

Lent 2009

Keeping the Spirit of Lent

The Lenten season has a dual character: to prepare catechumens **and** the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. Catechumens will focus on the Rite of Election, the Scrutinies, and the other rites and catechesis that will prepare them for the sacraments of Christian initiation. The faithful, ever more attentive to the word of God and prayer, and supportive of the catechumens and candidates, prepare themselves by penance for the renewal of their baptismal promises (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 249).

Care should be taken to preserve the spirit or tone of Lent.

Eucharistic Prayers

The Eucharistic Prayers of Reconciliation (with each proper Preface) are most appropriate during Lent. The current edition of the *Sacramentary* includes these Eucharistic Prayers.

Liturgical Music

The use of musical instruments is allowed only to support the singing (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 252). The exceptions to this rule are on the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday), and on solemnities and feasts. The *Gloria* is not sung or recited during Lent until Holy Thursday, except for the solemnities and feasts. The *Alleluia* is not used until the Easter Vigil. Lent might also be highlighted by greater use of silence during the liturgy.

Environment & Art

Flowers: During Lent, the altar and sanctuary are not to be enhanced with flowers (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, no. 252). The exceptions to this rule are on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (*Laetare Sunday*), and on solemnities and feasts.

Veiling Crosses: After the Holy Thursday liturgy, any cross that cannot be removed from sight should be covered with a red or violet cloth in preparation for the veneration of the cross on Good Friday. The *Roman Missal 2002* allows (but does not require) the veiling of crosses and images beginning after on the Saturday (morning) Mass of the Fourth Week of Lent and before the Saturday (Vigil) Mass of the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

Special Crosses: Planners ought to review the practice of placing a special Good Friday cross in the church throughout Lent. The Lenten season, after all, is not a forty-day meditation solely on the Lord's cross and passion.

Baptismal Fonts: The same is true for filling baptistry and holy water fonts with sand. Lent is **not** a period where blessed water and the paschal mystery it signifies are any less real or relevant than at other times of the Liturgical Year. Indeed, one could argue the opposite, since preparation for baptism, and therefore a deep baptismal spirituality, is a fundamental focus of the Lenten season. In other words, our baptisteries and holy water fonts are not to be emptied of holy water during the Lenten Season.

Celebrations of the Sacraments During Lent

Sacraments of Initiation: Because Lent in its rituals, scriptures, history, and place in parish life is oriented toward the celebration of the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil, the celebration of Baptism is somewhat incongruous during Lent itself. Lent is simply not the proper context for celebrating the Easter sacraments of initiation. It is certainly inappropriate to celebrate adult Baptism during Lent, except, of course, in danger of death. The Baptism of infants is also far more fitting on Easter Sunday and throughout the Easter Season. Regarding future planning, the Sacrament of Confirmation — also an Easter sacrament of initiation — ought to be celebrated during the Easter Season.

Rite of Penance: The celebration of the Sacrament of Penance during Lent should be clearly and positively encouraged, and so it is customary that confession schedules are expanded in preparation for Easter. The hours scheduled by any parish should be extensive enough so that an unreasonable burden does not fall on neighboring parishes. It is suggested that parishes, within their respective clusters, arrange their schedules cooperatively so that all in the area are served adequately and with reasonable convenience.

It is appropriate for reconciliation to be celebrated during Lent in a more solemn form, as described in the *Rite of Penance*. Additionally, the only ordinary way for the faithful to reconcile themselves with God and the Church is through individual, integral confession and absolution (*Rite of Penance*, no. 31).

Ideally, the faithful will have celebrated the Sacrament of Penance before the Triduum begins. Proper catechesis should be provided to all parishioners about the liturgical reasons for this. All in the faith community should know that Lent is the time for celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation, and that Lent ends on Holy Thursday afternoon. Parish confession schedules ought to reflect our liturgical beliefs, giving reasonable opportunity for receiving the sacrament during Lent. However, it is a reality that some people may look for the opportunity to celebrate reconciliation in the final days before Easter.

Rite of Marriage: If marriages are celebrated during Lent, couples are to be reminded that wedding plans must respect the nature of the liturgical season. Please refer to the sections on Liturgical Music and Environment & Art, above.

Lent and the *RCIA*. Liturgical planners and ministers should become thoroughly familiar with the *RCIA*, so that Lent and the Triduum may be celebrated as fully and richly as possible.

