

Guidelines for Lent and Easter 2026 in the Archdiocese of Boston

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*, 249).

“During Lent the altar is not to be decorated with flowers, and the use of musical instruments is allowed only to support the singing. The Fourth Sunday of Lent, called Laetare Sunday, solemnities, and feasts are exceptions to this rule” (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 252).

“The forty days of Lent run from Ash Wednesday up to but excluding the Mass of the Lord’s Supper exclusive. From the beginning of Lent until the Paschal Vigil, the Alleluia is not said” (*Universal Norms*, 28).

GUIDE TO ABBREVIATIONS

- ✕ EM *Roman Missal*, Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper [HT]
- ✕ EV *Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil [EV]
- ✕ GF *Roman Missal*, Good Friday [GF]
- ✕ OCIA *Order of Christian Initiation of Adults*
- ✕ PS *Paschalis Solemnitatis: Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*
- ✕ CIC Code of Canon Law

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

ASH WEDNESDAY | WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

- ✕ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✕ There is no Penitential Rite during the Introductory Rite.
- ✕ Lectionary #219
- ✕ Ashes are blessed and imposed after the homily.
- ✕ The Creed is not said (Ordo 2026, p. 63).
- ✕ Apart from Mass, a liturgy of the Word precedes the rite of blessing, concluding with general intercessions, the Lord’s Prayer, and a hymn (PS, 21).¹
- ✕ The ordinary minister for the blessing of ashes is a priest or deacon. Other (e.g., extraordinary ministers of holy communion) may assist with the imposition of ashes where there is genuine need, especially for the sick and shut-ins (Ordo 2026, p. 63).
- ✕ One of the following formulas is used: “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Ordo 2026, p. 63).
- ✕ The Order for the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes from the Book of Blessings may also be used when ashes are brought to the sick. According to circumstances, the rite may be abbreviated by the minister. Nevertheless, at least one Scripture reading should be included in the service (*Book of Blessings*, 1656-1678).

¹ A brief guide to abbreviations used in this text appears on the first page.

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FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT | SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

- ✘ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ Lectionary #22
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ If the parish is sending catechumens to the Rite of Election, the optional Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election may take place after the homily in a Celebration of the word of God or at Mass on or near this day (*Order of Christian Initiation of Adults* [hereafter OCIA], 106-109).

THE RITE OF ELECTION

Cathedral of the Holy Cross

1:30 PM Arrival of the elect with sponsors and catechists

2:00 PM Rite of Election begins (usually until about 3:30 PM)

- ✘ Catechumens should sign their names in the parish or collaborative Book of the Elect during the Rite of Sending or, if the optional Rite of Sending is not used, at an appropriate time before the Rite of Election (OCIA, n. 113). The OCIA catechist(s) should bring the pre-signed Book of the Elect to present to the archbishop at the Rite of Election itself (OCIA, n. 132).
- ✘ Note that the Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion will not be celebrated as part of an archdiocesan liturgy. Parishes may celebrate this optional rite in the parish. No special faculty is needed to do so (OCIA, ns. 446-458). The Office of Divine Worship has created an excerpt from the OCIA for parish use for this purpose, found at bit.ly/OCIA under “Rite of Election 2026.”

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT | SUNDAY, MARCH 1

- ✘ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ Lectionary #25
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ The Penitential Rite (Scrutiny) for baptized but uncatechized candidates preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist may be celebrated on the Second Sunday of Lent or on a weekday of Lent. It is to be held within a Celebration of the Word of God as a kind of scrutiny, similar to the scrutinies for catechumens. There is no combined rite with catechumens (OCIA, ns. 459-472).

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT | SUNDAY, MARCH 8

- ✘ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ Use Lectionary #28 whether celebrating the Scrutinies or not.
- ✘ The Creed is said.

THE FIRST SCRUTINY (OCIA, ns. 150-156)

- ✘ The Scrutinies for the Elect are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent (OCIA, ns. 141-146).
- ✘ The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the texts from the Ritual Masses for the Celebration of the Scrutinies found in the *Roman Missal* (OCIA, n. 146).
- ✘ “The Rite of Handing On the Creed takes place during the week following the First Scrutiny. It is desirable that the Rite of Handing On of the Creed takes place in the presence of the community of the faithful after the Liturgy of the Word at a weekday Mass with the appropriate readings for these Rites. If appropriate, it can also be celebrated during the Period of the Catechuminate (cf. ns. **104-105**)” (OCIA, n. 157). See also OCIA, ns. 158-163.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT | SUNDAY, MARCH 15

LAETARE SUNDAY

- ✘ The color of the vestments is rose, or violet may be used.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ Use Lectionary #31 whether celebrating the Scrutinies or not.
- ✘ The Creed is said.

