



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

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**TO:** PASTORS, PARISH ADMINISTRATORS, DEACONS AND  
PARISH LIFE COORDINATORS  
**FROM:** SUE A. HUETT, DIRECTOR  
OFFICE OF WORSHIP  
**DATE:** FEBRUARY, 2011  
**RE:** LENTEN REGULATIONS 2011

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*Each year the Lord Jesus calls the entire Church to a special season of penance and renewal. As we begin this holy time of Lent, we should reflect on our need for conversion of heart, prayer, charitable works and penance.*

**The season of Lent extends this year from Ash Wednesday, March 9, to the Mass of the Lord's Supper, April 21, inclusive.**

1. Everyone 14 years of age or over is bound to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all Fridays of Lent.
  2. Everyone 18 years of age and under 59 years of age is also bound to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
  3. On these two days of fast and abstinence, only one full meatless meal is allowed. The other meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to one's needs, but altogether they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted on these two days, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices are allowed. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the obligation of the law is modified. Because Lent is a special season for all Christians, we should not lightly excuse ourselves from these penitential practices.
  4. To completely disregard the law of fast and abstinence is seriously sinful.
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**HOLY SATURDAY: THE EASTER VIGIL**

The first Mass of Easter, the Easter Vigil, falls between nightfall of Holy Saturday, 23 April and daybreak of Easter Sunday, 24 April 2011. On Saturday evening, 23 April, the sun will set in our diocese at 7:44 p.m. The end of civil twilight (nightfall) will occur at 8:12 p.m. **It is suggested that the Easter Vigil celebration not begin before 8:12 p.m.**

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.

— *Paschale Solemnitatis*, no. 77

(quoting Exodus 12:42; St. Augustine, Sermon 219; and the *Ceremonial of Bishops*)

The entire celebration of this vigil should take place at night, that is, it should either begin after nightfall or end before the dawn of Sunday.

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## **HOLY WATER DURING LENT**

**Should we remove the holy water from our parish's baptismal and holy water fonts during Lent?** Draining the font of holy water does not support one of the main themes of Lent:

Lent is marked by two themes, the baptismal and the penitential. By recalling or preparing for baptism and by repentance, this season disposes the faithful . . . to celebrate the paschal mystery. The baptismal and penitential aspects of Lent are to be given greater prominence in both the liturgy and liturgical catechesis. Hence, more use is to be made of the baptismal features proper to the lenten liturgy. (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 109)

The Congregation for Divine Worship wrote a response in 2000 to a request for clarification on this issue. Their response stated that removing holy water from the font during Lent is not permitted for two reasons:

1. This is an issue of custom, not law, and the liturgical laws in place do not address this recent innovation. However, this practice, "is contrary to a balanced understanding of the season of Lent, which though truly being a season of penance, is also a season rich in the symbolism of water and baptism, constantly evoked in liturgical texts."
2. The fasting of Lent does not include fasting from sacramentals, such as the use of holy water."

The response continues: "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)."

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## **HOLY THURSDAY MANDATUM**

*The Secretariat of Divine Worship carries out the work of the Committee on Divine Worship. This is the latest statement of the Secretariat on the question. No subsequent legislation or instructions have necessitated a modification in the statement.*

**My parish liturgy committee has decided to allow both men and women to take part in the washing of the feet at the liturgy on Holy Thursday. I have always heard that only men may have their feet washed. Which does the Church allow?**

The rubric for Holy Thursday, under the title WASHING OF FEET, reads:

"Depending on pastoral circumstance, the washing of feet follows the homily. The men who have been chosen (*viri selecti*) are led by the ministers to chairs prepared at a suitable place. Then the priest (removing his chasuble if necessary) goes to each man. With the help of the ministers he pours water over each one's feet and dries them." Regarding the phrase *viri selecti*, the Chairman of the Bishops Committee on the Liturgy, after a review of the matter by the committee, authorized the following response which appeared in the BCL Newsletter of February 1987:

**What is the significance of the Holy Thursday foot washing rite?**

1. The Lord Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper as a sign of the new commandment that Christians should love one another: "Such as my love has been for you, so must your love be for each other. This is how all will know you for my disciples:

- by your love for one another" (see John 13, 34-35). For centuries the Church has imitated the Lord through the ritual enactment of the new commandment of Jesus Christ in the washing of feet on Holy Thursday.
2. Although the practice had fallen into disuse for a long time in parish celebrations, it was restored in 1955 by Pope Pius XII as a part of the general reform of Holy Week. At that time the traditional significance of the rite of foot washing was stated by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in the following words: "Where the washing of feet, to show the Lord's commandment about fraternal charity, is performed in a Church according to the rubrics of the restored Ordo of Holy Week, the faithful should be instructed on the profound meaning of this sacred rite and should be taught that it is only proper that they should abound in works of Christian charity on this day."<sup>1</sup>
  3. The principal and traditional meaning of the Holy Thursday mandatum, as underscored by the decree of the Congregation, is the biblical injunction of Christian charity: Christ's disciples are to love one another. For this reason, the priest who presides at the Holy Thursday liturgy portrays the biblical scene of the gospel by washing the feet of some of the faithful.
  4. Because the gospel of the mandatum read on Holy Thursday also depicts Jesus as the "Teacher and Lord" who humbly serves his disciples by performing this extraordinary gesture which goes beyond the laws of hospitality,<sup>2</sup> the element of humble service has accentuated the celebration of the foot washing rite in the United States over the last decade or more. In this regard, it has become customary in many places to invite both men and women to be participants in this rite in recognition of the service that should be given by all the faithful to the Church and to the world. Thus, in the United States, a variation in the rite developed in which not only charity is signified but also humble service.
  5. While this variation may differ from the rubric of the Sacramentary which mentions only men (*viri selecti*), it may nevertheless be said that the intention to emphasize service along with charity in the celebration of the rite is an understandable way of accentuating the evangelical command of the Lord, "who came to serve and not to be served," that all members of the Church must serve one another in love.
  6. The liturgy is always an act of ecclesial unity and Christian charity, of which the Holy Thursday foot washing rite is an eminent sign. All should obey the Lord's new commandment to love one another with an abundance of love, especially at this most sacred time of the liturgical year when the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection are remembered and celebrated in the powerful rites of the Triduum.<sup>3</sup>

#### Notes

1. Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction on the Correct Use of the Restored Ordo of Holy Week, November 16, 1955 (Washington, DC: National Catholic Welfare Conference Publications Office, 1955), page 6.
2. In biblical times it was prescribed that the host of a banquet was to provide water (and a basin) so that his guests could wash their hands before sitting down to table. Although a host might also provide water for travelers to wash their own feet before entering the house, the host himself would not wash the feet of his guests. According to the Talmud the washing of feet was forbidden to any Jew except those in slavery.

In the controversies between Hillel and Shammai (cf. Shabbat 14a-b) Shammai ruled that guests were to wash their hands to correct "tumat yadayim" or "impurity of hands" (cf. Ex 30, 17 and Lv 15, 11). Priests were always to wash their hands before eating consecrated meals. The Pharisees held that all meals were in a certain sense "consecrated" because of table fellowship.

Jesus' action of washing the feet of his disciples was unusual for his gesture went beyond the required laws of hospitality (washing of hands) to what was, in appearance, a menial

- task. The Lord's action was probably unrelated to matters of ritual purity according to the Law.
3. For a brief overview of the restoration of the foot washing rite in 1955, see W. J. O'Shea, "Mandatum," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume IX, 146, and W. J. O'Shea, "Holy Thursday," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume VII, 105-107; Walter D. Miller, *Revised Ceremonial of Holy Week* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1971), p. 43. See also Prosper Gueranger, OSB, *The Liturgical Year*, Volume VI, *Passiontide and Holy Week* (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1949), pp. 395-401. For the historical background of the many forms of this rite, see the following studies: Pier Franco Beatrice, *La lavanda dei piedi: Contributo alla storia delle antiche liturgie cristiane* (Rome: C.L.V. Edizioni Liturgiche, 1983); "Lotio pedum" in Hermann Schmidt, *Hebdomada Sancta*, Volume II (Rome: Herder, 1956-1957); Annibale Bugnini, CM, and C. Braga, CM, *Ordo Hebdomadae Sanctae Instauratus in Biblioteca "Ephemerides Liturgicae" Sectio Historica 25* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1956), pp. 73-75; Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*, second edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 81.
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#### **FOURTEEN QUESTIONS ON THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM**

1. **When does the Triduum begin and end?** The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closed with evening prayer on Easter Sunday.
2. **May another Mass besides the Mass of the Lord's Supper be celebrated on Holy Thursday?** Ordinarily, no other Mass may be celebrated on Holy Thursday. However, by way of exception, the local Ordinary may permit another Mass in churches and oratories to be celebrated in the evening, and, in the case of genuine necessity, even in the morning. Such Masses are provided for those who in no way are able to participate in the evening Mass.
3. **How are the Holy Oils, consecrated and blessed on Holy Thursday, to be received in the parish?** A reception of the oils may take place at the Mass of the Lord's Supper. The oils, in suitable vessels are carried in the procession of the gifts, before the bread and wine by members of the assembly. A text for this can be found in the *Sacramentary Supplement 2004* recently published by Catholic Book Publishing Company.
4. **When should the celebration of the Lord's Passion take place?** Normally it should take place in the afternoon, at about three o'clock to enable people to assemble more easily. However, pastoral discretion may indicate a time shortly after midday, or in the late evening, though never later than nine o'clock. Depending on the size or nature of a parish or other community, the local ordinary may permit the service to be repeated.
5. **Does the Church encourage any other liturgical celebrations on Good Friday?** On this day the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer could appropriately be celebrated with the participation of the people in the churches.
6. **Do devotions have a particular importance on Good Friday?** The *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy* (2002) provides the proper perspective in paragraphs 142 – 145. Clearly the central celebration of this day is the Good Friday Liturgy of the Lord's Passion. In no way should manifestations of popular piety, either by the time or manner in which they are convoked substitute for this solemn liturgical action. Nor should aspects of the various acts of piety be mixed with the Good Friday celebration, creating a hybrid. In recent times, Passion Processions and celebration of the Stations of the Cross,

and Passion Plays have become more common. In such representations, actors and spectators can be involved in a moment of faith and genuine piety. Care should be taken, however, to point out to the faithful that Passion Plays are a representation which is commemorative and they are very different from “liturgical actions” which are anamnesis, or the mysterious presence of the redemptive event of the Passion.