When there are Elect present, the Scrutinies are to be celebrated on the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays of Lent. When there are candidates for *Reception of Baptized Christians Into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church*, the Penitential Rite is celebrated on the 2nd Sunday of Lent. Readings are from cycle A of the *Lectionary*. [See *RCIA* no. 146 & 291.] Also, the proper ritual prayers and intercessions are found in the *Sacramentary*.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is the Church's solemn call to keep the season of Lent. We accept this call, united with the catechumens, and recalling our own baptism as we enter this special time of prayer and penitential practice.

Ashes are blessed and distributed after the homily of the Liturgy of the Word. When there is genuine pastoral need, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, or other lay persons may be designated to help distribute the ashes. The words "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel" are the recommended formula for placing the ashes, since this is what Jesus preached as he began his public ministry.

According to the **Ordo** and the **Sacramentary**, Ash Wednesday liturgies (which indicates the "Distribution of Ashes") may only be celebrated on the day (Wednesday, February 25th) which means it cannot have a "Vigil" nor may it be celebrated before or after the actual date.

NB: *Due to the ambiguity of the instruction in the **Sacramentary** for Ash Wednesday, please note the following important liturgical and pastoral instructions:*

- ❖ The **Sacramentary** and instructions ['rubrics'] pertain to the ordained minister (bishop, priest or deacon).
- ❖ The **Sacramentary** provides two (2) Rites for the Distribution of Ashes: (1) During the Mass; and (2) Outside of Mass.
- ❖ Only a bishop, priest or deacon can bless the ashes for distribution (either for distribution during the Mass or Outside of Mass). Therefore, only a bishop, priest or deacon is allowed to use the rites provided in the **Sacramentary**.
- ❖ However, it is noted that out of pastoral need, there are circumstances where parish communities (and homebound individuals) who wish to begin the discipline of Lent and celebrate Ash Wednesday and receive ashes when there is not Mass (or an ordained minister) available to bless the ashes.

When this happens, the Church generously provides an alternative rite found in the **Book of Blessings** (cf: “Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes” - Chapter 52 [paragraphs 1652-1678]). This rite provides for a lay ecclesial minister to lead the community or the homebound individual(s) in an adaptation from the rite found in the **Sacramentary**.

- ❖ One further clarification and pastoral adaptation (should the “Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes” be used from the **Book of Blessings**) is that the ashes must be blessed by a bishop, priest or deacon prior to the celebration of the adapted rite. It is suggested that the appropriate lay ecclesial minister (e.g. Pastoral Administrator, Pastoral Associate/Minister or Minister to the Sick and Homebound) attend an earlier celebration for Ash Wednesday and receive from that liturgy the ashes blessed by the bishop, priest or deacon (e.g. Sacramental Minister) . The blessed ashes will then be distributed during the “Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes” from the **Book of Blessings**. (Immediately following the “Reflection” offered by the lay ecclesial minister, the rite would proceed with the “Distribution of Ashes” which have already been blessed and brought to the parish, institution or home of the infirmed).
- ❖ It should be further noted that ashes on Ash Wednesday are to be “distributed” – that is dispensed by an appropriate minister to an individual. Therefore, “self-imposed” ashes (Or “take-away” ashes) are prohibited.

Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)

Introductory Rites: The Church today “celebrates Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery” (*Sacramentary*). The memorial of this event is to be included in every Mass. The *Sacramentary* provides three forms for this memorial of the Lord’s entrance, so these rites and their rubrics should be studied carefully as ministers, planners and musicians prepare the liturgy. Although the Procession should take place only once (before the principal Mass), the Solemn Entrance may be used before the principal Mass if the Procession cannot be held.

The prayers for the blessing of the palms are used whenever the Procession or the Solemn Entrance is celebrated; the penitential rite of the Mass is then omitted.

Reading the Passion: Readers and pastoral musicians are encouraged to study the rubrics for the proclamation of the Passion. There is a Gospel Acclamation as usual, and the deacon receives the blessing as usual (lay readers do not receive a blessing). Omitted are candles and incense, the greeting and response (“The Lord be with you...”), the making of the sign of the cross on the book, forehead, lips, and breast, and the people’s response (“Glory to you, Lord”).