THE SECOND SCRUTINY (OCIA, ns. 164-170)

- ✘ The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the texts from the Ritual Mass for the Scrutinies found in the *Roman Missal* (OCIA, n. 146).
- ✘ On the Fourth Sunday of Lent rose colored vestments may be used (PS, 25).

ST. PATRICK | TUESDAY, MARCH 17

FEAST OF THE PRINCIPAL PATRON OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON

- ✘ Today is a solemnity in parishes named Saint Patrick.
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary from Common of Pastors: For Missionaries #s 719.5, 722.2, and 724.4 or #541
- ✘ The creed is said.

ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY | THURSDAY, MARCH 19

- ✘ Today is a solemnity
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #543
- ✘ The Creed is said.

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT | SUNDAY, MARCH 22

- ✘ The color of the vestments is violet.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ Use Lectionary #34 whether celebrating the Scrutinies or not.
- ✘ The Creed is said.

THE THIRD SCRUTINY (OCIA 171-177)

- ✘ The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the texts from the Ritual Mass for the Scrutinies found in the *Roman Missal* (OCIA, n. 146).
- ✘ “The Handing On of the Lord’s Prayer takes place during the week following the Third Scrutiny. It is desirable that the Rite take place in the presence of the community of the faithful after the Liturgy of the Word at a weekday Mass with the appropriate readings for these Rites. If circumstances suggest, it may also be celebrated during the Period of the Catechumenate (cf. ns. 104-105)” (OCIA, n. 178). See also OCIA, ns. 179-184.
- ✘ “The practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church from this Sunday may be observed. Crosses remain covered until the end of the Celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil” (*Roman Missal*, Fifth Sunday of Lent).

ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

- ✘ Today is a solemnity.
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ The propers of the day are used.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #545
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ All genuflect at the words “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.”

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD | SUNDAY, MARCH 29

- ✘ The color of the vestments is red.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ There are three forms for the start of the liturgy: the Procession or Solemn Entrance before the principal Mass or the Simple Entrance before other Masses. “The Solemn Entrance, but not the Procession, may be repeated before other Masses that are usually celebrated with a large gathering of people” (*Roman Missal*, Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord). Masses beginning with either the Solemn Entrance or the Procession omit the Introductory Rites.
- ✘ “The narrative of the Lord’s Passion is read without candles and without incense, with no greeting or signing of the book. It is read by a Deacon or, if there is no Deacon, by a Priest. It may also be read by readers, with the part of Christ, if possible, reserved to a Priest” (*Roman Missal*, Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord).
- ✘ The Gloria is not said.
- ✘ Lectionary #37 for the Procession and Lectionary #38 for the Mass
- ✘ The Creed is said.

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CHRISM MASS | TUESDAY, MARCH 31

Cathedral of the Holy Cross

✠ Lectionary #260, Blessing of Oils and Consecration of Chrism

10:30 AM Procession Begins

11:00 AM Mass with Rite of Blessing of Holy Oils and Chrism

✠ Distribution of Holy Oils and Chrism following the Mass. Each parish should identify one person who will be responsible for picking up the newly-blessed oils following the Chrism Mass in the lower church hall. Oils are available after this date at the Pastoral Center in Braintree and in a limited quantity at the Cathedral.

HOLY OILS

✠ “Each year when the bishop blesses the oils and consecrates the chrism, the pastor should see that the old oils are properly disposed of by burning and that they are replaced by the newly blessed oils (*Book of Blessings*, 1127).”

✠ Priests have a responsibility to see to the reverent use and safe custody of the holy oils (CIC, c. 847). “The oils used for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, holy orders and anointing of the sick according to ancient tradition are reverently reserved in a special place in the church. This repository should be secured and protected by a lock” (*Book of Blessings*, 1125).

✠ The glass bottles containing the oils given to the parishes after the Chrism Mass are not for display purposes or liturgical use. The glass containers are used to transport the oils or for non-public storage. If the oils will be displayed they should be displayed in dignified vessels.

THE HOLY TRIDUUM

✠ Lent ends before Evening Prayer. Evening Prayer today is celebrated only by those not participating in the evening Mass. The Easter Triduum begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

✠ “The altar may be decorated with flowers with a moderation that reflects the character of the day” (*Roman Missal*, rubrics for the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper [hereafter EM], 5).

✠ Before Mass begins, the tabernacle should be entirely empty; a sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated at this Mass for the communion of the clergy and laity today and tomorrow (PS, 48).

