

January 19, 2010

TO: Clergy
FROM: Monsignor Robert Mazur
CONCERNING: Lent and Triduum:

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| (1) Distribution of Ashes | (6) Penance Service |
| (2) Fast and Abstinence | (7) Chrism Mass |
| (3) Devotions | (8) Easter Triduum |
| (4) Veiling Crucifix and Statues | (9) Distinctive Features of Season |
| (5) Diocesan Penance Services | (10) Bulletin Inserts |

(1) ORDER FOR THE BLESSING AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES

Appropriate information for the distribution of ashes may be found in the Book of Blessings in Chapter 52. The custom of blessing and distributing ashes (after the homily and before the general intercessions) normally takes place during the celebration of Mass. However, when circumstances require, the distribution of ashes may take place apart from Mass. When ashes are distributed outside Mass, there is always a celebration of the Word of God accompanying the distribution of ashes. The distribution of ashes is designated for Wednesday, February 17. Ashes would not be distributed on any other day of the liturgical year.

This traditional Lenten rite may be celebrated by a priest or deacon who may be assisted by lay ministers in the distribution of ashes. (The blessing of ashes is reserved to a priest or deacon.) There is no need to seek Bishop's permission for lay minister assistance with the distribution of ashes.

Note: At the Ash Wednesday Mass, there is no penitential rite. The penitential rite is omitted with the blessing and distribution of ashes.

(2) LENTEN FAST AND ABSTINENCE (See Bulletin Insert dated February 14)

Wednesday, February 17, is Ash Wednesday when the Church begins the forty day journey with the annual discipline of fasting, praying and giving alms. Ash Wednesday (February 17) and Good Friday (April 2) are days of fast and abstinence. All Fridays of Lent (February 19, February 26; March 5, 12, 19, 26) are days of abstinence. **FASTING** refers to only one full meal, with two small meals and no eating otherwise for the day. **ABSTINENCE** refers to not eating meat at all during the day. All those who have reached their 14th year are obliged to ABSTAIN. The Church directs the holy FAST to all those in their 18th year until their 60th year (Canon 1252). The ancient practice of fasting and abstaining can occur throughout the other days of Lent. This is no obligatory and can take a variety of forms distinct from food.

(3) LENTEN DEVOTIONS

In addition to Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours, the forty days invite the Faithful to traditional prayer forms. Exposition and Benediction of the Holy Eucharist are encouraged. Parishes are reminded of the Order For The Solemn Exposition of the Holy Eucharist for the proper order for exposition and benediction. Stations of the Cross are customary during the Fridays of Lent. To the extent possible, the Faithful are encouraged to process from station to station during this devotion. Proper devotional practice would encourage each prayer form to be distinct and separate, i.e., Benediction and Stations of the Cross would occur at different occasions and not at the same time.

Parishes are encouraged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours at times convenient for the Faithful. Morning and Evening Hours are ancient in Christian practice. To the greatest extent possible, parishes schedule the Hours at times separate and distinct from the Mass. The Season of Lent and the Season of Easter are marvelous occasions for the parish to communally pray the Liturgy of the Hours.

The Faithful are urged to recite the rosary throughout the forty days. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament are to be encouraged; making a Holy Hour before the Sacrament is a wonderful Lenten devotion. The reading of Scripture is a great source of spiritual nourishment and growth.

(4) VEILING CRUCIFIX AND STATUES:

The cross/crucifix may be covered from the Fifth Sunday of Lent until the end of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. Images in the church may be covered from the Fifth Sunday of Lent until the beginning of the Easter Vigil. A violet cloth may be used to drape the cross and images. On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, if not hiding the cross or crucifix from sight, a violet or red cloth may be used to drape it, as well as the ambo. These coverings over the cross/crucifix and ambo may be placed until the end of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday. The violet cloths over the statuary and other images are to be removed before the Easter Vigil begins.

This indult was given in the third edition of the Roman Missal (2002).

(5) DIOCESAN COMMUNAL PENANCE SERVICES:

JOHNSTOWN - STATE COLLEGE - ALTOONA

Bishop will gather with his priests throughout the Diocese on the following dates in Lent, 2010.

JOHNSTOWN: Saint John Gualbert Cathedral
Monday, March 22, 2010 - 6:30 PM

STATE COLLEGE: Good Shepherd Church
Tuesday, March 23, 2010 - 7:00 PM

ALTOONA: Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament
Wednesday, March 24, 2010 - 6:30 PM

Postcards will be sent with the **March 2nd mailing** inviting priests to these three penance services.

