Ash Wednesday
Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26, 2020. No Ritual or Votive Masses are permitted on this day or any Sunday of Lent. Funerals are permitted on Ash Wednesday. Ashes may be distributed to children of any age and to catechumens. Ashes should be distributed within the context of a Liturgy of Word, if not within Mass.

Fast and Abstinence
Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. Fridays during Lent are obligatory days of abstinence.

The norms on fasting are obligatory from age 18 until age 59. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may also be taken, but not to equal a full meal. The norms concerning abstinence from meat are binding from age 14 onwards.

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.

The Apostles’ Creed During Lent and Easter
The rubric found in the Roman Missal for the Order of Mass #19 stipulates that: Instead of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, especially during Lent and Easter Time, the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church, known as the Apostles’ Creed, may be used. The reason this option is recommended particularly for Lent/Easter Time is because of its close relationship with baptism. The Apostles’ Creed is the basis for the baptismal promises made by the elect before they are baptized. It is also used for the renewal of baptismal promises at Easter and by parents and godparents when bringing a child for baptism.

Lenten Communal Penance Services
Every effort should be made to schedule communal celebrations of the sacrament of Penance during the season of Lent. If not, then additional opportunities for individual confessions should be scheduled in the parishes. Lenten Communal Penance Services should not be scheduled during the days of the Triduum, nor on the Tuesday of Holy Week, April 7, 2020, to allow priests and people to attend the Chrism Mass at St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Austin.

Sacraments in Lent
Baptism and Matrimony are allowed in Lent with the exception of Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

Removing Holy Water from the Fonts During the Season of Lent
The removal of holy water from the fonts during the season of Lent is not permitted. Fonts are only emptied of holy water on the days of the Sacred Triduum in preparation for the blessing of the water at the Easter Vigil.

The Saints During Lent
- Solemnities and feasts are celebrated as usual.
- Memorials of the saints are not celebrated during Lent, but they may be commemorated as follows:

At Mass
- The Collect of the saint may replace the opening prayer of the Lenten weekday.
- The Scripture readings are always those of the Lenten weekday.
- The prayer over the gifts and prayer after communion are always the prayers of the Lenten weekday.
- The Lenten Preface is always used (Lenten Prefaces may be used with the Eucharistic Prayers for Reconciliation).
- The color is always violet.

In the Liturgy of the Hours
At the Office of Readings
After the second reading from the Lenten weekday (with its responsory), the readings of the saint (with its responsory) may be added with the concluding prayer being the collect of the saint.

At Morning and Evening Prayer
The ending of the concluding prayer may be omitted and the antiphon and the prayer of the saint may be added.

Distribution of Holy Communion to the Sick During the Triduum
According to the Church’s ancient tradition, the sacraments are not celebrated on Good Friday or during the day on Holy Saturday. The rubrics of the Roman Missal indicate that only the sacraments of the Anointing of the Sick and Penance are celebrated on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (Roman Missal, Rubrics for Good Friday, 1). Holy Communion may be brought at any hour of the day to the sick who cannot take part in the service on Good Friday. On Holy Saturday holy Communion may be given only as viaticum.
Lent is a season of penance, reflection and fasting which prepares us for Christ’s Resurrection. As a result, music during the liturgies of this season is less celebratory. We take our direction from the General Instruction of the Roman Missal 313, which states during the Lenten season, “the playing of the organ and musical instruments is allowed only to support the assembly’s singing. Laetare Sunday (the Fourth Sunday of Lent), solemnities, and feasts are exceptions to this rule.” It is important to remember that, although we should make less use of instruments, we are not discouraged from singing. It is important to maintain the nature of liturgy as a sung celebration.

Music Directors must plan musically for the preparation of the catechumens throughout the Lenten season.

THE ALLELUIA AND THE GLORIA

The Alleluia is omitted during the season of Lent. The alternative is provided at Lectionary #223 (before Monday of the First week).

The Gloria is omitted from the beginning of Lent until the Easter Vigil, except for:
- Ritual Masses (e.g., Matrimony and Confirmation outside of Sunday),
- Solemnities (St. Joseph and the Annunciation),
- the Chrism Mass,
- and Holy Thursday’s Mass of the Lord’s Supper.