✠ Holy water should be removed from all fonts immediately before the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. They are refilled with the water blessed at the Easter Vigil.

✠ Holy Communion may only be distributed to the faithful during Mass; but it may be brought to the sick at any hour of the day (*Roman Missal*, EM, 4).

✠ It is a worthy practice to remind the faithful of the Paschal Fast, “celebrated everywhere on Good Friday and, where possible, prolonged throughout Holy Saturday, so that the joys of the Sunday of the resurrection may be attained with uplifted and clear mind” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 110).

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HOLY THURSDAY | THURSDAY, APRIL 2

THE EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER LITURGY

- ✕ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✕ Use the propers of the day.
- ✕ The Gloria is said.
- ✕ Bells are rung during the singing of the Gloria and then remain silent until the Gloria of the Easter Vigil (PS, 50). "The organ and other musical instruments may be used only so as to support the singing" (*Roman Missal*, EM, 7).
- ✕ Lectionary #39
- ✕ The Creed is not said (*Roman Missal*, EM,13).
- ✕ Variations to the rites of Holy Thursday are not permitted, i.e. the washing of hands instead of feet. Other rites or statements of commitment are not appropriate for Holy Thursday.

WASHING OF THE FEET

- ✕ Those chosen as candidates for this rite should be representative of all members of the People of God. This group may consist of "men and women...young and old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated men and women and laity" (*In Missa In Cena Domini*, Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, January 6, 2016).

PRESENTATION OF THE HOLY OILS

- ✕ The following text is for the optional reception of the holy oils during the Presentation of the Gifts at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

OIL OF THE SICK

Presenter of the Oil of the Sick: The oil of the sick.

Priest: May the sick who are anointed with this oil experience the compassion of Christ and his saving love, in body and soul.

People: Blessed be God forever.

OIL OF THE CATECHUMENS

Presenter of the Oil of Catechumens: The oil of catechumens.

Priest: Through anointing with this oil may our catechumens who are preparing to receive the saving waters of baptism be strengthened by Christ to resist the power of Satan and reject evil in all its forms.

People: Blessed be God forever.

SACRED CHRISM

Presenter of the Sacred Chrism: The holy Chrism.

Priest: Through anointing with this perfumed Chrism may children and adults, who are baptized and confirmed, and presbyters, who are ordained, experience the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit.

People: Blessed be God forever.

The bread and wine for the Eucharist are then received and the Mass continues as usual.

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THE TRANSFER OF THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

- ✠ “At an appropriate moment during Communion, the priest entrusts the Eucharist from the table of the altar to Deacons or acolytes or other extraordinary ministers, so that afterwards it may be brought to the sick who are to receive Holy Communion at home” (*Roman Missal*, EM, 33).
- ✠ “After the distribution of Communion, a ciborium with hosts for Communion on the following day is left on the altar. The priest, standing at the chair, says the Prayer after Communion” (*Roman Missal*, EM, 35)
- ✠ **“If the celebration of the Passion of the Lord on the following Friday does not take place in the same church, the Mass is concluded in the usual way and the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle”** (*Roman Missal*, EM, 44).
- ✠ A procession takes place through the Church to a place of repose where “the Priest, with the help of the Deacon if necessary, places the ciborium in the tabernacle, the door of which remains open.” After incensing the Blessed Sacrament and singing the *Tantum Ergo* or another eucharistic chant, “the Deacon or Priest himself places the Sacrament in the tabernacle and closes the door. After a period of adoration in silence, the Priest and ministers genuflect and return to the sacristy ... The faithful are invited to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable length of time during the night, according to local circumstances but after midnight adoration should take place without solemnity” (*Roman Missal*, EM, 37-43). See also (PS, 49, 53, and 56).
- ✠ “The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a closed tabernacle or pyx. Under no circumstances may it be exposed in a monstrance. The place where the tabernacle or pyx is situated must not be made to resemble a tomb, and the expression tomb is to be avoided” (PS, 55).
- ✠ “At an appropriate time, the altar is stripped and, if possible, the crosses are removed from the Church. It is expedient that any crosses which remain in the church be veiled (*Roman Missal*, EM, 44). See also (PS, 57).

GOOD FRIDAY | FRIDAY, APRIL 3

- ✠ It is recommended that there be a communal celebration of the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (PS, 40 and 62).
- ✠ The cross remains covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday. Images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil (PS, 26).
- ✠ “On this and the following day, by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick” (*Roman Missal*, rubrics for Good Friday [hereafter GF], 1). See also PS, 59 and 61.
- ✠ The Celebration of the Lord’s Passion takes place about 3:00 P.M. If pastoral need dictates, there may be another celebration later in the day. “The liturgy by its very nature may not, however, be celebrated in the absence of a Priest” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 4). See also PS, 63.