Since it is a reading from the Gospel, the appropriate posture for the assembly during the reading of the Passion is standing. The deacon and/or priest may be assisted by lectors in the reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. As always, but especially on these days, the lectors chosen for this should be well-trained and highly proficient in the proclamation of the Word.

The recommended form for the Passion can be found in “The Passion Of Our Lord Jesus Christ” from Liturgy Training Publications. This resource divides the texts among three readers. This gives your congregation the opportunity to listen to the Passion as proclaimed and also be engaged by singing an appropriate acclamation and/or song

The Chrism Mass

At this solemn liturgy the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens are blessed by Bishop Carlson, the Sacred Chrism is consecrated by Bishop Carlson, and all are distributed for use in all our parishes and faith communities. This year’s Chrism Mass will be on Tuesday, April 7, 2009 at **2:30 pm** at the Cathedral of Mary of the Assumption.

Please make sure that the Holy Oils of the Sick and Catechumens and Sacred Chrism are properly disposed of and that by the time they are presented at the Cathedral the vessels are:

(1) Properly identifiable/ labeled:

- **OI** = *Oleum Infirmorum*/Oil of the Sick (generally designated by the color green)
- **OS** = *Oleum Sanctum*/Oil of Catechumens [-or-] **OC** = *Oleum Catechumenorum*/Oil of Catechumens (generally designated by the color of purple)
- **SC** = *Sacrum Chrisma*/Sacred Chrism (generally designated by the color gold)

NB: Also include the name of the Parish/Institution & Vicariate (either on the vessel, the identification tag or the lid).

(2) Suitable vessels and suitable for presentation:

- As described in the *Roman Missal*, the vessels must be worthy of their function and closed in such a way as to prevent spillage and maintain freshness
- The container housing these vessels should likewise reflect the dignity of its purpose and be made of worthy material suitable for presentation at the Cathedral and be labeled as mentioned above

(3) Properly cleaned:

- ❖ The three vessels must be empty, clean and without water (completely dry) or other oil residue.

If the parish vessels are not brought to the Cathedral properly cleaned to receive the new oils, alternate containers will be substituted for the presentation of the oils.

NB: Please remember that the Cathedral reserves the Holy Oils and Chrism in great supply and any parish may come to the Cathedral to receive extra Oils when needed.

The Triduum & the Easter Season

The Liturgies of the Easter Triduum

The rites for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil are to be used in the form in which they are presented in the *Sacramentary* and *Lectionary*. These are the Church's most sacred rites, and as the Church's ministers, we owe it to our people to celebrate these rites exactly as they have been handed down to us.

These days — from Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon — are to be a time apart: “The Easter Triduum of the passion and resurrection of Christ is thus the culmination of the entire liturgical year” (*General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar*, no. 18). As far as possible, all preparation should be done beforehand so that for all presiders, liturgical ministers, musicians, and sacristans these may be days of peace, prayer, and vigil. Those responsible for liturgy should see to it that the liturgies of these days are characterized by care and dignity, by simplicity, and by that deep joy which is announced in the entrance song of Holy Thursday: “We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life and our resurrection.”

Those who carry out the various ministries in these liturgies should be selected because of excellence in their ministry.

The very heart of the Triduum is the Easter Vigil, for there the fasting, prayer, and scripture readings culminate in the celebration of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. Planners should therefore give first attention to the liturgy of the Easter Vigil, then to the liturgies of Holy Thursday and Good Friday. Other devotional services, e.g., Stations of the Cross, rosaries, etc., should in no way detract from the preparation of liturgy and music for the rites and rituals of Lent, the Triduum, and Eastertide.

Funerals During the Triduum: A funeral Mass may **not** be celebrated on Holy Thursday (even before the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper), Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. If needed on these days, the body of the deceased may be brought to the Church for the "Rite of Final Commendation", including the incensation and blessing of the body with holy water. Other appropriate prayers may also be added. The Funeral Mass for the deceased should be celebrated as soon as convenient after Easter Sunday.

Marriages During the Triduum: The Rite of Marriage may **not** be celebrated on Good Friday or Holy Saturday.

Holy Thursday

Number of Masses: The Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper should be celebrated at the most suitable evening hour. It would be appropriate for as many parishioners of the parish to take part in other liturgies marking the end of Lent and the approach of the Triduum. Thus, the ideal is a single Holy Thursday Mass in a parish. The private celebration of any Mass is strictly forbidden.

