

# PARISH GUIDELINES FOR LENT AND EASTER 2012

*Diocese of St. Petersburg*

The annual observance of Lent is the special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of Easter. Through its twofold theme of repentance and baptism, the season of Lent disposes both the catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. Catechumens are led to the sacraments of initiation by means of the rite of election, the scrutinies, and catechesis. The faithful, listening more intently to the word of God and devoting themselves to prayer, are prepared through a spirit of repentance to renew their baptismal promises. (*CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS*, no. 249)

*The information in the box below may be reproduced in parish bulletins to remind the faithful of the Church's regulations on fasting and abstinence during Lent.*

## Regulations on Fasting and Abstinence

The dual disciplines of fasting and abstinence have a long history in the Catholic Church. Going back to the early Church, the purpose behind the custom of self denial is not punishment; it is to simplify our lifestyles so that we create a certain emptiness. In this way, freed from all distractions, we are able to hear and respond to God's continued call to conversion and holiness.

- ◆ **Fasting** is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by all Catholics between the ages of 18 to 59 years (inclusive). On days of fasting, one full meal is allowed. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids are allowed.
- ◆ **Abstinence** from meat is to be observed by all Catholics who are 14 years of age and older. Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays of Lent, and Good Friday are days of abstinence.

**Note:** If a person is unable to observe the above regulations due to ill health or other serious reasons, they are urged to practice other forms of self denial that are suitable to their condition.

Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are the three traditional disciplines of Lent. The faithful and catechumens should undertake these practices seriously in a spirit of penance and of preparation for baptism or of renewal of baptism at Easter.

## ✠ Celebrating the Sacraments during Lent ✠

### ◆ The Sacraments of Initiation

Because Lent is oriented toward the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at Easter, care must be taken to maintain this central focus. Respecting the ancient meaning of Lent as a season of preparation for baptisms, parishes could refrain from baptizing infants (except for emergencies or pastoral need) until Easter Sunday or a Sunday of Easter. The infants, parents and godparents could participate in the Lenten scrutinies. Likewise, Confirmation and the reception of First Communion are more appropriate during the Easter Season.

For those involved in the RCIA, the *Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion* will be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle on **Sunday, February 26, 2012** at two celebrations: **1:30** and **4:00 P.M.** Bishop Robert Lynch will welcome the catechumens preparing for baptism and those candidates preparing to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church at Easter. Parishes should celebrate the *Rite of Sending the Catechumens for Election* or the combined *Rite of the Parish Celebration for Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Recognition by the Bishop* (RCIA, nos. 108, 110) at a suitable time before the rite of election.

In addition, the *Penitential Rite* for baptized candidates preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist or to be received into full communion at Easter may be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent, March 4, 2012 (RCIA, nos. 462-463). The *Scrutinies* for the Elect (unbaptized) are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the prayer texts from the Ritual Mass section – 2. *For the Celebration of the Scrutinies*– found in the *Roman Missal* (RCIA, nos. 146, 156, 170 & 177).

### ✦ **The Sacrament of Penance**

During Lent the faithful should be urged to take a greater and more fruitful share in the Lenten liturgy. It is appropriate for the sacrament of penance to be celebrated during Lent in a more solemn form, as described in the *Rite of Penance: Form B* (RITE OF PENANCE, nos. 22-30, 48-59). The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to receive this sacrament during Lent. However, any communal penance celebration should take place before the Easter Triduum and should **not** immediately precede the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper (CIRCULAR LETTER CONCERNING THE PREPARATION AND CELEBRATION OF THE EASTER FEASTS, no. 37). Ideally, the faithful would celebrate the sacrament of penance before the Triduum begins; however, individual confessions may take place on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (ROMAN MISSAL: *Friday of the Passion of the Lord*, no. 1).

### ✦ **Funerals during Lent and the Easter Triduum**

Good liturgical practice would suggest reflecting the liturgical season in the choice of music and scripture. The season of Lent may also reflect a change in the color of vesture and employ the optional use of purple or black (ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS, no. 39).

A funeral Mass **may not be celebrated** on the Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday (ORDER OF CHRISTIAN FUNERALS, no. 178). On these days the body of the deceased may be brought into the church for the *Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass* using the *Order of Christian Funerals*, PART 1, CHAPTER 4. A Mass for the deceased should be offered when it is convenient after Easter Sunday.

### ✦ **Marriages during Lent and the Easter Triduum**

Marriages celebrated during the season of Lent should respect the penitential character of the season, i.e., a marked moderation in festivity. The altar is not to be decorated with flowers (CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS, no. 252).

