GUIDELINES FOR LENT/EASTER 2016

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 10, 2016, and ends with the celebration of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, March 24, 2016. The Lenten Season is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving as we prepare to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of our Faith.

*The precept of confessing grave sins and receiving Holy Communion at least once during the Lenten Season or Eastertide should be reminded to the faithful.*

As part of the Extraordinary Jubilee year of Mercy Pope Francis has called for all churches to have “24 hours for the Lord” on Friday, March 4 and Saturday, March 5, during which parishes will offer extended hours for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Through its two-fold theme of repentance and baptism, the Season of Lent disposes both the catechumen and the faithful to celebrate the Paschal Mystery. Catechumens are led to the Sacraments of Initiation by means of the Rite of Election, the scrutinies, and catechesis. The faithful, by 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 (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, No. 249).

Popular piety does not often perceive the mystical aspect of Lent and any of its great themes such as the relationship between "the sacrament of forty days" and "the Sacraments of Christian initiation" (or the mystery of the "exodus" which is always present in the Lenten journey).

In the planning of the Season of Lent, the Triduum and the Easter Season, it would be helpful to view the seasons as a whole with the Parish Liturgy Committee and Music Director. A good reference for planning these Seasons is found in the 2016 *Ordo: The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist* beginning on page 64. Reference to the *Ordo* is found throughout this Lent/Easter Newsletter.

The information below may be reproduced in your parish bulletin for the purpose of reminding the faithful of the regulations for fast and abstinence.

**REGULATIONS ON FASTING AND ABSTINENCE**

Ash Wednesday, February 10, 2016 and Good Friday, March 25, 2016 are days of fast and abstinence. All Fridays of Lent are also days of abstinence from meat.

**Fasting** is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Catholics between the ages of 18 years and 59 years (inclusive). On a fast day one full meal is allowed. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one’s needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids are allowed. If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the "paschal fast" to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily His Resurrection (USCCB).

**Abstinence** from meat is to be observed by all Catholics who are 14 years of age and older. **Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent (and Good Friday) are days of abstinence.**

**Note:** If a person is unable to observe the above regulations due to ill health or other serious reasons, they are urged to practice other forms of self denial that are suitable to their condition.

**Fasting, almsgiving and prayer** are the three traditional disciplines of Lent. The faithful and catechumens should undertake these practices seriously in a spirit of penance and of preparation for baptism or of renewal of baptism at Easter.
The Rite of Election
In the Diocese of Venice, the Rite of Election will take place on the First Sunday of Lent, on February 14, at Epiphany Cathedral, beginning at 2:30 p.m. See details sent by the Department of Evangelization to the parishes. Parishes should celebrate the Rite of Sending the Catechumens for Election or the combined Rite of the Parish Celebration for Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop (RCIA, Nos.108, 110) at a suitable time before the Rite of Election.

The Penitential Rite for baptized candidates preparing for Confirmation and First Holy Communion or to be received into full communion at Easter may be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent, February 21, 2016 (RCIA Nos. 462-463). The scrutinies for the elect (those unbaptized) are celebrated on the Third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The Mass at which the scrutinies take place uses the text for the Ritual Mass for the Scrutinies found in the Sacramentary (pp. 826-829 or RCIA, nos. 146, 156, 170 and 177).

Sacrament of Reconciliation
It is very appropriate for the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be administered during Lent in a more solemn form, as described in the Rite of Penance Form B (Rite of Penance, nos. 22-30, 48-59). The Church considers individual confession and absolution to be the only ordinary way for persons aware of serious sin to be reconciled with God and the Church (June 2002 BCL Newsletter). The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to receive this Sacrament during Lent. Schedules for confessions and communal celebrations should be arranged in each parish and among parishes so that all may be served adequately. Any communal celebration should take place before the Easter Triduum and should not immediately precede the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper. However, when there is a genuine pastoral need, the Sacrament of Penance may be administered on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (Ordo). During this Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy Pope Francis has called on all churches to have “24 hours for the Lord” on Friday, March 4, when Confessions will be open from noon until 11:00 p.m., and Saturday, March 5, during which Confessions will be available 9:00 a.m. to noon. Many parishes will also have more extended hours for Confession throughout Lent.