Empty Tabernacle: The tabernacle should be empty before the liturgy begins. Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for Holy Communion today and tomorrow. Consecrated wine is **not** to be reserved for distribution on Good Friday. Though Holy Communion may be brought to the sick today, Holy Communion may be distributed at the Church itself only within the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

Parts of the Mass: The custom of receiving the newly blessed oils can be incorporated into the Mass of the Lord's Supper. In 1989, the Vatican confirmed the decision of the U.S. bishops to include this in future editions of the *Sacramentary*. For a sample resource of how to adapt for this ritual consult the "Chrism Mass" mailing.

The washing of feet (Mandatum) is encouraged in all parishes. This rite should be characterized by its simplicity, allowing the beautiful gesture of service to speak to all ministry in the church. The Mandatum itself is a powerful sign of our love and commitment to one another and of the nature of that commitment. We must resist the temptation to replace the Mandatum with something “more appropriate” or “more relevant,” remembering that Peter, too, thought that the washing of feet was inappropriate for the Last Supper liturgy. The group whose feet are washed should represent a cross-section of the local community. The number is traditionally twelve, though there is no exact requirement. The presider should wash the feet. If he needs assistance, he may turn to other leaders of the community, such as deacons and parish staff members. However, he should not ordinarily turn to parish volunteers to wash the feet of other parish volunteers.

Other rites and statements of commitment are not appropriate at the liturgy of Holy Thursday, for they would not find support from either the rites or from the scriptures. Rituals for the commissioning of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, parish officers, or even renewal of priestly vows, are best celebrated on the feast of the patron of the parish, on the parish anniversary, or at some other time.

The *Sacramentary* instructs that the collection of gifts and money today be for the poor.

Following the Prayer after Communion, the Holy Eucharist is transferred to the place of reposition. This may be the regular tabernacle if it is in an area removed from the sanctuary. The Precious Blood is consumed after the Communion Rite and is never reserved for distribution on Good Friday. The Blessed Sacrament is never to be reserved in a monstrance during this time. The rite for this procession is described in the *Sacramentary*.

After the transfer of the Holy Eucharist, the altar is stripped privately, and any crosses are removed or covered with a red or purple veil. Lamps should **not** be lit before images of saints. Holy water is removed from all fonts, to be refilled with water blessed at the Easter Vigil. They should **not** be filled with sand (or any other environmental adaptations).

“The faithful should be encouraged to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable period of time during the night, according to local circumstances, but there should be no solemn adoration after midnight” (*Sacramentary*). In fact, the nature of the Triduum before the Easter Vigil is that of prayer and watching and anticipation. Fasting is one expression of this. Another is private and communal prayer. Thus, on Thursday night, even after the hours of formal adoration, the faithful might be encouraged to come at any and all hours to the church to watch and pray between Thursday night and the Easter Vigil.

Passover Seder: Parish liturgy planners should seriously evaluate the custom of celebrating the Jewish Seder meal within the context of Holy Week. We must recognize, as Christians, that the Eucharist is our holy ritual meal, and that we should refrain from appropriating the Jewish Passover Seder, which we cannot, in full conformity with our faith, celebrate without major and likely inadmissible adaptation. Healthy ecumenical and interfaith relations require respect for the religious heritage of others and the integrity of their rituals. Roman Catholics, traditionally sensitive to any perceived abuse of their own sacred rites and symbols, should surely understand this. Likewise, we should **not** appropriate the Passover Seder and adapt it for our own purposes.

Good Friday

The Good Friday liturgy is a part of the Triduum, a unitive feast celebrated over three days; it is **not** just an elaborate “Communion service.” The Good Friday liturgy may never be abandoned, reordered, or replaced (see instructions below).

Because Good Friday is part of the one feast called the Triduum, every effort should be made to have a priest-presider of Good Friday’s solemn liturgy. The pastor of the community, or the priest responsible for sacramental care, is the presider. The *Ordo* and *Sacramentary* clearly prescribe instructions [‘rubrics’] for the priest-presider (with instructions included for an assisting deacon). The liturgy with its Communion Rite should never give the appearance of a concelebration.