SACRED SILENCE

Silence is an important element of the liturgy that allows for reflection and private prayer, while establishing a rhythm within the liturgy. Slightly longer moments of silence, or silence during optional sung elements such as the Preparation of the Gifts or Recessional also allows the sober nature of the Lenten liturgy to be experienced. The Entrance Antiphon, Chant or Song may not be omitted.

FLOWERS DURING LENT

Just as we fast from the beauty of instrumental music during Lent, we also simplify the visual environment, as is appropriate for our Lenten spiritual exercises of prayer, self-denial, and service. During Lent it is forbidden for the altar to be decorated with flowers. Exceptions, however, are Laetare Sunday (Fourth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts (GIRM, 305).

VEILING CROSSES, STATUES AND IMAGES

The entire Lenten season speaks of the Lord’s passage to resurrection through suffering and death. Our attention intensifies in the final two weeks. The practice of veiling the Cross and images in the church helps us to focus our attention on the altar, the primary symbol of Christ in the church, and to more inwardly contemplate Christ.

In the Dioceses of the United States of America, crosses in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the end of the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday. Images in the church may be covered from the conclusion of the Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent, until the beginning of the Easter Vigil (see rubric for the Fifth Sunday of Lent).

Traditionally this is done by covering crosses, statues and images with plain, opaque, simple violet cloth without a pattern. Stations of the Cross and stained glass windows are not covered.
CHRISM MASS, TUESDAY, APRIL 7
The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m., at St. Vincent de Paul Parish, in Austin. Holy Oils will be distributed after Mass. Pastors should see to it that the old oils are properly disposed of by burning or burying them and replaced by the newly blessed oils. Parishes are not to add new oil to the old. The Worship Office maintains a sizable reserve for parishes who require additional oil.

HOLY THURSDAY
According to the Church’s ancient tradition, all Masses without a congregation are prohibited on this day. The Mass of the Lord’s Supper is celebrated in the evening. (see, Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Paschal Feasts, 47). Communion may only be distributed to the faithful within Mass but may be brought to the sick at any hour.

Additional Masses on Holy Thursday require permission of the Bishop and only for those in no way able to participate in the evening Mass and not for the advantage of individuals or special small groups. (Roman Missal, Rubrics for the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper (EM, 3) Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter, March/April 2003).

For the Order of Procession with the Blessed Sacrament see Holy Thursday #38 ff.

"The reception of the Holy Oils may take place in individual parishes either before the celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper or at another time that seems more appropriate" (Roman Missal, Chrism Mass, no. 15). See http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/order-for-the-reception-of-the-holy-oils.cfm

FOOT WASHING RITE
"After careful consideration" Pope Francis has decreed “the Pastors of the Church may choose the participants in the rite [of the Washing of the Feet] from among all of the members of the People of God. ...In performing this rite, bishops and priests are invited to conform intimately to Christ who ‘came not to be served but to serve’. ...Pastors may choose a group of the faithful representing the variety and unity of every part of the People of God. This group may consist of men and women, and ideally of the young and the old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated persons and laypeople.”

There is no prescribed number of individuals whose feet are washed. The practice of washing hands in place of the washing of the feet is not permitted.

FUNERALS ON HOLY THURSDAY AND DURING THE TRIDUUM
Funeral Masses are NOT permitted on Holy Thursday morning or during the days of the Easter Triduum. On these days, the body of the deceased may be brought to the church and the Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass may be celebrated. (OCF, 177-203) A memorial Mass should be celebrated on a convenient date after Easter Sunday.

GOOD FRIDAY
On this day and Holy Saturday, the Church does not celebrate the sacraments at all except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. (RM, Good Friday 1)

The Celebration of the Lord's Passion is to take place in the afternoon, at about 3 p.m. For pastoral reasons, an appropriate time may be chosen in order to allow the people to assemble more easily, for example, shortly after midday or in the late evening, however, not later than 9 p.m. (Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Paschal Feasts, 63) Although Stations of the Cross are permitted, they are never to replace nor be given greater prominence than the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion.

It is entirely inappropriate to replace the Good Friday homily with the viewing of a movie such as The Passion of the Christ.