Funerals during the Season of Lent and the Easter Triduum
A funeral Mass may not be celebrated on the Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday (Order of Christian Funerals, No. 178). On these days the body of the deceased may be brought into the church for the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass using the Order of Christian Funerals, Part 1, Chapter 4. A Mass for the deceased should be offered when it is convenient after Easter Sunday. Also funeral Masses should not be celebrated the morning of the Chrism Mass, Tuesday, March 22, so priests can concelebrate Mass at the Cathedral.

Marriages during Lent and the Easter Triduum
Marriages celebrated during the Season of Lent should respect the penitential character of the season, i.e., a marked moderation in festivity. The sanctuary is not to be decorated with flowers (Ceremonial of Bishops, No. 252). Marriages are strictly prohibited on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (Circular Letter, Nos. 61 & 75).

Communion for the Sick and Viaticum
According to the Church’s ancient tradition, the Sacraments are not celebrated on Good Friday or Holy Saturday. Communion may be brought to the sick on all days except Holy Saturday. On that day Communion may only be given as viaticum (Circular Letter, No. 75). Communion services outside of the Liturgy are not held during the Triduum.

Liturgical Vestments for Lent
Good liturgical practice would suggest reflecting on the liturgical season in the choice of music. The Season of Lent also reflects a change in the color of vesture. The red/purple colored Lenten vestment rather than the blue/purple vestment used in the Advent season should be worn. On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 6, traditionally known as Laetare Sunday, a rose-colored vestment may be worn (Ceremonial of Bishops, No. 252).
Lent and the Worship Environment

During Lent the altar area is not to be decorated with flowers (Ceremonial of Bishops, No. 252). The Fourth Sunday (Laetare Sunday), Solemnities and Feasts are an exception to the rule (Ordo 81). The visual goal of the Lenten environment is austerity, simplicity and plainness. The Source Book for Sundays and Seasons (Published by LTP, Chicago, IL) gives excellent ideas on the setting, sense, look, sound and rhythm of the Lenten environment. To Crown the Year: Decorating the Church through the Seasons by Peter Mazar (published by LTP) also gives helpful hints. The crucifix may be covered in red or violet for Good Friday (Circular Letter, no. 26).

Ash Wednesday, February 10

The blessing and distribution of ashes follows the Mass. The ordinary minister for the blessing and distribution of ashes is a priest or deacon. Others (e.g. extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion) may assist with the distributing of ashes where there is genuine need, especially for the sick and shut-ins. There is no penitential rite at the beginning of the Liturgy. For the distribution of ashes, one of the following formulas is used (Ordo 53):

Repent and believe in the Gospel.
Or
Remember, you are dust, and to dust you will return.

Rite of Election, Sunday, February 14

This will take place at the Cathedral at 2:30 p.m.

Stations of the Cross

This is an appropriate devotion to schedule weekly during the Lenten Season. Various publishers offer a variety of formats for this most commendable and ancient devotion.

Feast of St. Joseph, Saturday, March 19

A Gloria and Creed are recited at this Mass. It is the custom in some places to bless bread, pastries and other food and to give a large portion of it to the poor. When blessing bread, pastries and other food and giving it to the poor, consult the Catholic Household Book of Blessings and Prayers page 140-141.

Gloria and Alleluia

The Gloria and Alleluia are not to be used during Lenten Liturgies. Exceptions are Feasts and Solemnities that occur during Lent (e.g. the Solemnity of St. Joseph on March 19), in which case the Gloria is sung.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, March 20

Holy week begins with Palm Sunday, or "Passion Sunday." On this day the Church remembers Christ’s entrance into Jerusalem. The commemoration, with the blessing of the palms and procession, is a ritual action that marks our own entry into Holy Week. Three forms are given for the beginning of the liturgy: the procession, the solemn entrance and simple entrance. Mass then begins with either the solemn entrance or the procession, omitting the penitential rite, and the opening prayer is said.

The reading of the Passion is essential and cannot be omitted. It may be proclaimed using one to three or more readers. The congregation may sit if they cannot stand for the entire Gospel.

The Gospel of the Passion of the Lord is read without candles or incense, and with no greeting or signing of the Book. It may be read by lay readers, with the part of Christ, reserved to the priest. At the end of the reading, the Book is not kissed, but “The Gospel of the Lord” is said with its response (Ordo 83).