NB: *In the event that a **priest-president is unavailable** or the parish community is unable to cluster with another local community to celebrate the liturgy of Good Friday, let it be noted that out of pastoral need, parish communities may gather to observe and honor the dignity of Good Friday. In such cases please note the following important liturgical and pastoral instructions:*

❖ **The rite outlined in the Sacramentary is NOT followed.**

❖ A Pastoral Administrator, appointed by the Bishop, may gather with the parish community for one of the following options:

Option A:

The celebration of the Liturgy of the Word (without procession or prayer: Isaiah 52:12-13; Psalm 31 (“Father, I put my life in your hands.”); Hebrews 4:14-16;5:7-9; John (The Passion) 18:1-19, 42); silence or a brief reflection; followed by the traditional structure of the General Intercessions (not the format in the *Sacramentary*) for this day; Veneration of the Cross (performed in a solemn way) and departure in silence (with no “formal” prayer or dismissal).

Option B:

The celebration of Morning Prayer (as prescribed in the Liturgy of the Hours. The scripture proclaimed would be the assigned scripture (Isaiah 52:13-15) with silence or a brief reflection.

Option C:

The celebration of Evening Prayer (as prescribed in the Liturgy of the Hours). The scripture proclaimed would be the assigned scripture (1 Peter 2:21-24) with silence or a brief reflection.

NB: *Popular devotions, such as the Way of the Cross or Ecumenical celebrations should be scheduled at other times than on Good Friday and cannot substitute or replace the “official” Good Friday liturgy of the Church or the liturgical and pastoral recommendations made above.*

Liturgy of the Hours: It is recommended that there be a communal celebration of the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer on both Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Celebration of the Lord's Passion: The celebration of the Lord's Passion should take place about 3 pm, but for pastoral reasons may be at a later hour, or as early as 12 noon. In any case, the celebration should conclude by 9 pm. [The liturgy may be repeated only when the number wishing to attend would be too large for the Church].

The use of the Reproaches ("My people, what have I done to you...") is discouraged. Alternative texts to go with the traditional music have been made available by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB). Other texts and hymns may also be used.

Although the *Sacramentary* says that "a brief homily may be given," a letter from the Congregation for Divine Worship says that there should be a homily, followed by some silent meditation. A poorly prepared homily, or even skipping the homily as a "favor" to everyone, would be inappropriate for the people who have gathered to celebrate the Lord's dying and rising.

Veneration of the Cross: The ritual speaks of the veneration of the cross, not necessarily a crucifix. Wood is the operative sign for the veneration, not a figure or other embellishments that might be attached to the cross. The image of the dead and defeated Lord can narrow our focus to one isolated moment in the paschal mystery, whereas the cross (more precisely the wood of the cross) can better suggest the tree of life, whose power is present now, and transcends any particular moment in human history.

NB: *The Ceremonial of Bishops directs that only one cross should be used in the veneration.*

During the veneration, music planners should avoid selections that offer facile sentiment, as the spirit of the ritual of veneration has no place for this type of music or song. Therefore, "The Old Rugged Cross" is unsuitable, as well as some other pieces that seem to have become standard fare for the veneration of the cross in the United States.

After the veneration, the cross is positioned near the altar and (four) candles are placed near it. The cross will remain there and the candles will remain lit for a period of time following the liturgy to allow the faithful to spend some additional time in prayer before the cross.

Communion: Holy Communion is distributed only within the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, but may be taken to the sick at any time this day.

After Communion: After the Blessed Sacrament has been returned to its place of reservation, the priest-presider says the Prayer Over the People from the *Sacramentary*. Then, all depart in silence. As mentioned above, the cross (with lighted candles) remains available for private prayer for a period of time. The altar is stripped at a convenient time.

Holy Saturday

Holy Communion may be given on this day only as Viaticum. Ordinary Communion visits to the sick should be made earlier in the week and on Easter. Communion visits are not permitted on this day, nor are Masses, even funeral Masses. The absence of these liturgical celebrations is in keeping with the nature and mood of this day.

Rites for the preparation of the elect for initiation are celebrated this day, as described in the *RCIA*. Since these rites are the prayer of the Church, and not private celebrations, they ought to be included in the published Holy Week schedules, with everyone in the parish community invited. The pastor or priest responsible for the sacramental care of the community is the presider.

