

Holy Week Guidelines for the Pastors of the Polish National Catholic Church

Bishops, Very Rev. and Rev. Fathers, Deacons,
My dear brothers,

As the bishops of the Polish National Catholic Church, we continue to be in touch with each other and we monitor what is being said by the various state and federal agencies in the areas where our parishes reside.

This being said it would seem that the isolation orders are strengthening in many areas within our country. The federal guideline have also extended the social distancing measures and prohibitions of groups larger than 10 until April 30. Many state guidelines are even stronger. The Polish National Catholic Church will follow these precautions in order to protect the safety of all of our parishioners.

While we are aware that Holy Week and the celebration of the Solemnity of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ are the true central point of our liturgical year and all of its celebrations, unfortunately the directives for our people to remain at home mean that things will have to be done a little different this year. We remind the faithful of the Church that the celebrations of the Passion of our Lord and His triumph over death in the Resurrection are not canceled but rather they must be celebrated by each of us separately in our homes, joined in prayer while the celebrations occur within our parish churches.

We desire to give some guidelines to the pastors of the parishes of the Polish National Catholic Church regarding the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter. The pastors are reminded that while the people are directed to remain at home, we are still to celebrate the liturgy of the Church. The Church and her priests will continue to pray for her people. The guidelines given are the minimum of the celebrations that are to occur within the parishes where pastors are resident. We remind pastors who care for more than one congregation that only one celebration need occur for any given day.

If a pastor is broadcasting his liturgy on any social media or networking platform, portions of the liturgy not included in the guidelines can be added. In regards to this, we remind the pastor, to consider those who will be viewing the broadcast so that they can most fully experience and view from home the liturgy that is broadcast.

Worship Aids

Written “Worship Aids for Use in the Home” will continue to be distributed for:

- 1) Palm Sunday
- 2) Holy Thursday
- 3) Good Friday
- 4) Holy Saturday – Easter food blessing
- 5) Easter Sunday

The pastors should instruct their people to follow these worship aids and provide the links or email them to their parishioners.

Palm Sunday – April 5, 2020

- 1) For the Liturgy of the Palms that is given in the publication, “Liturgies of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday” only the blessings of the palms given on pages 22 and 23 are necessary
- 2) If the liturgy is broadcast, then more of the celebration can be added. It begins with the Antiphon “Hosanna to the Son of David” and continues to the blessing of palms.
- 3) The procession with palms is to be eliminated.
- 4) The knocking on the vestibule door with the Antiphon “All glory, laud and honor...” should not be done.
- 5) The “Scourging of the Cross” should not be done.
- 6) The Mass will be celebrated as usual. The shorter reading of the Passion as the Gospel can be utilized.
- 7) Pastors can make palms available to the faithful by placing them in an area outside of the church building in a suitable place. This can also be done on an individual basis having the pastor leave palms in an outside place where parishioners can retrieve them after they contact the pastor.
- 8) If there is any concern that the pastor is sick, then the distribution of palms to the faithful is to be eliminated, and only a few are to be blest. (Palms for distribution can be blest at a later date.)

Chrism Mass (Holy Tuesday) – April 7, 2020

- 1) The bishop of the Diocese will celebrate the Chrism Mass with the blessing of the Holy Oils of the Sick and Catechumens and the consecration of the Sacred Chrism. The priests are instructed to remain at home, joining with the bishop in prayer at that time. The bishop will ask one or two priests to join him in the celebration of the blessing of oils.
- 2) For the Western Diocese, since they do not yet have a resident bishop, the Chrism Mass will not be celebrated in the diocese. The Prime Bishop will prepare the Holy Oils at Mass in Scranton, PA.
- 3) The Holy Oils can later be picked up by the priests in the local area of the Cathedral or they will be mailed to the parishes. Since overnight mail to all of the parishes of the entire Church will be very expensive, the Oils may be delivered following Holy Week or picked up at a later date. Because of this the liturgies of Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday will be affected.

Holy Wednesday – April 8, 2020

- 1) Many parishes have a Penitential Service on the Wednesday of Holy Week. This service should not be celebrated unless it is done through social media.

Holy Thursday – April 9, 2020

- 1) The Holy Mass of the Lord’s Supper will be celebrated as usual except for a few changes.
- 2) The “Reception of Holy Oils” will not be celebrated, even if the newly blessed Holy Oils are obtained. The newly obtained Holy Oils should be placed in an ambry, or where they are usually kept.
- 3) The Mandatum (The Washing of Feet) will not be celebrated. As the faithful are instructed to remain at home, there should be no one in the congregation.
- 4) As usual 3 hosts are to be consecrated, one for the Mass of Holy Thursday, one for reception of Good Friday and one for the Luna.