Pastors should remind the faithful of the paschal fast which “should be observed everywhere on Good Friday and continued, where possible, on Holy Saturday. In this way, the people of God will receive the joys of the Lord’s Resurrection with uplifted and responsive hearts (Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, 110) (Ordo 83).
Holy Week March 21-March 24 (Monday-Thursday)
The days of Holy Week, Monday to Thursday inclusive, have precedence over all other celebrations. It is not fitting that baptisms or confirmations be celebrated on these days since they have their natural place in the Easter Vigil (Ordo 75-77).

The Chrism Mass will be held on Tuesday, March 22, at 10:30 a.m. in the Cathedral
Parishes are to properly dispose of their old oils by burning or burying them prior to the Chrism Mass. (Please do not bring them with you to the Cathedral). Newly consecrated Chrism for the coming year will be given to each parish at the conclusion of the Chrism Mass. The old oils are burned. They may be put into the lamp which burns before the reserved Blessed Sacrament or burned in the pre-Easter Vigil fire (Ordo 85).

Note: Pastors may wish to consider adjusting their Mass schedule for this day in order to invite parishioners to attend the Chrism Mass. Funeral Masses should not be celebrated the morning of the Chrism Mass, Tuesday, March 22, so priests can celebrate Mass at the Cathedral at 10:30 a.m.

Morning and Evening Prayer
Prayer being one of the traditional disciplines of Lent, it is appropriate to offer opportunities for parishioners to join in the Liturgy of the Hours of the Church using the Morning and Evening Prayer format. They could offer solemn Evening Prayer on the Fridays or Sundays of Lent, or before the morning or evening Mass. As with all liturgies, music is integral and should be a part of these celebrations.

Holy Week March 21-March 24 (Monday-Thursday)
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Holy Water Fonts in the Lenten Season
The removing of Holy Water from the fonts during the season of Lent is not permitted. The practice of the Church has been to empty the Holy Water fonts on the days of the Sacred Triduum in preparation of the blessing of the water at the Easter Vigil, and it corresponds to those days on which the Eucharist is not celebrated (i.e. Good Friday and Holy Saturday) (Congregation for Divine Worship (3/14/03: Prot. N. 569/00/L). Please note that this practice of emptying fonts is not to be done until after Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday

Easter Triduum
The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday (Ordo 80).

On Holy Thursday and Good Friday, the Eucharist is distributed only during the Liturgy, but may be brought to the sick at any convenient hour. On Holy Saturday, the Eucharist is not given before the Easter Vigil celebration; it may be given only as viaticum (Ordo 81-83).

Holy Thursday, March 24
Lent ends with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, which is the principal and only Mass of the day. Before Mass begins the tabernacle should be entirely empty; a sufficient number of Hosts should be consecrated at this Mass for the communion of the clergy and laity today, Thursday, and tomorrow, Good Friday (Ordo 81).

The group whose feet are washed should represent a cross-section of the local community. The number is traditionally 12, though there is no exact requirement (Ordo 81). The washing of the feet is an optional practice, which may or may not be done, depending on pastoral circumstance.

Church bells are rung during the Gloria at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Afterwards, the bells should remain silent until the Gloria at the Easter Vigil. This marks the end of the solemn time of Passion and proclaims the joy of the Resurrection. Please use the Church bells at the Parish. In the tradition of the Church, the organ is silenced from the Gloria on Holy Thursday until the Gloria of the Easter Vigil.
Other rites or statements of commitment are not appropriate for Holy Thursday. It is not particularly appropriate for First Communion to be administered at the Mass of the Lord’s Last Supper. Another day should be chosen instead, such as a Sunday between the Second and Sixth Sundays of Easter, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ or Sundays in Ordinary Time (Redemptions Sacramentum, 87, Ordo 95).

It is appropriate that the oils blessed and consecrated at the Chrism Mass be carried in at the presentation of the gifts. The proper rubrics and prayers for the presentation of the oils are found in the Sacramentary Supplement.

**Holy Water** may be removed from all fonts after the Mass on Holy Thursday and refilled with blessed water from the Easter Vigil (Ordo 81-83).