Pastors are asked to encourage your parishioners with parish communities in the vicinity of these churches to participate in the communal celebrations of the Sacrament of Penance. Local pastors, parochial vicars, and residents are asked to join the Bishop as confessors at these communal celebrations. The season of Lent invites a more solemn celebration of sacramental forgiveness and mercy.

(6) PENANCE SERVICE

It is fitting that the Lenten Season include, both for the individual as well as for the whole Church community, a sacramental penitential celebration. Bishop will gather with his priests at three locations to celebrate Sacramental Penance this Lent. This liturgy will help all to prepare to celebrate more fully the dying and rising of Christ in the upcoming Triduum. The Season of Lent is the occasion to seek conversion and reconciliation. We are called in a spirit of repentance to ask God's forgiveness for those times in our history when we have fallen short of serving His kingdom through our own negligence and sin. Priests are to encourage the reception of the Sacrament of Penance during the forty days of Lent.

A Lenten Penance Service has been prepared for use at your parish. It is copy-ready or you might wish to create from it a copy for the Faithful containing only their parts. Violet paper is the suggested color for this seasonal liturgy. Please note: when celebrating a Communal Penance Service according to the Roman Rite, participants remain until all have received individual absolution and a general prayer and/or hymn of thanksgiving are communally celebrated.

(7) CHRISM MASS

Bishop will gather with his college of presbyters on **Monday, March 29, 2010 at 11:00 AM** in the Altoona Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament for the annual celebration of the Chrism Mass. All priests are asked to concelebrate. Each parish is asked to send two representatives who will receive the blessed oils to take back to your faith community. The Deans will again entrust the sacred oils to your parish representatives at the end of the Liturgy. The three oils are to be presented to the faith community during the celebration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening.

Because of concern for the holy oils, tickets will again be issued for each parish. This helps identify parish representatives. Your ticket will be forwarded with the **March 16th Clergy Mailing**. Please have your two parish representatives give their ticket to the Dean distributing the holy oils.

The Chrism Liturgy is a celebration of unity. The Bishop gathers with his college of priests and the people of God to celebrate our unity in Jesus Christ. The new oils will be presented for the Sacraments of Initiation celebrated at the Easter Vigil, throughout the Sundays of the Easter Season, and throughout the liturgical year.

Note: The oils are placed within a locked ambry.

(8) EASTER TRIDUUM

Please review the Roman Missal for the Easter Triduum. This will be helpful not only in terms of liturgical celebration but also in terms of the administration of certain sacraments. The Church gives specific directives in this regard relating to the days of the Easter Triduum.

The Sacred Triduum is the center and highlight of the liturgical year. As the culmination of the entire liturgical year, pastors are to encourage their people to enter into serious prayer these three days. Every faith community (clergy and people) is asked to take time to prepare each liturgical celebration, and pray each Liturgy with joy and reverence. These days are the hinge of the year; all else revolves around The Three Days.

As is stated in the introductions to the various Triduum services, the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, the Celebration of the Lord's Passion, and the Celebration of the Easter Vigil are permitted only once in each church. Of course, not everyone will be able to attend. Even though they are **the** celebrations of the Church year, they are not celebrations of obligation. The Diocesan Bishop can give permission to have additional celebrations on Holy Thursday and Good Friday, according to need. Requests for permission to repeat Holy Thursday and Good Friday celebrations should be addressed to the Bishop in writing, giving the pastoral reason for the need to repeat as well as the times of the services. Permission should not be taken for granted. Therefore, requests need to be processed now. In areas where two or more churches are in close proximity to each other, your cooperation is encouraged in scheduling at staggered times.

Holy Thursday - April 1

The Mass of the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated in the evening, even if there is a need to celebrate a second Mass in a particular parish (with permission, of course). Bishop can permit a morning Mass in addition to the evening Mass, but only in cases where there is a significant number of people who **cannot** (as opposed to "will not") attend the principal Mass in the evening. Morning Masses for school students are not permitted. The blessed oils should be part of the opening procession of Holy Thursday's Liturgy. The three oils are carried in procession and placed on a separate stand; they may be incensed with the altar. After Mass, they may be returned to the ambry/repository.

The full expression of the Eucharist, both bread and cup, should be offered to all in the assembly. In parishes where celebrations are repeated, only the final celebration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday would include the transfer of the Holy Eucharist for reposition, followed by a period of adoration (never to extend beyond midnight).

