



DIOCESE OF METUCHEN - HOLY WEEK AND TRIDUUM 2020

In time of COVID-19 Pandemic

In light of further restrictions by Governor Murphy and the Decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Bishop Checchio promulgates the following regarding the liturgies of Palm Sunday 2020 and Holy Week 2020 throughout the Diocese of Metuchen to assist the clergy and the faithful in the spiritual celebration of the Paschal Mysteries. As Bishop Checchio encourages us to continue to strive to engage our faithful in prayer during these days, he is also conscientious of the need to follow the guidelines of our state so as to hopefully hamper the spread of the virus to our faithful. Everything in our priestly being wants to bring them together, but we cannot risk endangering our beloved flock nor ourselves. Therefore, religious activities that would encourage groups of faithful to come to our churches are discouraged and in fact, not allowed by the state at this time. We are strictly following the guidelines from the Holy See too. Thank you for helping to protect our people as best as we can, while still reaching out pastorally, encouraging even more prayer in these challenging days for our faithful.

Please note that the allowed participants noted below for the live streaming of Holy Week liturgies is limited to Holy Week only. At all other times, only the resident clergy and one technician may be present for any live-streamed Mass/Prayer Service.

PALM SUNDAY

On Palm Sunday there is to be NO PUBLIC GATHERING (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

The Mass for Palm Sunday will be celebrated by the Bishop **without a congregation**, with palms blessed, and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Cathedral web site at <https://www.stfranciscathedral.org/> at 10:30 am on Sunday, April 5, 2020.

In parish churches, the Mass for Palm Sunday may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon; one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed; one lector; one cantor and one musician in addition to resident clergy) by the pastor/parish; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese. Blessed palms can be made available for distribution at a later date – they are NOT TO BE DISTRIBUTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE at this time. If one person who has the coronavirus even touches some of the palm which someone else will take, they could be infecting them. The risk is too high as doctors are telling us that the virus is very contagious. You do not want to be the one who endangers the lives of others, especially our elderly.

CHRISM MASS

The Chrism Mass will be postponed and re-scheduled for another date/time with the renewal of priestly commitment and the blessing/consecration of oils occurring at that time. Oils/chrism from the current supplies (currently in use) may continue to be used until a new supply is blessed/consecrated and made available. If the parish is running low on oils/chrism, contact Tony Varas, Director of the Office of Worship, tvaras@diometuchen.org.

PASCHAL TRIDUUM: the following liturgical directives are to be observed in accordance with the "Decree in Time of COVID-19" issued on March 19, 2020 by the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments by mandate of the Supreme Pontiff for the year 2020 only. The Paschal Triduum **cannot** be transferred to another time.

HOLY THURSDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.). Televised or live-stream broadcasts should be live (not recorded).

The Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated by the Bishop **without a congregation** and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Cathedral web site at <https://www.stfranciscathedral.org/> at 7:30 pm on Thursday, April 9, 2020.

In parish churches, the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon; one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed; one lector; one cantor and one musician in addition to resident clergy) by the pastor/parish priest; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

During the Evening Mass for the Lord's Supper:

- a. The Washing of the Feet **is to be omitted**;
- b. The usual procession with the Blessed Sacrament to a place of repose **is to be omitted** and the Blessed Sacrament should be kept in the tabernacle, as usual; please **understand that NO PROCESSIONS WITH THE BLESSED SACRAMENT are to take place and ALTARS OF REPOSE are not to be created**;
- c. The faithful are to be informed that parish churches **will NOT BE OPEN** for the usual visitation of churches on Holy Thursday evening. Our churches will not be decorated with special reserve altars for these traditional visits, and the risk is that larger groups will come at this time, hence raising the risk of spreading the virus. Pastors are **NOT PERMITTED** to leave their churches open at this time. Of course, you are free to arrange for a livestream prayer service later in the evening to creatively engage your faithful in some type of prayer.

Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers of the day from the Liturgy of Hours instead.

