

# **Celebration of the Paschal Triduum in Families of Parishes Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

*Revised 3/24/23*

When two or more parishes come together for the celebration of the Triduum, it presents a number of liturgical issues. We are still in the infancy stages of addressing the liturgical challenges we face when gathering a Family of Parishes into a single worshipping community for the Church's high-point of the liturgical year, the Triduum.

It should be noted that the *Roman Missal* and the *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts (CL)* recommend that in places where the priest has responsibility of several smaller parishes, the entire Triduum should be carried out in the principal parish. (cf. *RM, Introduction to the Sacred Paschal Triduum, 3; CL, 43*) Of course, each parish church may have celebrations on Easter Sunday morning or celebrate the Sacrament of Penance on Good Friday or celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours or devotional practices outside of the liturgy (e.g. stations of the cross), but it may be appropriate for the principal liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil to be celebrated in one of the churches.

## **Ministries**

Liturgical ministers should be chosen from each of the parish communities. The liturgical ministries should "look" like the entire gathered assembly, not just the parish at which the liturgy is being celebrated. However, this suggests that each parish has common liturgical practices and skills training. The liturgical ministers need to be excellent in their skill and familiar with the particular liturgical practices of the church where the Triduum liturgy is being celebrated. This may be easier with lectors, greeters, and other ministers than EMsHC, since each church has very specific particular guidance for ministers of Holy Communion (e.g. where to stand, where to return vessels, etc.)

## **Music**

Music is integral to worship. The sung participation of the faithful must be carefully considered especially when a Family of Parishes combines for a common celebration of the Triduum. Prior to the Triduum, Families must seek to develop common repertoire so that when parishes come together for the Triduum, all present will feel a sense of belonging because the music is familiar, not alien, to the assembly gathered. Combining the parish choirs may facilitate a sense of commonality and belonging.

Secondly, music must be chosen according to sound liturgical principles. The music director(s) and the pastor will need to work together to ensure that the music reflects the unity, the solemnity, and the meaning of the Triduum.

## General

- **Fonts:** Holy water fonts and stoups should be emptied before the evening of Holy Thursday, regardless of whether the principal Triduum liturgies are celebrated in the church or not. They should be refilled prior to Easter Sunday and blessed according to the rites (see Easter Sunday below.)

## Specific Ritual Elements and Days

### Mass of the Lord's Supper

- **Presentation of Blessed Holy Oils:** Oils blessed and consecrated at the Chrism Mass may be presented prior to the Mass of the Lord's Supper or at another appropriate time following the Chrism Mass. Representatives from each parish may carry a vessel to be presented. However, the presentation of each oil to the presiding minister should only be spoken once.
- **Washing of the Feet (*Mandatum*):** Representatives from each parish community should be chosen.
- **Transfer of the Blessed Sacrament:** Normally, it is preferred that the Triduum be celebrated in the principal church of a given cluster or pastoral region. (cf. *RM*, Introduction to the Triduum, 3; *CL*, 43). However, if the celebration of the Good Friday liturgy is celebrated in another church, then the Mass of the Lord's Supper is concluded with the blessing and dismissal. There is no procession or adoration. The Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle in the usual way after Communion. (cf. *RM*, Mass of the Lord's Supper, 44)
- **Stripping the Altar:** *Roman Missal*, Holy Thursday #44 says that if the liturgy doesn't take place in a church on Good Friday, Mass "concludes in the usual way and the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle." If Mass isn't celebrated on Holy Thursday night in a church, nothing should be done vis-à-vis stripping of the altar at the end of Mass. This should happen without solemnity later.

### Good Friday

- **Sanctuary:** *Roman Missal*, Good Friday #3 states that before the liturgy the altar should be completely bare, without cross, candles, or clothes. #33 states that after the liturgical celebration (if it takes place), the altar is stripped but the cross remains. Thus, it seems logical that the sanctuary of a church even in which the Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion does

not take place would be bare during the day on Good Friday until the Easter Vigil.

## Easter Vigil

- **Multiple Paschal Candles:** “The *Roman Missal*, not envisioning the pastoral situation of mission churches or cluster parishes, specifies that only one paschal candle is used. To accommodate the particular circumstances, the Secretariat might suggest that the candles from the mission churches or other parish churches could be present at the Easter Vigil, having been prepared in advance, and blessed alongside the main candle (perhaps having deacons or other representatives holding them). In keeping with the rubrics, for the lighting and procession only one candle should be lit (the principal one, or the one which will remain in that particular church). As the other candles in the congregation are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. Once all the candles are extinguished after the singing of the *Exsultet*, the other paschal candles are put aside. On Easter Sunday morning, those candles could be taken to each of the missions [sic] and carried, lit, in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary.”

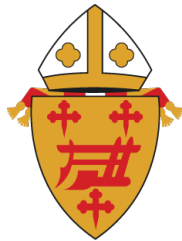
*(from USCCB Secretariat for Divine Worship,  
Eighteen Questions on the Paschal Triduum)*

- **Sacramental Records:** Please consult the [\*Sacramental Records Handbook\*](#) for how to properly record initiation that takes place for someone outside their parish (even within the same Family.) Notably:
  - When persons from more than one parish are baptized or received into full communion with the Catholic Church at a single liturgy, it is preferred that the record for each individual baptized or received into full communion be retained at the parish where the rites are celebrated.
  - If confirmation is conferred upon baptized Catholics from several parishes at one liturgy, two methods of recording are acceptable: 1) all records are made at the parish where confirmation was celebrated; or 2) records are made at the respective parishes of the recipients. When there is a large representation from more than one parish, method #2 is preferred. When the number of recipients from outside the parish where confirmation was administered is small, method #1 is preferred. In either case the parish of baptism must be notified about the conferral of confirmation.

## Easter Sunday

- **Paschal Candle:** As detailed above from the USCCB, if the Easter Vigil was not celebrated the night before in a church building, on Easter Sunday morning the paschal candle could be lit, carried in the entrance procession of the first Mass, and placed in the sanctuary.
  
- **Font:** If a permanent font was not blessed during the Easter Vigil, it may be blessed on Easter Sunday morning in the usual way. (see Appendix II of the *Roman Missal*)
  - If the renewal of baptismal promises will take place, the blessing of water follows the homily (the Creed is omitted) and precedes the renewal.
  - If the renewal of baptismal promises is omitted, the blessing of water and sprinkling rite takes the place of the Penitential Act.

**With specific questions or concerns regarding the celebration of the Paschal Triduum in a Family of Parishes, please contact us.**



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