THE LITURGY

- ✠ The color of the vestments is red.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is not said.
- ✠ “The Priest and the Deacon, if a Deacon is present, wearing red vestments as for Mass, go to the altar in silence and, after making a reverence to the altar, prostrate themselves or, if appropriate, kneel and pray in silence for a while. All others kneel” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 5). See also PS, 65.
- ✠ The celebrant says the opening prayer omitting the invitation “Let us pray” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 6).
- ✠ Lectionary #40

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SOLEMN INTERCESSIONS

- ✠ The intercessions “are to follow the wording and form handed down by ancient tradition, maintaining the full range of intentions, so as to signify clearly the universal effect of the passion of Christ, who hung on the cross for the salvation of the whole world” (PS, 67). “In a situation of grave public need, the Diocesan Bishop may permit or order the addition of a special intention” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 13).
- ✠ “The Deacon, if a Deacon is present, or if he is not, a lay minister, stands at the ambo, and sings or says the invitation in which the intention is expressed. Then all pray in silence for a while, and afterwards the Priest, standing at the chair or, if appropriate, at the altar, with hands extended, sings or says the prayer. The faithful may remain either kneeling or standing throughout the entire period of the prayers” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 11).
- ✠ “Before the Priest’s prayer, in accord with tradition, it is permissible to use the Deacon’s invitations **Let us kneel – Let us stand**, with all kneeling for silent prayer ... The prayer is sung in the simple tone or, if the invitations **Let us kneel – Let us stand** are used, in the solemn tone” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 12-13).

THE ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

- ✠ The Holy Land Collection is to be taken up before the Veneration of the Cross.
- ✠ There are two forms of the showing of the Holy Cross in the Roman Missal and “the more appropriate one, according to pastoral needs, should be chosen” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 14).
- ✠ “For the Adoration of the Cross, first the Priest Celebrant alone approaches, with the chasuble and his shoes removed, if appropriate. Then the clergy, the lay ministers, and the faithful approach, moving as if in procession, and showing reverence to the Cross by a simple genuflection or by some other sign appropriate to the usage of the region, for example, by kissing the Cross” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 18).
- ✠ “Only one cross should be offered for adoration. If, because of the large number of people, it is not possible for all to approach individually, the Priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored, takes the Cross and, standing in the middle before the altar, invites the people in a few words to adore the Holy Cross and afterwards holds the Cross elevated higher for a brief time, for the faithful to adore it in silence” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 19). See also PS, 69.
- ✠ “While the adoration of the Holy Cross is taking place, the antiphon ... We adore your Cross, O Lord, the Reproaches, the hymn ... Faithful Cross or other suitable chants are sung, during which all who have already adored the Cross remain seated” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 20).
- ✠ “When the adoration has been concluded, the Cross is carried by the Deacon or a minister to its place at the altar. Lighted candles are then placed around or on the altar or near the cross” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 21).

HOLY COMMUNION AND DEPARTURE

- ✠ “A cloth is spread on the altar, and a corporal and the Missal put in place. Meanwhile the Deacon or, if there is no Deacon, the Priest himself, putting on a humeral veil, brings the Blessed Sacrament back from the place of repose to the altar by a shorter route, while all stand in silence. Two ministers with lighted candles accompany the Blessed Sacrament and place their candlesticks around or upon the altar. When the Deacon, if a Deacon is present, has placed the Blessed Sacrament upon the altar and uncovered the ciborium, the Priest goes to the altar and genuflects” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 22).
- ✠ After the Lamb of God, the priest “reverently consumes the Body of Christ, saying quietly: **May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.**” (*Roman Missal*, GF, 26-27).

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- ✘ “During Communion, Psalm 22 (21) or another appropriate chant may be sung” (Roman Missal, GF, 28).
- ✘ “When the distribution of Communion has been completed, the ciborium is taken by the Deacon or another suitable minister to a place prepared outside the church or, if circumstances so require, it is placed in the tabernacle” (Roman Missal, GF, 29).
- ✘ “Then the Priest says: Let us pray, and, after a period of sacred silence, if circumstances so suggest, has been observed, he says the Prayer after Communion” (Roman Missal, GF, 30).
- ✘ “All, after genuflecting toward the Cross, all depart in silence” (Roman Missal, GF, 32).
- ✘ “After the celebration, the altar is stripped, but the Cross remains on the altar with two or four candlesticks” (Roman Missal, GF, 33). See also PS, 71.

