



MEMORANDUM

To: All Priests; All Parishes
From: Father Robert Hughes, V.G.
Date: April 8, 2020
RE: **Covid-19 and the Celebration of Holy Week & Triduum REMINDER**

On March 23rd, Bishop Sullivan issued a decree in keeping with the restrictions imposed on New Jersey residents by Governor Murphy and the decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments. Yesterday, Bishop Sullivan participated in a phone conference with Governor Murphy and members of his cabinet. The Governor repeated his call to religious leaders to not permit gatherings of any kind during the celebration of the Triduum and Easter.

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). **Please be reminded that no public gathering includes not conducting a drive-by adoration which some have suggested.**

In parish churches, the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon and one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed) 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, which is already optional, **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;
- c. The faithful are to be informed that parish churches **will NOT BE OPEN** for the usual visitation of churches on Holy Thursday evening. **Pastors are NOT PERMITTED to leave their churches open at this time.**

Please be reminded that “is to be omitted” does not make the washing of feet or a Eucharistic Procession optional – it means they are NOT TO BE DONE.

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.). Please be reminded that this includes outdoor stations of the cross or drive-by veneration of the cross which some have suggested.

In parish churches, the Commemoration/Celebration of the Lord’s Passion may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon and one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed) 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. A special commemoration in the General Intercessions for the sick, the dead and for those who feel lost or dismayed will be developed by the Office of Worship and sent to the parishes for mandated use.

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

HOLY SATURDAY

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

In parish churches, the Easter Vigil may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon and one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed) 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 recited 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**

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

Please be reminded that “is to be omitted” does not make the washing of feet or a Eucharistic Procession optional – it means they are NOT TO BE DONE.

EASTER SUNDAY

No public gatherings (inside or outside Churches, in cars, etc.). **Please be reminded that no public gathering includes not conducting a drive-by distribution of Holy Communion or sprinkling with holy water blessed at Easter which some have suggested.**

In parish churches, Mass for Easter Sunday may be celebrated **without a congregation** (you may have one deacon and one person to operate the live streaming equipment if the liturgy is being live streamed) 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 **without a congregation**.

This decree is given by mandate of the Bishop, Most Reverend Dennis J. Sullivan, D.D., March 23, 2020, for the Diocese of Camden.

Reminder about Gatherings – through social media, it is clear that some pastors are not adhering to the ban on gathering the faithful at their churches. Pastors are reminded that it is not within their discretion to invite parishioners to join them for live-streamed prayers, processions, Stations of the Cross, or Masses. Given Governor Murphy’s repeated mandates – the limitations imposed by Bishop Sullivan’s decree must be adhered to. As such only the resident clergy, one deacon and one technician may be present for any live-streamed event.

As with any decree issued by the Bishop, failure to comply with the directives contained therein may result in disciplinary action including the loss of faculties.