- 7. How does the Veneration of the Cross on Good Friday begin?** The Veneration of the Cross begins with one of two forms of **Showing of the Cross: The first form** begins as the deacon or another suitable minister goes to the sacristy and obtains the veiled cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, the veiled cross is brought to the center of the sanctuary in procession. The priest accepts the cross and the standing in front of the altar and facing the people, uncovers the upper part of the cross, the right arm and then the entire cross. Each time he unveils a part of the cross, he sings *This is the wood of the cross*. **In the second form** of the veneration of the cross, the priest or deacon goes to the church door, where he takes up the uncovered cross. Accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, he processes to the sanctuary, stopping at the door of the church, in the middle of the church and before entering the sanctuary to sing the acclamation, *This is the wood of the cross*.
- 8. How is the cross venerated by members of the Congregation on Good Friday?** After the showing of the cross, the priest or deacon may carry the cross to the entrance of the sanctuary or another suitable place. The first person to adore the Cross is the priest celebrant. If circumstances suggest, he takes off his chasuble and his shoes. The clergy, lay ministers and the faithful then approach the cross. The personal adoration of the cross is an important feature in this celebration and every effort should be made to achieve it. The rubrics remind us that “only one cross” should be used for adoration. If the numbers are so great that all can not come forward, the priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored the cross, can take the cross and stand in the center before the altar. In a few words he invites the people to adore the Cross. He then elevates the cross higher for a brief period of time while the faithful adore it in silence. It should also be kept in mind that when a sufficiently large cross is used even a large community can reverence it in due time. The foot of the cross as well as the right and left arm can be approached and venerated. Coordination with ushers and planning the flow of people beforehand can allow for this part of the liturgy to be celebrated with decorum and devotion.
- 9. When should the Easter Vigil take place?** The Vigil, by its very nature, ought to take place at night. It is not begun before nightfall and should end before daybreak on Easter Sunday. The celebration of the Easter Vigil takes the place of the Office of Readings. The Easter Vigil begins and ends in darkness. It is a *nocturnal vigil*, retaining its ancient character of vigilance, and expectation, as the Christian people await the resurrection of the Lord during the night. Fire is blessed and the paschal candle is lighted to illumine the night so that all may hear the Easter proclamation and listen to the word of God proclaimed in the Scriptures. For this reason the Service of Light takes place before the Service of the Word. Since sunset varies at different locations throughout the country, local weather stations can be consulted as to the time of sunset in the area.
- 10. What considerations should be given for the Paschal Candle used at the Easter Vigil?** This candle should be made of wax, never be artificial, be replaced each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. The Paschal Candle is the symbol of the *light of Christ, rising in glory*, scattering the darkness of our hearts and minds. Above all, the Paschal Candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choice of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed.

- 11. How many readings should be proclaimed at the Easter Vigil?** One of the unique aspects of the Easter Vigil is the recounting of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation. These deeds are related in seven readings from the Old Testament chosen from the law and the prophets and two readings from the New Testament, namely from the apostles and from the gospel. Thus, the Lord “beginning with Moses and all the prophets” (Lk 24.27, 44-45) meets us once again on our journey and, opening up our minds and hearts, prepares us to share in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup. The faithful are encouraged to meditate on these readings by the singing of a responsorial psalm, followed by a silent pause, and then by the celebrant’s prayer. Meditation on these readings is so significant for this night that we are strongly urged to use all the readings whenever it can be done. Only in the case of grave pastoral circumstances can the number of readings be reduced. In such cases, at least three readings from the Old Testament should be read always including Exodus 14.
- 12. How is the First Communion of the neophytes to be emphasized during the Easter Vigil?** The celebrant, before he says, *This is the Lamb of God*, may make a brief remark to the neophytes about their first Communion and about the importance of so great a mystery, which is the climax of initiation and the center of the Christian life. This is a night when all should be able to receive Holy Communion under both forms.
- 13. What directions are given for the celebration of Masses on Easter Sunday?** Mass is to be celebrated on Easter Day with great solemnity. A full complement of ministers and the use of liturgical music should be evident in all celebrations. 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 holy water fonts at the entrance to the church should also be filled with the same water. On Easter Sunday the rite of renewal of baptismal promises is repeated after the homily.
- 14. Where is the Paschal Candle placed during the Easter Season?** 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 honor in the baptistery, so that in the celebration of Baptism the candles of the baptized may be lit from it. 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.

*All of the information in this memo is available on the Office of Worship website at [www.officeofworship.catholicweb.com](http://www.officeofworship.catholicweb.com).*