The collection at the Mass of the Lord's Supper is specifically designated for the poor. The Faithful should be aware of the nature of this evening's collection.

Good Friday - April 2

Celebrating only once the Lord's Passion on Good Friday does not preclude other types of services, such as praying the Divine Office or Stations of the Cross or Tenebrae. The Roman Missal suggests the celebration of the Lord's Passion take place in the afternoon, about 3:00 o'clock. Holy Communion may be given to the Faithful only at the celebration of the Lord's Passion, but may be brought at any hour of the day to the sick who cannot take part in this service. By making this day a special day of prayer and penance, evening devotions can be scheduled to gather the Faithful for prayer. Parishes are encouraged to offer various prayer opportunities throughout the three days.

This is the day of the ancient fast. This is a day of fast and abstinence. Believers are encouraged to continue the fast until the Vigil is celebrated Saturday evening. Jesus has been crucified. We wait in quiet fasting for the celebration of Christ risen from the dead.

Easter Vigil - April 3

On Holy Saturday, Holy Communion may be taken only to the dying in the form of Viaticum on this day. Again, parishes are encouraged to offer prayer opportunities that invite the Faithful back to church. We are preparing for the great Vigil of the Church. Morning Prayer, Office of Readings, or blessing of food are popular practices throughout the Diocese.

The celebration of the Vigil of the Lord's Resurrection is to take place in darkness. Allowing for complete darkness, the Easter Vigil is to begin no earlier than **8:30 PM (Daylight Saving Time)**.

Great care should be taken that the Easter Vigil Liturgy is not celebrated in haste. The Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated at this Vigil. Adults and families who have been progressing in the Christian Initiation Process, come forward and are baptized, confirmed and eucharized. Again, it is fitting that full expression be given to the sign of the Eucharist by offering Communion under the species of both bread and wine. With the initiation of new members into the Church and with the forty days concluded, it would be appropriate for the parish to have a social following the Easter Vigil.

Notice that when a second Mass is necessary on Holy Saturday, it has to be celebrated **after** the Mass of the Easter Vigil. The Easter Vigil itself is never repeated in the same church.

Easter Sunday - April 4

Easter Sunday concludes the Three Day celebration. At the end of the Liturgy of the Word, believers renew baptismal promises and are sprinkled with Easter water. The Triduum concludes with Evening Prayer Easter Sunday night. Many parishes make Easter water available to the Faithful to take home and use for home blessings throughout the liturgical year.

(9) DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF LENTEN SEASON

Our worship space and our liturgies take on a distinctive character throughout the forty days of Lent.

- . The two Eucharistic Prayers of Reconciliation with their complimentary Prefaces are encouraged to be prayed throughout the season of Lent.
- . There are to be no alleluias both in Office and Eucharist.
- . The Glory to God is omitted at Liturgy.
- . The music sung expresses the spirit of the season which is baptismal and penitential.
- . Musical instrumentation serves the sole purpose of supporting the singing. Silence and quiet are appropriate. Preludes and postludes do not take place in Lent.
- . Flowers and plants are removed from the worship space (the 4th Sunday of Lent is an exception).
- . If marriages occur during Lent, couples are to be reminded of the simplicity of the season. There should be restraint in song and in display.
- . The Rite of Election will be celebrated Sunday, February 21st, at both Cathedrals.
- . As the Easter Vigil is the proper time to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation, it is fitting in the spirit of Lent to defer baptism of infants until Easter and the Sundays of the Easter Season (preferably at Sunday Mass).
- . First Eucharist is most appropriately celebrated during the Easter Season . As the normative rite of initiation celebrates reception of communion at the Easter Vigil, the first communion of our young children is properly celebrated during the Sundays of the Easter Season.
- . The Sacrament of Confirmation will be appropriately celebrated throughout the Easter Season in the Diocesan Church.
- . The Sacrament of Holy Orders will be celebrated on Saturday, May 22nd, in the Altoona Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament

(10) BULLETIN INSERTS: FOR THE SUNDAYS OF LENT

The bulletin Lenten Liturgical Inserts continue to discuss and explain the upcoming revised edition of the **Roman Missal**. Please place these inserts in your weekly bulletin. This is an important form of catechesis for us and all the Faithful.

LENT — 2010

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Liturgical Reflection...