GOOD FRIDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

The Commemoration/Celebration of the Lord's Passion will be celebrated by the Bishop **without a congregation** and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Cathedral web site at <https://www.stfranciscathedral.org/> at 3:00 pm on Friday, April 10, 2020.

In parish churches, the Commemoration/Celebration of the Lord's Passion may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon; one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed; one lector; one cantor and one musician in addition to resident clergy) by the pastor/parish priest; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

During the Good Friday Service

- a. Veneration of the Holy Cross takes place by those present with a simple genuflection; the Cross is not to be revered with a kiss;
- b. A special commemoration in the General Intercessions shall be added as follows:

FOR THOSE SUFFERING FROM THE CURRENT PANDEMIC.

Deacon or lay minister:

Let us pray, dearly beloved,
to God the Father almighty,
that he may extend his hand in mercy
to all those affected by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Silent Prayer

Priest:

Almighty ever-living God,
heal those who are ill,
comfort those who mourn,
give solace to all who are afraid and alone,
and protect those who are providing medical care.
Make us instruments of your peace
among our brothers and sisters.
In your mercy, alleviate our fears
and eliminate this scourge,
so that we may come together again
to give you praise and to build your Kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Priests who are unable to celebrate this liturgy should instead pray Vespers of the day from the Liturgy of Hours instead.

Stations of the Cross: While not prescribed by the Liturgy, the Stations are indeed a venerable and worthy tradition for the faithful to participate as part of their Good Friday devotion. They may be observed **without a congregation** in parish churches and made available by livestreaming. The participants would be reserved to a celebrant/leader, one musician and one cantor, and one reader, in addition to the resident clergy.

HOLY SATURDAY

Holy Saturday Morning: There is the custom in many parishes to celebrate a communal Lauds. This may be done, however without a congregation, with the resident clergy, one cantor and one musician. It is also customary in some places to offer some Marian devotion, this too may be done provided the usual restrictions are applied; resident clergy, one musician, one cantor, one lector.

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

The Easter Vigil will be celebrated by the Bishop **without a congregation** and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Cathedral web site at <https://www.stfranciscathedral.org/> at 8 pm on Saturday, April 11, 2020.

In parish churches, the Easter Vigil may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon; one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed; one lector; one cantor and one musician in addition to resident clergy) by the pastor/parish priest; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

During the Easter Vigil:

- a. The preparation and lighting of the fire **is omitted**;
- b. The paschal candle is lit without procession followed by the Easter Proclamation;
- c. The Liturgy of the Word takes place;
- d. The Baptismal Liturgy **is only the renewal of Baptismal Promises**; a symbolic (small) amount of Holy Water may be blessed but holy water fonts are to remain empty;
- e. The Rite of Christian Initiation and/or Reception into Full Communion **will be postponed and re-scheduled once restrictions are lifted – more details will be provided at that time.**

Priests who are unable to celebrate the Easter Vigil should instead pray Vespers/Matins/Lauds of the day from the Liturgy of Hours instead.

EASTER SUNDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.).

Mass for Easter Sunday will be celebrated by the Bishop **without a congregation** and broadcast via the live-stream internet on the Cathedral web site at <https://www.stfranciscathedral.org/> at 10:30 am on Sunday, April 12, 2020.

In parish churches, Mass for Easter Sunday may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon; one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed; one lector; one cantor and one musician in addition to resident clergy) by the pastor/parish priest; pastors should notify the parishioners of the time for the live-stream; pastors should also notify the Diocesan Office of Communications so that a Diocesan calendar/schedule of events might be posted for access by the faithful of the Diocese.

Priests are otherwise asked to celebrate Easter Sunday Masses **without a congregation**.

****At this time all public worship is suspended** until further notice. We will continue to monitor the status of when masses and other services may begin again according to the directives from civil authorities.

This decree is given by mandate
of the Most Reverend James Francis Checchio,
Bishop of Metuchen,
March 26, 2020
for the Diocese of Metuchen