- 5) At the end of Mass when the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the altar, the ciborium should be taken to a side altar or other suitable place in a simple procession.
- 6) The celebrant should then change his vestments from white to purple and only the one altar upon which Mass was just celebrated is to be stripped. Psalm 22 will be read following the removal of the altar cloths.
- 7) The pastor should spend some time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, praying for his congregation, the people entrusted to his care, and God's mercy in this time of anxiety.
- 8) Any other services such as the Vespers of Holy Thursday or the Tenebrae should not be celebrated, unless they are being broadcast online.

Good Friday – April 10, 2020

- 1) Only the celebration of the Pre-sanctified liturgy need be celebrated this day.
- 2) The "Liturgy of the Word" and the "General Intercessions" should be celebrated as usual.
- 3) During the "Veneration of the Cross" a smaller cross may be unveiled, but it should not be placed in the midst of the Church or venerated with kisses. Those who are broadcasting their liturgies are to remember to place the cross for a time where it can be seen by the viewers.
- 4) For the "Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified" the Blessed Sacrament should be brought immediately to the altar and the prayers said as usual.
- 5) The Blessed Sacrament should be returned to the ciborium rather than placed in a monstrance. It should be returned to a side altar.
- 6) Since it may be difficult for there to be a symbolic tomb, the "Symbolic Entombment" need not be celebrated. If a pastor is broadcasting his liturgy and is able to set up this symbolic tomb, he may celebrate this portion of the liturgy.
- 7) If anyone from a parish would like to spend some time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on this day, they should contact the rectory to make arrangements. In areas where there is community transmission this should be omitted. Pastors are reminded to follow their state or local directives in this situation.
- 8) Any other liturgy of Good Friday need not be celebrated, but pastors may wish to encourage their people to read the Stations of the Cross or Bitter Lamentations at home.
- 9) Pastors who are broadcasting their liturgy may wish to celebrate these liturgies or Tenebrae on Good Friday evening.

Holy Saturday – April 11, 2020

- 1) There should be no blessing of the new fire outside of the Church. Rather a taper should be lit and the incense nails or charcoal should be blessed in the back of the Church or vestibule. The new light can be brought into the darkened church from there, saying the appropriate verses and kneeling in the center aisle.
- 2) The Blessing of the Paschal Candle (Exultet) can be done as usual. (It may be said or sung.)
- 3) The Readings or Exhortations can be read as usual
- 4) The Blessing of Water should be done as usual.
- 5) Baptismal water should not be blessed, unless a baptism is to be done on this day or soon thereafter. The Holy Oils from the previous year may be used.
- 6) The Reaffirmation of Baptism Vows need not be done unless the service is broadcast.

- 7) The Litany of Saints need not be said, unless this is desired for a broadcast.
- 8) The Resurrection Vigil Mass should not be celebrated. If a parish celebrates its Sunday obligation on Saturday, the Mass of Easter should be celebrated.
- 9) There should be no blessing of Easter foods in Church. If pastors wish to allow for these blessings they can take place outside where social distancing can be maintained. Parishioners may even stay in their cars while baskets are blessed.

Easter Sunday – April 12, 2020

- 1) The celebrant can proceed to the side altar (or appropriate place of repose) where the Blessed Sacrament is kept.
- 2) The Antiphon, together with Psalm 117 and Psalm 3 can be said with the concluding prayer.
- 3) At least one verse of “Come, Rejoice Our Lord is Risen!” should be sung.
- 4) There is no Easter Procession. The Blessed Sacrament is immediately returned to the main altar and the tabernacle.
- 5) The Antiphons and responses with the Crucifix with a red stole and the concluding prayer should be said.
- 6) The Mass of Easter is then said as usual.

The pastors are reminded that these are guidelines for the celebrations of Holy Week and Easter to help us to continue to pray the liturgy of the Church for her people. Pastors are also reminded that if they are broadcasting their liturgies on social media, then they are to take care to make them solemn and prayerful for those who watch, allowing the faithful to pray along with the broadcast from their homes.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding these guidelines or in regards to any of the liturgy of the Church either during Holy Week or at any time, please contact your Diocesan Bishop.

Office of the Prime Bishop

National Church Center

Most Rev. Anthony Mikovsky – Prime Bishop