This Wednesday, February 17, is Ash Wednesday when the Church begins the forty day journey toward the Triduum (The Three Days) with the annual discipline of fasting, praying and giving alms. Ash Wednesday (February 17) and Good Friday (April 2) are days of fast and abstinence. All Fridays of Lent (February 19, 26, and March 5, 12, 19, 26) are days of abstinence. **FASTING** refers to only one full meal, with two small meals and no eating otherwise for the day. **ABSTINENCE** refers to not eating meat at all during the day. All those who have reached their 14th birthday are obliged to abstain. The Church directs the holy FAST to all those in their 18th year until their 60th year (Canon 1252). The ancient practice of fasting and abstaining can occur throughout the other days of Lent. This is not obligatory and can take a variety of forms distinct from food.

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**ROMAN
MISSAL**

Liturgical Reflection...

The publication of the third edition of the ROMAN MISSAL was officially promulgated in Rome in March 2002. Confirmation of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops' adaptations to the revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* arrived in April 2002. Even though there is presently no English translation of the ROMAN MISSAL, the Catholic world implemented the revised Missal along with adaptations particular to each country in 2002.

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**ROMAN
MISSAL**

Liturgical Reflection...

Certain gestures at Mass intensify our witness to the oneness we celebrate in the crucified and risen Lord. The third edition of the Roman Missal directs STRIKING OUR BREAST during the *Confiteor* (I Confess). During the words "through my own fault," each member of the liturgical assembly is to strike his or her breast. This liturgical gesture can strengthen awareness that my sin is my fault. During these Lenten days when the Church calls for intense prayer, fasting and almsgiving, striking our breasts can strengthen the realization that sinfulness depends totally on the mercy and forgiveness of God.

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**ROMAN
MISSAL**

Liturgical Reflection...

The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Number 48, states: “The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful when present at the mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred service conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full involvement.” Our common postures, gestures, our praying and singing, our shared silences, all give witness to the great gift of our salvation—in Jesus Christ—remembered at each Mass.

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**ROMAN
MISSAL**

Liturgical Reflection...

The different postures at Mass reinforce the meaning of the action in which we are taking part at that moment in our worship. **STANDING** is a sign of respect and honor, so we stand as the priest who represents Christ enters and leaves the liturgical assembly. When we stand we assume our full stature before God, not in pride, but in humble gratitude for the marvelous things God has done for us. We stand for the Gospel, the pinnacle of revelation. And in the United States, we stand for the reception of Communion, the Sacrament that unites us in a profound way with Christ. **KNEELING** signifies penance and awareness of our dependence on God. This posture is a sign of adoration. The bishops of our country have chosen that we kneel for the entire Eucharistic Prayer (particular to the United States). **SITTING** is the posture of listening and meditation. The assembly sits for the first reading, the sung psalm, and the second reading, and may sit or kneel after the Communion hymn is complete as we enter into communion thanksgiving.

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**ROMAN
MISSAL**

Liturgical Reflection...

The third edition of the Roman Missal takes time to direct the ancient gesture of signing ourselves with the **SIGN OF THE CROSS**. Christians have traditionally started and ended prayer with the sign of the cross. We begin Mass and, in the form of a blessing, Mass concludes with the sign of the cross. As the Gospel is introduced, we sign our foreheads, our lips, and our hearts with a cross. We pray that the proclaimed word will rest in our minds, always be on our lips, and take root in our hearts in praise of God. Lent is the appropriate time to focus on the cross and how we use this ancient, sacred gesture in prayer.

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LENT — 2010

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Liturgical Reflection...

Today is Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion. We enter the holiest week of the Church's year. We hold our blessed palms as we enter the church in song; we hold our palms as the Passion is proclaimed; and we hold our blessed palms as the final hymn is sung; and we take our palms home to place them in a prominent, visible space to be reminded of the Lord's glorious entry into Jerusalem where he dies and rises for our redemption.

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Liturgical Reflection...

The Local Church of Altoona-Johnstown will gather Monday, March 29 at 11:00AM in the Altoona Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament for the annual Chrism Mass. Bishop Joseph will bless the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of the Sick, and Sacred Chrism. Oil is a sign of strength and healing, grounded in biblical tradition. These consecrated oils will be used throughout the year for the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick. Each faith community will take a portion of the three oils back to the parish for use in the appropriate liturgical celebrations. As Bishop gathers with his college of priests assisted by his deacons along with the assembled faithful, the Church celebrates our unity in Jesus Christ. The entire diocesan family is invited to participate in this beautiful Liturgy.

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