After Communion, a ciborium with Hosts for Good Friday is left on the altar. Following the prayer after Communion, the procession with the Holy Eucharist takes place and the Holy Eucharist is transferred to the place of reposition (Ordo 81-83). This may be the usual tabernacle, if it is in a separate chapel or area removed from the sanctuary. The place of Reposition should be simply decorated. **Under no circumstances should the Blessed Sacrament be exposed in a monstrance.** The faithful should be encouraged to spend some time in Adoration through the remainder of the evening. It should conclude by midnight (Circular Letter, Nos. 55-56). It is not permitted to reserve the Precious Blood for Adoration on Holy Thursday, or for distribution on Good Friday.

After Mass on Holy Thursday the altar is stripped privately. Votive candles should not be lit before the images of saints. Any crosses may be covered with a purple or red veil (Circular Letter, No. 57) (Ordo 83). Although it is not required, the custom in many Catholic churches is to veil crosses and statues after the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

### Good Friday, March 25

The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer, is strongly encouraged to be said with the faithful. The Celebration of the Lord’s Passion, the principal celebration of this day, should take place about 3:00 p.m. If pastoral need dictates, there may be another celebration later in the day or it can be moved to the evening (Ordo 83). (Note: the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is transferred to Monday, April 4, because nothing can take place during Easter Week.)

On Good Friday, a single Crucifix, on which a corpus is present, is to be used since we venerate Christ crucified.

The beautiful words of the *Ecce Lignum Crucis* ("This is the wood of the Cross") are repeated three times, with the priest singing. The proper response is: "on which hung the Savior of the world." Please note that this Crucifix is to be the sole Crucifix to be venerated on Good Friday. There are not to be multiple crosses.

Those parts of the liturgy which should always be sung are: the general intercessions and the chants for the showing and veneration of the cross (Ordo 83).

### Holy Saturday, March 26

The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer, is encouraged. According to custom, food may be blessed before or after the Easter Vigil or on Easter morning for consumption at the first meal of Easter, when fasting is ended and the Church is filled with joy. It is recommended that Morning Prayer be celebrated with the participation of the people. The Church abstains strictly from celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass. Holy Communion may only be given in the form of Viaticum. The celebration of marriages are forbidden, as is the celebration of other Sacraments, except those of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick.

The entire celebration of this Vigil should take place at night, that is, it is to begin after nightfall and end before the dawn of Sunday (General Norms, 21). The Easter Vigil is to begin at the time that allows for the new fire to break the darkness of night. The Easter Vigil must be the only Mass of the evening and is to occur **after dark.** It is **not** to be celebrated at the time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Mass (Ordo 85-87).

Civil Twilight occurs this year at 8:21 p.m. The Easter Vigil therefore is **not to be scheduled in any parish before 8:30 p.m.**
**The Easter Fire** is an important part of the Easter Vigil celebration. Here is a suggestion to use in your parish: Use denatured alcohol to begin the fire in place of wood. One parish in the diocese uses a large clay dish, 12 inches in diameter and 1 ½ inches tall, and filled with sand. On this they place a round cake pan lined with foil and filled with salt. They pour denatured alcohol onto the salt and before the Easter Vigil, they practice to figure out the right amount of denatured alcohol for the height of the flame and the length of time it will burn. On Holy Saturday they pour the alcohol on the salt before the Vigil and then cover the pan with foil. Just before the Vigil begins they take the foil off. It is uncovered for only about 10 minutes because it evaporates. The flame lasts about 20 minutes, and there is no smoke. The flame is about a foot high and very impressive. Use a candle taper to light it.

The **Paschal Candle** should be made of wax, never be artificial, and be sufficiently large in size, and one in number, so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world (*Circular Letter, No. 82*). The Paschal Candle is lit for all liturgical celebrations of the Easter season (*Ceremonial of Bishops No. 372*) and also during the year at every baptism and funeral. It is **not** to be extinguished after the Gospel on the Solemnity of the Ascension or Pentecost.

The **Exsultet** (Easter Proclamation) should be sung by one who can do so with grace and beauty. The deacon, priest, or cantor should do the proclamation.

At least three of the seven Old Testament **readings** should be used. The reading from Exodus 3 should always be used (*Exodus 14:15-15-1*) (*Ordo 85-87*).