The celebration of marriage is strictly prohibited on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (CIRCULAR LETTER, nos. 61 & 75). Marriages can be celebrated after the Easter Vigil.

### ✦ **Communion for the Sick and Viaticum**

Communion may be brought to the sick on all days except Holy Saturday. On Holy Saturday, Holy Communion may be given only in the form of Viaticum (CIRCULAR LETTER, no. 75 & ROMAN MISSAL: *Holy Saturday*, no. 1). Communion services outside the liturgy are not held during the Triduum.

## ✘ **Lent and the Worship Environment** ✘

During Lent the altar is not to be decorated with flowers (CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS, no. 252). The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday), solemnities and feasts are the exceptions to this rule. The visual goal of the Lenten environment is austerity, simplicity and plainness.

The prescribed color for Lent is purple or violet. On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, March 18, 2012, rose-colored vestments may be worn (CB, no. 252). Crosses and images may be covered in violet or red from the end of Mass for Saturday of the Fourth Week of Lent until the end of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday (USCCB, April 2002).

The *2012 Sourcebook for Sundays and Seasons* (published by L.T.P., Chicago IL, 1-800-933-1800) gives excellent ideas on the setting, sense, look, sounds and rhythm of the Lenten environment. *To Crown the Year: Decorating the Church Through the Seasons* by Peter Mazar (published by L.T.P.) also gives helpful hints.

## ✘ Particular Liturgies during Lent ✘

### ◆ *ASH WEDNESDAY* – February 22, 2012

The blessing and distribution of ashes may take place either at a celebration of the Eucharist or at a Liturgy of the Word Service (for Liturgy of the Word Service, see *BOOK OF BLESSINGS*, nos. 1656-1678). The blessing and distribution of ashes follows the homily. The ordinary minister for blessing the ashes is a priest or deacon. Others (e.g., extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion) may assist with the distribution of ashes, especially for the sick and shut-ins. There is no Penitential Act at the beginning of this liturgy.

### ◆ *RITE OF ELECTION* – February 26, 2012

Two celebrations of the *Rite of Election and the Call to Continuing Conversion* will take place at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle. The times are **1:30** and **4:00 P.M.**

### ◆ *PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY* – April 1, 2012

On this day the Church remembers Christ's entrance into Jerusalem. This commemoration, with the blessing of the palms and procession, is not an historical re-enactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem but a ritual action that marks our own entry into Holy Week and the celebration of the Christian Passover.

Three forms are given for the beginning of this liturgy: the procession, the solemn entrance, and the simple entrance. Masses that begin with either the procession or the solemn entrance omit the Penitential Act.

The Passion proclaimed on this day is essential and may not be omitted. It may be proclaimed using one, three or more readers. Lay persons are allowed to do any of the parts.

### ◆ *CHRISM MASS* – Tuesday, April 3, 2012

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle at 11:30 A.M. Parishes are to properly dispose of their old oils prior to the Chrism Mass (please **do not** bring them with you to the Cathedral). Bring new oil in the containers for the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens. Newly consecrated Chrism for the coming year will be given to each parish at the conclusion of the Chrism Mass.

**Note:** Pastors may wish to consider adjusting their Mass schedule for this day in order to invite parishioners to attend the Chrism Mass.

## ✘ Other Celebrations ✘

### ◆ *Morning & Evening Prayer*

Prayer being one of the traditional disciplines of Lent, it is appropriate to offer opportunities for parishioners to join in the Liturgy of the Hours of the Church using the Morning and Evening Prayer format. A parish may choose to offer solemn Evening Prayer on the Fridays or Sundays of Lent. Another possibility might be to invite people to gather a bit early or stay a little later around the morning or evening Mass times to celebrate this form of liturgical prayer. As with all liturgy music is integral and should be a part of these celebrations.

## ✦ Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross on the Fridays of Lent is a time-honored tradition. Various publishers offer a variety of formats and emphases for this devotion.

## ✦ Particular Liturgies during the Easter Triduum and Easter Season ✦

### ✦ HOLY THURSDAY – April 5, 2012

Lent ends with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the principal liturgy of this day. The tabernacle is emptied before the liturgy begins (*CIRCULAR LETTER*, no. 48 & *ROMAN MISSAL: Thursday of the Lord's Supper*, no. 5). Communion under both forms is strongly recommended. Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for the liturgy of Good Friday as well.

The washing of the feet ("mandatum") is an act of humility and service which inspires the community to do the same. Other rites or statements of commitment are not appropriate for Holy Thursday.

It is appropriate that the oils blessed and consecrated at the Chrism Mass be carried in at the presentation of the gifts. The proper rubrics and prayers for the presentation of the oils are found in the Sacramentary Supplement.

The Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the place of reposition following the prayer after communion. The place of reposition should be decorated simply. **Under no circumstance is the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed in a monstrance.** The faithful should be encouraged to spend time in adoration throughout the remainder of the evening. Adoration should conclude by midnight (*CIRCULAR LETTER*, nos. 55 & 56).

After Mass, the altar is stripped and the sanctuary is cleared of flowers and adornments. The crosses may be covered in red or violet for Good Friday. Votive candles should not be lit before images of the saints (*CIRCULAR LETTER*, no. 57).

### ✦ GOOD FRIDAY – April 6, 2012

The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer is encouraged.

The celebration of the Lord's Passion, the principal celebration of the day, traditionally is celebrated at 3:00 P.M. If pastoral need dictates, there may be another celebration later in the day.

During the veneration of the cross, only one cross should be used. Other crosses may be used if there is a pastoral need, but doing so diminishes the symbolism of the "one" cross as the symbol of victory and salvation.

### ✦ HOLY SATURDAY – April 7, 2012

The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer is encouraged.

The Easter Vigil should begin at a time that allows for the new fire to break the darkness of night. The end of civil twilight occurs on this evening at 8:15 P.M.; therefore, so that it can begin in total darkness, the Vigil should not be scheduled before 8:00 P.M. Also, the Easter Vigil is to be the only liturgy celebrated on this evening.

It is recommended that the Exsultet (Easter Proclamation) be sung by one who can do so with grace and beauty. At least three of the seven Old Testament readings should be used, including reading number three from Exodus (Exodus 14:15-15:1). The *Glory to God* should be sung. Communion under both forms is strongly recommended.

Adults (and children of catechetical age) being baptized or brought into full communion during the Easter Vigil are to be confirmed by the presider (*RCIA* nos. 305 & 481; *NATIONAL STATUTES* nos. 14, 18 & 35; *CODE OF CANON LAW* 883:2). Delegation has been given by Bishop Lynch to pastors to confirm those baptized uncatechized Catholics who have been part of the Christian initiation process. Questions about this should be directed to the Office of the Chancellor.

### ◆ **Easter Sunday and the Easter Season**

For parishes planning sunrise worship services, civil twilight on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012 is at 6:48 A.M.

The fifty days from Easter Sunday (April 8, 2012) to Pentecost (May 27, 2012) are celebrated as one feast day. The entire season is considered one “great Sunday.” The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord (*CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS*, nos. 371 & 373). The *Ordo* reminds us that the *Gloria* is to be sung or recited during the octave of Easter. The *Sequence* is sung or said before the *Alleluia* at all Masses on Easter Sunday and is optional during the days of the octave. (*GENERAL INSTRUCTION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL 2002*, no. 62).

The Paschal Candle must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficient size, so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world (*CIRCULAR LETTER*, no.82). The Paschal Candle is lit for all liturgical celebrations of the Easter season (*CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS*, no. 372). It is not to be extinguished after the gospel on the solemnity of the Ascension or Pentecost.

At all the Masses on Easter Sunday (April 8, 2012) the *Rite of Renewal of Baptismal Promises* (according to the text used at the Easter Vigil) and its accompanying sprinkling rite replaces the Creed.

Because it is a reminder of baptism, it is appropriate that on all the Sundays of Easter, including Pentecost, the *Rite for the Blessing & Sprinkling of Water* (cf. Appendix II in the *Roman Missal*) replaces the usual *Penitential Act*.

The double *Alleluia* is added to the dismissal formulary during the octave of Easter (*CEREMONIAL OF BISHOPS*, no. 373 & *ROMAN MISSAL: The Easter Vigil*, no. 69), i.e. “Go forth, the Mass is ended, alleluia, alleluia,” and the response, “Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.”

### ◆ **ASCENSION OF THE LORD – Sunday, May 20, 2012**

The Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops voted in the year 2000 to transfer the solemnity of the Ascension from the Thursday forty-days after Easter to the Seventh Sunday of Easter, in accord with an indult granted to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the Holy See. Therefore, for the Catholic Churches in the Province of the State of Florida, the Seventh Sunday of Easter is always to be replaced by the solemnity of the Ascension. For the year 2012, the Ascension of the Lord is Sunday, May 20.

### ◆ **PENTECOST – May 27, 2012 (Memorial Day Weekend)**

The *Sequence* of Pentecost is sung or recited at all Masses. The *Sequence* is sung before the Gospel acclamation (*Alleluia*). After Pentecost, the Easter Candle is returned to its place near the baptismal font.