HOLY SATURDAY | APRIL 4

- ✘ It is recommended that there be a communal celebration of the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (PS, 40 and 62).
- ✘ The cross remains covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday. Images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil (PS, 26).
- ✘ “On this...day, by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick” (Roman Missal, Good Friday, 1). See also PS, 75-76.
- ✘ “Holy Communion may only be given on this day as Viaticum” (Roman Missal, Holy Saturday, 3).
- ✘ Order of Christian Initiation Rites of Immediate Preparation (OCIA, ns. 185-199).

THE EASTER VIGIL

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ “The Easter Vigil takes the place of the Office of Readings” (Roman Missal, “Rubrics for the Easter Vigil” [hereafter EV], 5).
- ✘ **In the Archdiocese of Boston, the recommended Easter Vigil start time this year is 8:00pm and may not be scheduled to start before 7:30 P.M. An earlier start time is not permitted to preserve the nature of the Easter Vigil as a night vigil and to avoid any confusion with a Saturday night anticipated Mass.**
- ✘ “In some areas where initially the ... Easter Vigil was received enthusiastically, it would appear that with the passage of time this enthusiasm has begun to wane. The very concept of the Vigil has almost come to be forgotten in some places, with the result that it is celebrated as if it were an evening Mass ... it also happens that the celebrations of the Triduum are not held at the correct times” (PS, 3).
- ✘ “The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on the Sunday” (Roman Missal, EV, 3).
- ✘ “According to a most ancient tradition, this night is one of vigil for the Lord, and the Vigil celebrated during it, to commemorate that holy night when the Lord rose from the dead, is regarded as the ‘mother of all holy vigils.’ For in that night, the Church keeps vigil, waiting for the resurrection of the Lord, and celebrates the sacraments of Christian initiation”(PS, 77).
- ✘ “The order of the Easter Vigil is arranged so that after the service of light and the Easter proclamation (which is the first part of the Vigil), Holy Church meditates on the wonderful works that the Lord God wrought for his people from the earliest times (the second part or liturgy of the word) to the moment when, together with those new members reborn in baptism (third part), she is called to the table prepared by the Lord for his Church, the commemoration of his death and resurrection, until he comes (fourth part)” (PS, 81).

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- ✘ “Of this night’s Vigil, which is the greatest and most noble of all solemnities, there is to be only one celebration in each church” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 2).
- ✘ “It would be desirable if, on occasion, provision were made for several communities to assemble in one church, wherever their proximity to one another or small numbers mean that a full and festive celebration could not otherwise take place. **The celebration of the Easter Vigil for special groups is not to be encouraged since, above all in this Vigil, the faithful should come together as one and should experience a sense of ecclesial community** [emphasis added]” (PS, 94).
- ✘ “The Easter Vigil takes the place of the Office of Readings” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 5).

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

- ✘ “Candles should be prepared for all who participate in the Vigil. The lights of the church are extinguished” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 7).
- ✘ “A blazing fire is prepared in a suitable place outside the church. When the people are gathered there, the Priest approaches with the ministers, one of whom carries the paschal candle. The processional cross and candles are not carried” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 8).
- ✘ The Paschal Candle “must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world” (PS, 82).
- ✘ “When, because of difficulties that may occur, a fire is not lit, the blessing of fire is adapted to the circumstances. When the people are gathered in the church as on other occasions, the Priest comes to the door of the church, along with the ministers carrying the paschal candle. The people, insofar as possible, turn to face the Priest. The greeting and address take place...then the fire is blessed and the candle is prepared” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 13)
- ✘ “When the candle has been lit, one of the ministers take burning coals from the fire and places them in the thurible, and the Priest puts incense into it in the usual way. The Deacon or, if there is no Deacon, another suitable minister, takes the paschal candle and a procession forms. The thurifer with the smoking thurible precedes the Deacon or other minister who carries the paschal candle. After them follows the Priest with the ministers and the people, all holding in their hands unlit candles” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 15).
- ✘ The sung proclamation, “The Light of Christ,” takes place at the door of the Church (then the Priest lights his candle from the flame of the paschal candle), in the middle of the Church (then all light their candles from the paschal candle), and finally before the altar, facing the people (*Roman Missal*, EV, 15-17).
- ✘ “Then the Deacon places the paschal candle on a large candlestand prepared next to the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary. And lights are lit throughout the church, except for the altar candles” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 17).
- ✘ “The Deacon, after incensing the book and the candle, proclaims the Easter Proclamation (*Exsultet*) at the ambo or a lectern, with all standing and holding lighted candles in their hands. The Easter Proclamation may be made, in the absence of a Deacon, by the Priest himself or by another concelebrating Priest. If, however, because of necessity, a lay cantor sings the Proclamation, the words **Therefore dearest friends** up to the end of the invitation are omitted, along with the greeting **The Lord be with you**. The Proclamation may also be sung in the short form.” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 18-19). See also PS, 84.