Those parts unique to the Vigil which should always be sung are: The acclamations during the procession with the paschal candle and the Easter proclamation, the responsorial “Alleluia,” the Litany of the Saints, and the acclamation after the blessing of water (*Ordo 85-87*).

Adults being baptized or brought into Full Communion during the Vigil are to be confirmed by the presider (*RCIA 305 & 481; Natural Statues Nos. 14, 18 & 35; Code of Canon Law 833:2*) (*Ordo 85-87*).

**Easter Sunday, March 27**

For parishes planning sunrise Liturgies, sunrise on Easter Sunday is at 7:26 a.m.

The 50 days from Easter Sunday (March 27, 2016) to Pentecost Sunday (May 15, 2016) are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better, as one “Great Sunday.” The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the Octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord (*Ceremonial of Bishops, Nos. 371 & 373*). The **Gloria** is to be sung or recited during the Octave of Easter. The **Sequence** is sung or said before the **Alleluia** at all Masses on Easter Sunday, but is optional during the days of the Octave (*GIRM #64*).

At **all** Masses on Easter Sunday the **Renewal of Baptismal Promises** and its accompanying sprinkling rite replaces the Creed. Because it is a reminder of baptism, it is appropriate that on all the Sundays of Easter, including Pentecost, the Rite of Sprinkling replaces the usual Penitential Rite. The double Alleluia is added to the sung dismissal formulary during the octave of Easter (*Ceremonial of Bishops, No. 373*).

The Easter Triduum ends with the conclusion of Evening Prayer Easter Day. The traditions of celebrating baptismal vespers on Easter Day with the singing of psalms during the procession to the font should be maintained where it is still in force, and as appropriate restored (*Ordo 103*).

During the 50 days, Intercessions should be made in the Eucharistic Prayer for the newly baptized during the Easter Octave (*RCIA, nos. 244-251*). The paschal candle, a symbol of the presence of the risen Christ among the people of God, remains in the Sanctuary near the altar or ambo through Vespers on Pentecost. Infant baptisms could fittingly be celebrated on any Sunday of the Easter Season, including Pentecost day. It is also appropriate that children
receive their First Communion on one or other of the Sundays of Easter. The Easter Season is a traditional time when homes may be blessed (*Ordo 103*).

**Divine Mercy Sunday, April 3**
This Sunday reminds us of the mercy God has for us. Adoration, the chaplet and benediction may be done on this day as a special devotion. The octave of Easter ends with the celebration of Evening Prayer.

**Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, transferred to Monday, April 4**
This Solemnity (usually March 25) never takes place during Holy Week and is thus transferred to Monday, April 4, the first day open after Easter Sunday because nothing can take place during Easter Week.

**May Crowning**
It takes place during May and a special crowning, rosary and devotions to Mary are encouraged during this month.

**The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, transferred to Sunday, May 8**
The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops voted in the year 2000 to transfer the solemnity of the Ascension from the Thursday forty-days after Easter to the Seventh Sunday of Easter, in accord with an indult granted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the Holy See. Therefore, for the Catholic Churches in the Province of the State of Florida, the Seventh Sunday of Easter is always to be replaced by the solemnity of the Ascension.

**The Solemnity of Pentecost, Sunday, May 15**
Encouragement should be given to a prolonged celebration of Mass in the form of a Vigil, not baptismal as in the Easter Vigil, but one of urgent prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit. More readings also can be included (*Ordo 123*).
The *Sequence* of Pentecost is sung or recited at all Masses after the second reading and before the Alleluia. The double Alleluia is added to the dismissal and the responsorial, as it was at the Easter Vigil. The Easter season ends with the conclusion of Vespers. The Easter Candle is lit at all Masses this day and then placed near the baptismal font where it is displayed with honor (*Ordo 123*).

**Ordinary Time begins again Monday, May 16 with the seventh week of Ordinary Time.**

**The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, Sunday, May 22**
White vestments are worn (*Ordo 127*).

**Corpus Christi, Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, May 29**
An outdoor procession, adorations and other devotions may take place to celebrate the reverence of the Eucharist. It can truly be a sign of common faith and adoration (*Ordo 131*).