antiphons, "Reproaches," and hymns should be sung, so that the history of salvation be commemorated through song. Other appropriate songs may also be sung.
14. The priest sings the invitation to the Lord's Prayer which is then sung by all. The sign of peace is not exchanged. The Communion Rite is as described in the Missal.
15. During the distribution of Communion, Psalm 21 or another suitable song may be sung. When Communion has been distributed the pyx is taken to a place prepared for it outside of the church.
16. After the celebration, the altar is stripped; the cross remains however, with four candles. An appropriate place (for example, the Altar/chapel of repose used for reservation of the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday) can be prepared within the church, and there the Lord's cross is placed so that the faithful may venerate and kiss it, and spend some time in meditation.
17. Devotions such as the "Way of the Cross," processions of the passion, and commemorations of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary are not, for pastoral reasons, to be neglected. The texts and songs used, however, should be adapted to the spirit of the Liturgy of this day. Such devotions should be assigned to a time of day that makes it quite clear that the Liturgical celebration by its very nature far surpasses them in importance.

HOLY SATURDAY:

Notes:

1. On Holy Saturday the Church is, as it were, at the Lord's tomb, meditating on his passion and death, and on his descent into hell, and awaiting his resurrection with prayer and fasting. It is highly recommended that on this day the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer be celebrated with the participation of the people. Where this cannot be done, there should be some celebration of the Word of God, or some act of devotion suited to the mystery celebrated this day.
2. The image of Christ crucified or lying in the tomb, or the descent into hell, which mystery Holy Saturday recalls, as also an image of the sorrowful Virgin Mary can be placed in the church for the veneration of the faithful.
3. On this day the Church abstains strictly from the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass. Holy Communion may only be given in the form of Viaticum. The celebration of

marriages is forbidden, as also the celebration of other sacraments, except those of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick.

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION:

A. The Easter Vigil

Notes:

1. According to a most ancient tradition, this night is "one of vigil for the Lord," and the vigil celebrated during it, to commemorate that holy night when the Lord rose from the dead, is regarded as the "mother of all holy vigils." For in that night the Church keeps vigil, waiting for the resurrection of the Lord, and celebrates the sacraments of Christian initiation.

1. The Meaning Of The Nocturnal Character Of The Easter Vigil

1. "The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday." This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. Reprehensible are those abuses and practices which have crept into many places in violation of this ruling, whereby the Easter Vigil is celebrated at the time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses.
2. The Passover Vigil, in which the Hebrews kept watch for the Lord's Passover which was to free them from slavery to Pharaoh, is an annual commemoration. It prefigured the true Pasch of Christ that was to come, the night that is of true liberation, in which "destroying the bonds of death, Christ rose as victor from the depths."
3. From the very outset the Church has celebrated that annual Pasch, which is the solemnity of solemnities, above all by means of a night vigil. For the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our faith and hope, and through Baptism and Confirmation we are inserted into the Paschal Mystery of Christ, dying, buried, and raised with him, and with him we shall also reign.
The full meaning of Vigil is a waiting for the coming of the Lord.

2. The Structure Of The Easter Vigil And The Significance Of Its Different Elements And Parts

1. The order for the Easter Vigil is arranged so that after the service of light and the Easter Proclamation (which is the first part of the Vigil), Holy Church meditates on the wonderful works which the Lord God wrought for his people from the earliest times (the second part or Liturgy of the Word), to the moment when, together with those new members reborn in Baptism (third part), she is called to the table prepared by the Lord for his Church—the commemoration of his death and resurrection—until he comes (fourth part).
This liturgical order must not be changed by anyone on his own initiative.
2. The first part consists of symbolic acts and gestures, which require that they be performed in all their fullness and nobility, so that their meaning, as explained by their introductory words of the celebrant and the liturgical prayers, may be truly understood by the faithful.

In so far as possible, a suitable place should be prepared outside the church for the blessing of the new fire, whose flames should be such that they genuinely dispel the darkness and light up the night.

The paschal candle should be prepared, which for effective symbolism must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world. It is blessed with the signs and words prescribed in the Missal.

3. The procession, by which the people enter the church, should be led by the light of the paschal candle alone. Just as the children of Israel were guided at night by a pillar of fire, so similarly, Christians follow the risen Christ. There is no reason why to each response "Thanks be to God" there should not be added some acclamation in honour of Christ.

The light from the paschal candle should be gradually passed to the candles which it is fitting that all present should hold in their hands, the electric lighting being switched off.

4. The deacon makes the Easter Proclamation which tells, by means of a great poetic text, the whole Easter mystery placed in the context of the economy of salvation. In case of necessity, where there is no deacon, and the celebrating priest is unable to sing it, a cantor may do so.
5. The readings from Sacred Scripture constitute the second part of the Vigil. They give an account of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation, which the faithful are helped to meditate calmly upon by the singing of the responsorial psalm, by a silent pause and by the celebrant's prayer.
6. The restored Order for the Vigil has seven readings from the Old Testament chosen from the Law and the Prophets, which are in use everywhere according to the most ancient tradition of East and West, and two readings from the New Testament, namely from the Apostle and from the Gospel. Thus the Church, "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets" explains Christ's Paschal Mystery.[90] Consequently wherever this is possible, all the readings should be read so that the character of the Easter Vigil, which demands that it be somewhat prolonged, be respected at all costs.