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THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

- ✘ Lectionary #41
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ “In this Vigil, the mother of all Vigils, nine readings are provided, namely seven from the Old Testament and two from the New (the Epistle and Gospel), all of which should be read whenever this can be done, so that the character of the Vigil, which demands an extended period of time, may be preserved. Nevertheless, where more serious pastoral circumstances demand it, the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced, always bearing in mind that the reading of the Word of God is a fundamental part of this Easter Vigil. **At least three readings should be read from the Old Testament, both from the Law and from the Prophets, and their respective Responsorial Psalms should be sung. Never, moreover, should the reading of chapter 14 of Exodus with its canticle be omitted**” (*Roman Missal, EV, 20-21*).
- ✘ “After setting aside their candles, all sit. Before the readings begin, the Priest instructs the people...then the readings follow. A reader goes to the ambo and proclaims the reading. Afterwards a psalmist or a cantor sings or says the Psalm with the people making the response. Then all rise, the Priest says, **Let us pray** and, after all have prayed for a while in silence, he says the prayer corresponding to the reading. In place of the Responsorial Psalm a period of sacred silence may be observed, in which case the pause after **Let us pray** is omitted” (*Roman Missal, EV, 22-23*).
- ✘ “After the last reading from the Old Testament with its Responsorial Psalm and its prayer, the altar candles are lit, and the Priest intones the hymn **Gloria in excelsis Deo (Glory to God in the highest)**, which is taken up by all, while bells are rung, according to local custom” (*Roman Missal, EV, 31*). See also PS, 87.
- ✘ “After the Epistle has been read, all rise, then the Priest solemnly intones the **Alleluia** three times, raising his voice by a step each time, with all repeating it. If necessary, the psalmist intones the **Alleluia**” (*Roman Missal, EV, 34*).
- ✘ “After the Gospel, the Homily, even if brief, is not to be omitted” (*Roman Missal, EV, 36*).

THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM

- ✘ Please see OCIA, ns. 206-243 and 562-594 and *Roman Missal, EV, 37-58* for the complete norms and rubrics. See also PS, 88.
- ✘ Adults (OCIA, ns. 209-230) and children of catechetical age (OCIA, ns. 252-259 and 304-329) being baptized and baptized but uncatechized adults (OCIA, ns. 400-410) completing their initiation are to be confirmed by the presiding priest. “If the bishop is not present, Confirmation is to be given by the Priest who conferred Baptism (cf. CIC, c. 866)” (OCIA, n. 232). **“The faculty to confirm a Catholic previously baptized as an infant must be received from the Diocesan bishop” (OCIA n. 409).**
- ✘ **Priests do not have permission to confirm at the Easter Vigil those adults who have already received Baptism and Eucharist in the Catholic Church.** It is strongly recommended that such persons be enrolled in an “adult confirmation” program and presented for Confirmation either at a regularly scheduled parish Confirmation or at an Adult Regional Confirmation scheduled by the Regional Bishop or Episcopal Vicar. Please contact the office of the Regional Bishop/Episcopal Vicar for scheduling and registration.
- ✘ If there are no candidates for baptism the font may still be blessed. “If no one is to be baptized and the font is not to be blessed, the Litany is omitted, and the Blessing of Water (no. 54) takes place at once (*Roman Missal, EV, 39-42*). See also PS, 88.
- ✘ “Where many are to be baptized on this night, it is possible to arrange the rite so that, immediately

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after the response of those to be baptized and of the godparents and the parents, the Celebrant asks for and receives the renewal of baptismal promises of all present” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 49).

- ✠ “When the Rite of Baptism (and Confirmation) has been completed or, if this has not taken place, after the blessing of water, all stand, holding lighted candles in their hands, and renew the promise of baptismal faith, unless this has already been done together with those to be baptized (cf. no. 49)” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 55). See also PS, 89.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- ✠ “After the sprinkling, the Priest returns to the chair where, omitting the Creed, he directs the Universal Prayer, in which the newly baptized participate for the first time” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 58).
- ✠ “In the Eucharistic Prayer, a commemoration is made of the baptized and their godparents in accord with the formulas which are found in the Roman Missal and Roman Ritual for each of the Eucharistic Prayers” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 63). See also OCIA, ns. 242.
- ✠ “Before the **Ecce Agnus Dei (Behold the Lamb of God)**, the Priest may briefly address the newly baptized about receiving their first Communion and about the excellence of this great mystery, which is the climax of Initiation and the center of the whole of Christian life” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 64). See also OCIA, n. 243.
- ✠ “It is desirable that the newly baptized receive Holy Communion under both kinds, together with their godfathers, godmothers, and Catholic parents and spouses, as well as their lay catechists” (*Roman Missal*, EV, 65). See also PS, 92.