The Easter Vigil

The tabernacle is empty for the Easter Vigil. All bread that will be used for Holy Communion is to be consecrated at the Vigil, offering us the model of what should happen at every celebration of the Eucharist throughout the year.

Time of Celebration: “The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday” (*Sacramentary*). The *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*, issued by the Vatican in 1988, is even stronger by insisting that the Easter Vigil must start only after it is dark. 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.

The Bishops' Committee on Liturgy (BCL) *Newsletter*, March 2001, states the Easter Vigil “is to take place in darkness... that is, after the time in the evening when daylight is last visible. This time is roughly equivalent to [the end of] astronomical twilight as defined by the Naval Observatory. The time after which ‘the sun does not contribute to sky illumination.’”

NB: *The starting time for the Easter Vigil 2009 in the Diocese of Saginaw is no earlier than 8:45 pm.*

Order of Celebration: The rites of the Vigil are to be celebrated in the order in which they appear in the *Sacramentary* and *RCIA*. Parts of the Easter Vigil liturgy are never to be celebrated at other times on Holy Saturday, nor are they to be repeated at the Masses of Easter Sunday.

New Paschal Candle: Each year a new paschal candle must be used. It should be made of wax and worthy in size and in beauty, befitting its role in the liturgy of this night, throughout the Easter season, and at the celebrations of baptism and burial throughout the year. Candles that are metal or plastic forms “refilled” by smaller candles are inconsistent with the candle’s symbolic role, and so are **not** allowed.

Liturgy of the Word: The reading of the word of God is, in the words of the *Sacramentary*, “the fundamental element of the Easter Vigil.” Though the number of readings from the Hebrew Scriptures may be reduced from seven to three, this is not to be done lightly. No one should look at this night’s liturgy as simply a “long Mass.” It is a Vigil, and should be conducted as such (with appropriate catechesis through the bulletin, etc., beforehand). The readings and psalms should be given the greatest care in preparation and celebration.

The parts unique to the Vigil which should always be sung are:

- the acclamations during the procession with the paschal candle;
- the Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*);
- the Gospel *alleluia* acclamation;
- the Litany of the Saints; and
- the acclamation after the blessing of water.

Sacraments of Initiation: The planning for the baptismal liturgy should provide for its beauty and for the full preparation and participation of the assembly. Planners and ministers will have to work with both the *Sacramentary* and the *RCIA* ritual books.

When adults are baptized at the Vigil, the liturgy attains its fullness, for there is the paschal mystery of the Lord's dying and rising in our midst. When there are no adults to be baptized, the parish is encouraged to have the baptism of infants at the Vigil, if possible. The fullness of the rite of baptism comes when immersion is possible (the pouring of water over the entire body). Parishes should work toward the fullness of this sign.

The Elect - those who are baptized at the Easter Vigil - are to be fully initiated; therefore, confirmed immediately by the presiding priest at the Easter Vigil liturgy. These confirmations may **not** be postponed to a later time. Baptism and Confirmation are proper to the presiding priest's ministry, and may not be delegated to another priest or to a deacon.

Priests appointed by Bishop Carlson to parish ministry have the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics, but only in two categories:

1. Baptized Catholic seeking readmission who has been an apostate from the faith.
2. Baptized Catholic who has been formed in a non-Catholic religion.

However, in a third category (baptized Catholic who has never been catechized nor has ever put that faith into practice), pastors must request the delegation of this faculty from the bishop.

It is important that candidates - those adults and children who are to be received into full communion in the Roman Catholic Church at the Vigil Mass - have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance at an earlier time. Appropriate catechesis on the sacrament should be an integral part of their catechetical formation. Such catechesis should emphasize the realities of sin and grace, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Easter Sunday

Sequence: The Easter Sequence is sung or said on Easter Sunday after the second reading and before the Gospel *alleluia* acclamation. The Sequence is also optional throughout the octave of Easter.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises: In the United States, the renewal of baptismal promises replaces the Creed on Easter Sunday. This is followed by a sprinkling of the people with the water that was blessed at the Easter Vigil.

Dismissal: At the conclusion of the Mass, the priest or deacon should dismiss the people with a dismissal form that includes a double *alleluia*. The double *alleluia* is also to be used for the dismissal at all Masses throughout the octave of Easter.

