Holy Week Guidelines 2020

In accord with the indications and suggestions from the decree of March 25th from the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, the following guidelines are put in place for celebrations of Holy Week this year.

In observing Holy Week, parishes are encouraged to decorate the church at least in a simple manner, even the outside, as a witness to the events of salvation being observed, even though not publicly celebrated.

The number of people present must be kept to a minimum. It should be noted that “faith-based services that are provided through streaming or other technology” are included on the list of essential critical infrastructure workers provided by the California Public Health Officer, and so those involved in that are allowed to leave their homes for that purpose.

Especially if being stream or broadcasted, it is important for the celebrations to be beautiful, including the appropriate use of music.

In all liturgies-

- The liturgical adaptations currently in force are to be observed.
- While the Vatican decree suggests ‘avoiding concelebration’ it has been clarified that it did not intend to forbid concelebration at these liturgies, but rather to remind priests of keeping proper social distance, even during the celebration of the liturgy.

Palm Sunday

- In parish churches, the simple entrance (option 3 in the Missal) should be used.
- In the interest of preventing the spread of the coronavirus, palms are not to be distributed at this time, or left outside the doors of the church. If it is possible, parishes could attempt to keep them fresh, or fold them while fresh to be distributed after the stay-at-home order has been lifted.

Holy Thursday

- Special permission has been given to all priests to celebrate the Holy Thursday evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper without the presence of the faithful.
- The washing of the feet is omitted.
- The procession at the end is omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is simply placed in the tabernacle. There is nothing preventing the Pange lingua from being used as a recessional hymn. If the Good Friday commemoration of the Lord’s Passion is celebrated, the Sacrament should be brought to a suitable place of repose just before the liturgy.
Good Friday

- The following intention, in accord with the rubric given in the Missal (Friday of the Passion of the Lord, no. 13), is to be added to the Universal Prayer. Musical adaptation is attached.

XI. For an end to the pandemic

Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end to the coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world, that our God and Father will heal the sick, strengthen those who care for them, and help us all to persevere in faith.

Almighty and merciful God, source of all life, health and healing, look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease; protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us and in your fatherly providence grant recovery to the stricken, strength to those who care for them, and success to those working to eradicate this scourge. Through Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

- In the adoration of the Cross, kissing the Cross is limited to the celebrant. If a parish is streaming or broadcasting the liturgy, the First Form of the Showing of the Cross may be more effective (Roman Missal, Friday of the Passion of the Lord, 15). It would also be appropriate to utilize the method for adoration described in no. 19.

Easter Vigil

- In general, initiation will be deferred until a later date. However, if a parish has only 1 person to be baptized, and it is possible to baptize him or her while keeping the numbers present under 10 and with proper distance between them, that person may be baptized at the Vigil if it seems prudent. It may also be appropriate to baptize if there is an Elect who has been in the catechumenate for an extraordinarily long time, or a similar situation where baptizing just one would not be unfair to the other Elect.

- The lighting of the new fire is optional but may be celebrated according to the prudential judgment of the pastor, either indoors (in a small, smokeless fashion - such as burning alcohol or some other quick-burning, relatively odorless fuel) or in a situation where a small fire will not draw attention (e.g., it can be done well out of view of the main street).
  - If the new fire is not lit, the liturgy begins with lighting the Paschal Candle at the front of the church, the “Lumen Christi/Light of Christ” acclamation is sung once, and the Exsultet follows.

- If there is no baptism, only the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” (Roman Missal, Easter Vigil, no. 55) should be celebrated during the Baptismal Liturgy, omitting even the blessing of the water for the sprinkling rite, and the Litany of the Saints is not sung.

- If baptism occurs, the following are to be observed:
  - If the Elect has not undergone at least one of the scrutinies, one is to be celebrated just before the Vigil. The laying on of hands is to be omitted.
  - The Holy Saturday preparatory rites for the Elect are to be omitted.
  - Baptism is to be done by pouring, not immersion.
  - Except during the pouring of the water, and the anointing at confirmation, the priest should remain at least six feet away from the others. Before the baptism and confirmation, at a convenient point, the priest should sanitize his hands.
o The godparent who lights the candle should be the only one who handles the candle before giving it to the neophyte.

o Following the Confirmation, when the priest washes his hands he should immediately sanitize them as well.