EASTER SUNDAY | APRIL 5, 2025

- ✠ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✠ Use the propers of the day.
- ✠ The Gloria is said.
- ✠ Lectionary #42
- ✠ The Creed is said.
- ✠ “On Easter Sunday, at Masses with a congregation, the rite of renewal of baptismal promises, used at the Easter Vigil, may take the place of the Creed after the homily” (Ordo, 2026, p. 101).
- ✠ The sequence, *Victimae Paschali*, obligatory at Mass on Easter Sunday (Ordo, 2026, p. 101).
- ✠ Use Easter Preface I.

THE EASTER SEASON

- ✠ The Paschal Triduum ends after Evening Prayer II and the Easter Season begins.
- ✠ “The paschal candle, a symbol of the presence of the risen Christ among the people of God, remains in the sanctuary near the altar or ambo through Vespers on Pentecost Sunday. Its use is encouraged at all liturgical celebrations, especially Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours” (Ordo 2026, p. 101). See also PS, 99.
- ✠ *Victimae paschali* is optional on days of the octave.
- ✠ Easter Preface I is used (“on this day”) through the octave day of Easter, namely, the Second Sunday of Easter” (Ordo 2026, p. 101).
- ✠ “The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the Octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord” (Universal Norms, 24).
- ✠ At Mass, Morning Prayer, and Vespers, throughout the octave, a double alleluia is added to the dismissal and its response” (Ordo 2026, p. 101).

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SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY) | APRIL 12

- ✘ See Appendix for Decree on the Plenary Indulgence for Divine Mercy Sunday
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #43
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ “On Sundays, especially in Easter Time, the blessing and sprinkling of water as a memorial of Baptism may take place from time to time in all churches and chapels, even in Masses anticipated on Saturday evenings. If this rite is celebrated during Mass, it takes the place of the usual Penitential Act at the beginning of Mass” (*Roman Missal*, Appendix II: Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water).
- ✘ Use Easter Preface I.

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER | APRIL 19

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #46
- ✘ The Creed is said.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER | APRIL 26

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #49
- ✘ The Creed is said.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER | MAY 3

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #52
- ✘ The Creed is said.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER | MAY 10

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #55
- ✘ The Creed is said.

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ASCENSION THURSDAY | MAY 14

- ✘ Holy Day of Obligation.
- ✘ In the province of Boston, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord is celebrated on Thursday.
- ✘ The weekdays after the Ascension through the Saturday before Pentecost [are] a time of preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete” (Universal Norms, 26).
- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #58
- ✘ The Creed is said.

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER | MAY 17

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Lectionary #59
- ✘ The Creed is said.

PENTECOST SUNDAY | MAY 24

- ✘ The color of the vestments is white.
- ✘ Use the propers of the day.
- ✘ The Gloria is said.
- ✘ Vigil: Lectionary #62C, Day: Lectionary #63C
- ✘ The Pentecost Sequence is sung or recited at all Sunday Masses except the vigil.
- ✘ The Creed is said.
- ✘ After Pentecost, the Easter Candle is placed near the baptismal font.
- ✘ Easter ends with Evening Prayer II.

REGULATIONS FOR FASTING AND ABSTINENCE

- ✘ Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days for fast and abstinence.
- ✘ Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.
- ✘ The following may be reproduced in parish bulletins:

Ash Wednesday and **Good Friday** are days of fast and abstinence. **Fridays of Lent** are also days of abstinence.

Fasting is to be observed by all 18 years of age and older, who have not yet celebrated their 59th birthday. On a fast day, one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one’s needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids, including milk and juices, are allowed.

Abstinence is observed by all 14 years of age and older. On days of abstinence, no meat is allowed. Note that when health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. When in doubt concerning fast and abstinence, the parish priest should be consulted.

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.