The paschal fast is observed everywhere on Good Friday, and, if possible, on Holy Saturday until the Easter Vigil, to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more deeply in his resurrection.

CROSS VS. CRUCIFIX
“Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world. R: Come, let us adore.” The ritual text clearly refers to the wood of the Cross which is the instrument of our salvation. It is noteworthy that the Cross is so identified with Christ that we are called to adore the Cross as one would Christ. (God alone is adored.) However, it is clear that the use of the crucifix is mentioned in the middle ages. A Cross without corpus is preferred but a crucifix may be used. Nonetheless, only a single cross or crucifix may be used for the veneration. (PS 68, 69)

MAY A DEACON OFFICIATE AT THE GOOD FRIDAY LITURGY OF THE LORD’S PASSION
No. Although the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion appears to be a service of the Word with the distribution of Holy Communion, the Roman Missal does not permit a deacon to officiate at the celebration.
**Music for Good Friday**

The Good Friday solemn intercessions are meant to be sung using the chant given in the *Roman Missal*, and a short moment of silent prayer should be included at the end of each invitation. If the intercessions cannot be sung, they should be spoken with a solemn character and with time given for the appropriate silences.

The procession during the Adoration of the Holy Cross is not one of sorrow or atonement, but rather one of gratitude, triumph and acceptance. We are not honoring the One crucified, but the Cross that embodies the mystery of Christ’s redemptive triumph over sin and death. The music during this procession should speak about the mystery and triumph of the Cross rather than about the details of Jesus’ death and suffering.

**Easter Vigil**

The Easter Vigil is celebrated at night. When the Easter Vigil will occur during Daylight Savings Time, which is the case in 2020, the USCCB advises the approximate time of nightfall to be 45 minutes to one hour following sunset. On Saturday, April 11, sunset, in Austin, will be at **7:56 p.m.**, therefore the Easter Vigil begins no sooner than **8:40 p.m.** Parishes should check the time of sunset in their location and add 45 minutes. Sunset varies from east to west. College Station **7:51 p.m.** and Mason **8:03 p.m.**

**No other Masses may be celebrated on Holy Saturday before the Easter Vigil is complete.**

Each parish may celebrate only one Vigil Mass. (*RM, Easter Vigil no. 2*). The liturgy may be bilingual or multilingual depending on the needs of the community. Once the Vigil is complete, Masses for Easter may be celebrated even if it is still Saturday night.

Please note that under special circumstances (i.e. prisons, hospitals or places that have restrictions) where the Triduum liturgies must be celebrated at a special time, explicit permission from the Vicar General is required.

The preparation of the Paschal Candle is no longer optional although the 5 grains of incense are optional (see Easter Vigil, #11). Also note the modified procession into the Church described at #15.

- The Paschal Candle is lit at the fire (burning coal is placed in thurible and priest places incense on coal)
- Procession Order: thurifer, deacon (or other minister) with lighted Paschal Candle, followed by priest and ministers, finally the faithful (note: no crucifix). All hold *unlit* taper candles.
- Deacon/minister lifts the candle and intones “The light of Christ” or “Lumen Christi” three times:
  - *at the door to the church* – priest alone lights taper
  - in the middle of the church – all light their tapers (light shared from lit candles)
  - in front of the altar and facing the people
- Paschal Candle placed in stand
- all lights are lit except for the altar candles

**Initiation within the Easter Vigil**

The universal Church does not envision the initiation of candidates coming into the full communion of the Catholic Church within this Mass. However, the integration into the Roman Missal of the initiation of the Elect as described in Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) was one of the reasons for a new edition of the Missal. A brief review of the Baptismal Liturgy within the Easter Vigil would be beneficial.

A general note. The Roman Missal now includes notes for the initiation of catechumens (corresponding to RCIA Part I). However, if catechumens [elect] are present along with candidates for full communion, RCIA 562ff must be consulted alongside the Roman Missal.

For an outline of how to integrate the reception and profession of faith of candidates within the Easter Vigil, see the file “Outline Of Initiation Within The Easter Vigil at https://www.austindiocese.org/rite-of-christian-initiation-of-adults-rcia.”

**Easter Sunday**

On Easter Sunday the rite of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises occurs after the homily. The Creed is omitted.