The Easter Season

The Triduum is concluded liturgically with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. The Triduum leads us to the Easter season, the fifty days from Easter Sunday until after Evening Prayer on Pentecost Sunday. This is the Church's most ancient season and, now that the full rites of Christian initiation are restored, it may again be possible for Eastertide to be kept as a special season for Catholics, with its music, customs, and cycle of scriptures.

Octave of Easter: All of the days in the octave of Easter (the eight days from Easter Sunday through the Second Sunday of Easter) have the rank of solemnity. Funeral Masses are permitted on the weekdays, but no other ritual Masses may be celebrated during this time. Also, the *Gloria* is to be sung or recited; however, the Creed is to be omitted. Preface of Easter I is also to be used, and the double *alleluia* is to be used in the dismissal.

Second Sunday of Easter. The octave of Easter concludes with the Second Sunday of Easter. The proper prayers and readings are those shown for the Second Sunday of Easter in the *Sacramentary*.

Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water: It is recommended that a Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water replace the Penitential Rite at all Sunday Masses during the Easter Season, including Pentecost.

Solemnity of Ascension: The Ascension of the Lord is transferred to the Seventh Sunday of Easter (May 24, 2009). This is the case throughout the United States (except in a few ecclesiastical provinces) and all of Latin America. Refer to the *Ordo* for details on readings and Mass selections.

Pentecost Sequence: The Sequence is sung or said on Pentecost after the second reading and before the Gospel *alleluia* acclamation.

Easter Candle: The Easter Candle, a symbol of the presence of the risen Christ among the people of God, remains in the sanctuary or near the altar or ambo throughout the Easter season. After Evening Prayer II on the solemnity of Pentecost, the Easter candle is placed near the baptismal font, where it should be displayed with honor.

Sources & Acknowledgements:

- The Lectionary for the Mass (Cf “Introduction”)
- The Sacramentary (Cf “GIRM)
- The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours & Celebration of the Eucharist 2007 (Ordo) [Province of Michigan]
- The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
- Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons (An Almanac of Parish Liturgy) [LTP, Chicago, IL]
- USCCB/Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy [Washington, DC]
- The Archdiocese of Seattle, WA [Liturgy Office]

Catholic Diocese of Saginaw + Office of Liturgy

JWB/mw: 01/26/09

LENTEN REGULATIONS + 2 0 0 9

The Meaning of Lent:

The annual observance of Lent is the special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of Easter. Through its twofold theme of Repentance and Baptism, the SEASON OF LENT disposes both the catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the Paschal Mystery. Catechumens are led to the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) by means of the Rite of Election, the Scrutinies and catechesis. The faithful, listening more intently to the Word of God and devoting themselves to prayer, are prepared through a spirit of repentance to renew their Baptismal promises. [Taken from the *Ceremonial of Bishops*, #249]

Introduction to Ash Wednesday:

We have responded to the call of repentance issued on this sacred day when we are marked with ashes. These ashes serve as a reminder that we are a sinful people, ever in need of the mercy of God. As this SEASON OF LENT unfolds, let us recall that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and full of kindness. With humble hearts, we begin this season of grace.

Fasting & Abstinence:

Lent is sometimes called a “forty-day-fast,” recalling the period of time that Jesus fasted in the desert before undertaking his public ministry. At one time, keeping Lent involved extensive fasting. Today ...

+ FASTING is required of those between the ages of 18 and 59 on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On days of fasting, one full meal and two smaller meals are permitted with NO eating between meals.

+ ABSTINENCE is required of all those 14 years and older on ALL Fridays of Lent, as well as on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. In this case the abstinence norms require that those who are in good health should refrain from eating food items made of and/or from red meat (beef and pork), of animal fat, or poultry.

(The so-called “paschal fast” on Holy Saturday is encouraged, but not required.)

All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat, as is Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.

Despite the few days on which a strict fast must be kept, there is a “spirituality of fasting” being kept that permeates these Forty Days of Lent. This “fast” can include acts of self-sacrifice for others, exercising spiritual discipline, and refraining from pleasures and frivolous activities so as to make room for prayer and works of charity. The practice of prayer and almsgiving is also part of Lenten spirituality. Keeping the disciplines of PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING throughout the entire Season of Lent weaves a significant part of the fabric of these holy Forty Days of Lent.