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SOLEMNITIES, FEASTS, & THE COMMEMORATION OF SAINTS DURING LENT

- ✘ Lenten weekdays are not commemorated on Solemnities and Feasts (Ordo, 2026, p. 61)
- ✘ Ash Wednesday and the days of Holy Week take precedence over all Solemnities and Feasts (Ordo, 2026, p. 71)
- ✘ “Sundays of ... Lent, and Easter take precedence over Solemnities which are transferred to the Monday following, except when they occur on Passion (Palm) Sunday or Easter Sunday, when they are transferred to the Monday after the Second Sunday of Easter” (Ordo, 2026, p. 281).
- ✘ All Memorials of saints occurring during Lent are observed as Optional. Hence, they may be omitted or observed as commemorations (*Ordo*, 2026, p. 61).
- ✘ “Commemorations of Memorials in Privileged Seasons (17-31 Dec. and during Lent) are celebrated as follows: at OR after the patristic reading (with its responsory) from the Seasonal proper, the proper hagiographical reading (with its responsory) may follow, with the concluding Collect of the saint; at [Morning Prayer] and [Evening Prayer], the ending of the concluding prayer may be omitted and the saint’s antiphon (from the Proper or Common) and Collect of the saint may be added; at Mass, the Collect of the saint may replace the Collect of the feria” (Ordo, 2026, p. 281).
- ✘ The scripture readings, prayer over the gifts, and prayer after communion are always the prayers of the Lenten weekday unless the day is a Solemnity or Feast outranking the weekday.
- ✘ The Lenten Preface is used (except with Eucharistic Prayers that have their own proper preface).

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THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS AND THE RITES

Since Lent in its liturgies, its scriptures, its place in parish life, and its history are oriented toward the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil, it seems to be more fitting to celebrate these sacraments on Easter and during the Easter season. However, during Lent, one cannot deny these sacraments to the faithful if they are properly disposed.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance during Lent. Pastors should arrange an expanded schedule of confessions as needed in preparation for Easter. The hours scheduled by any parish should not be so limited that an unreasonable burden would fall on neighboring parishes. It is suggested that parishes in their respective areas arrange their schedules cooperatively so that all the faithful in their area are served adequately. Under no circumstances is the sacrament to be administered using “General Absolution.”

Ideally, the faithful would celebrate the sacrament of penance before the Paschal Triduum begins, and efforts should be made to educate people about the liturgical reasons for this. Parishes should provide reasonable times for the sacrament of penance to the faithful prior to the Paschal Triduum but it is appropriate to offer this sacrament on Good Friday following the practice of the Holy Father.

FUNERALS DURING THE SEASON OF LENT AND THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM

Good liturgical practice would suggest reflecting the liturgical season in the choice of music and scripture.

A funeral Mass may not be celebrated on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday. 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 I Chapter 4. A Mass for the deceased should be offered as soon as is convenient after Easter Sunday.

MARRIAGES DURING THE SEASON OF LENT AND THE TRIDUUM

Marriages during the season of Lent are not to be encouraged. However, if a marriage does take place, there should be a marked moderation in festivity and the parish environment should not be altered from that of Lent. No flowers are allowed in the sanctuary (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 252). The celebration of marriage (including the convalidation of marriage) is not permitted during the Easter Triduum (*Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 32).

COMMUNION FOR THE SICK AND VIATICUM

Communion may be brought to the sick on all days except Holy Saturday. On Holy Saturday communion may be given only as viaticum. Communion services outside of the liturgy are not held on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Holy Saturday (*Roman Missal*, GF, 1-2).

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APPENDIX: PLENARY INDULGENCE FOR DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

In a decree dated August 3, 2002, the Apostolic Penitentiary announced that in order “to ensure that the faithful would observe this day (Divine Mercy Sunday) with intense devotion, the Supreme Pontiff established that this Sunday be enriched by a plenary indulgence...so that the faithful might receive in abundance the gift of the consolation of the Holy Spirit. In this way, they can foster a growing love for God and for their neighbor, and after they have obtained God’s pardon, they in turn might be persuaded to show a prompt pardon to their brothers and sisters.”

The *plenary indulgence* is granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!).

Additional provisions are offered for those who are impeded from fulfilling these requirements, but wish to acquire the plenary indulgence. The full text of the decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary may be found in English at the Vatican website under Curia, Tribunals, Penitenzieria Apostolica, June 29, 2002.

While the readings and prayers for Mass on this day remain unchanged, Holy See offers this reflection:

The Gospel of the Second Sunday of Easter narrates the wonderful things Christ the Lord accomplished on the day of the Resurrection during his first public appearance: “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad to see the Lord. . Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you,’ and then he breathed on them, and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained’” (Jn 20,19-23).

In addition, the decree requires that parish priests “should inform the faithful in the most suitable way of the Church’s salutary provision. They should promptly and generously be willing to hear their confessions. On Divine Mercy Sunday, after celebrating Mass they should lead the recitation of the prayers that have been given above and they should also encourage the faithful to perform acts of mercy as often as they can.”

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