Where, however, pastoral conditions require that the number of readings be reduced, there should be at least three readings from the Old Testament, taken from the Law and the Prophets; the reading from Exodus chapter 14 with its canticle must never be omitted.

7. The typological import of the Old Testament texts is rooted in the New, and is made plain by the prayer pronounced by the celebrating priest after each reading; but it will also be helpful to introduce the people to the meaning of each reading by means of a brief introduction. This introduction may be given by the priest himself or by a deacon. Each reading is followed by the singing of a psalm, to which the people respond. Melodies should be provided for these responses which are capable of promoting the people's participation and devotion. Great care is to be taken that trivial songs do not take the place of the psalms.
8. After the readings from the Old Testament, the hymn "Gloria in excelsis" is sung, the bells are rung in accordance with local custom, the collect is recited, and the celebration moves on to the readings from the New Testament. An exhortation from the Apostle on Baptism as an insertion into Christ's Paschal Mystery is read. Then all stand and the priest intones the "Alleluia" three times, each time raising the pitch. The people repeat it after him. If it is necessary, the psalmist or cantor may sing

the "Alleluia," which the people then take up as an acclamation to be interspersed between the verses of Psalm 117, so often cited by the Apostles in their Easter preaching. Finally, the resurrection of the Lord is proclaimed from the Gospel as the high point of the whole Liturgy of the Word. After the Gospel a homily is to be given, no matter how brief.

9. The third part of the Vigil is the baptismal liturgy. Christ's passover and ours is now celebrated. This is given full expression in those churches which have a baptismal font, and more so when the Christian initiation of adults is held, or at least the Baptism of infants. Even if there are no candidates for Baptism, the blessing of baptismal water should still take place in parish churches. If this blessing does not take place at the baptismal font, but in the sanctuary, baptismal water should be carried afterwards to the baptistry there to be kept throughout the whole of paschal time. Where there are neither candidates for Baptism nor any need to bless the font, Baptism should be commemorated by the blessing of water destined for sprinkling upon the people.
10. Next follows the renewal of baptismal promises, introduced by some words on the part of the celebrating priest. The faithful reply to the questions put to them, standing and holding lighted candles in their hands. They are then sprinkled with water: in this way the gestures and words remind them of the Baptism they have received. The celebrating priest sprinkles the people by passing through the main part of the church while all sing the antiphon "Vidi aquam" or another suitable song of a baptismal character.
11. The celebration of the Eucharist forms the fourth part of the Vigil and marks its high point, for it is in the fullest sense the Easter Sacrament, that is to say, the commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross and the presence of the risen Christ, the completion of Christian initiation, and the foretaste of the eternal pasch.
12. Great care should be taken that this Eucharistic Liturgy is not celebrated in haste. Indeed, all the rites and words must be given their full force: the General Intercessions in which for the first time the neophytes now as members of the faithful exercise their priesthood; the procession at the offertory in which the neophytes, if there are any, take part; the first, second or third Eucharistic Prayer, preferably sung, with its proper embolisms; and finally, Eucharistic Communion, as the moment of full participation in the mystery that is being celebrated. It is appropriate that at Communion there be sung Psalm 117 with the antiphon "Paschua nostrum," or Psalm 33 with the antiphon "Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia," or some other song of Easter exultation.
13. It is fitting that in the Communion of the Easter Vigil full expression be given to the symbolism of the Eucharist, namely by consuming the Eucharist under the species of both bread and wine. The local Ordinaries will consider the appropriateness of such a concession and its ramifications.

3. Some Pastoral Considerations

1. The Easter Vigil Liturgy should be celebrated in such a way as to offer to the Christian people the riches of the prayers and rites. It is therefore important that authenticity be respected, that the participation of the faithful be promoted, and that the celebration should not take place without servers, readers and choir exercising their role.

2. It would be desirable if on occasion provision were made for several communities to assemble in one church, wherever their proximity or small numbers mean that a full and festive celebration could not otherwise take place.
3. The celebration of the Easter Vigil for special groups is not to be encouraged, since above all in this Vigil the faithful should come together as one and should experience a sense of ecclesial community.
4. The faithful who are absent from their parish on vacation should be urged to participate in the liturgical celebration in the place where they happen to be.
5. In announcements concerning the Easter Vigil care should be taken not to present it as the concluding period of Holy Saturday, but rather it should be stressed that the Easter Vigil is celebrated during Easter night, and that it is one single act of worship. Pastors should be advised that in giving catechesis to the people they should be taught to participate in the Vigil in its entirety.[102]
6. For a better celebration of the Easter Vigil, it is necessary that pastors themselves have an ever deeper knowledge of both texts and rites, so as to give a proper mystagogical catechesis to the people.

B. Easter Day

1. Mass is to be celebrated on Easter Day with great solemnity. It is appropriate that the penitential rite on this day take the form of a sprinkling with water blessed at the Vigil, during which the antiphon *Vidi aquam*, or some other song of baptismal character should be sung. The fonts at the entrance to the church should also be filled with the same water.
2. The paschal candle has its proper place either by the ambo or by the altar and should be lit at least in all the more solemn liturgical celebrations of the season until Pentecost Sunday, whether at Mass, or at Morning and Evening Prayer.
After the Easter season the candle should be kept with honour in the baptistry, so that in the celebration of Baptism the candles of the baptized may be lit from them.
In the celebration of funerals, the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate that the death of a Christian is his own passover.
The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit nor placed in the sanctuary outside the Easter season.