

THE BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF SCOTLAND

GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY WEEK AND THE SACRED TRIDUUM 2021

Resumption of Communal Worship in Scotland

Assuming no deterioration in the situation with the virus between now and then, communal worship will resume in Scotland on Friday 26 March with a cap of 50 people in the congregation, provided the building can safely accommodate that number with two metre physical distancing between households.

Guidance from the Holy See

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has issued a [Note to Bishops and Episcopal Conferences on the Celebration of Holy Week 2021](#) (Prot. N. 96/21 – 17 February 2021) to assist the Bishops in their task of “judging concrete situations and providing for the spiritual welfare of pastors and faithful in living this great Week of the liturgical year.” The *Note* also states that the [Decree](#) issued by the Congregation last year (Prot. N. 153/20) is still valid for this year’s celebrations.

The Congregation reminds us that the pandemic has influenced the liturgical life of the Church, and that “the norms and directives contained in the liturgical books, drawn up with normal times in view, are not entirely applicable in exceptional moments of crisis such as these”.

The use of social media has greatly aided parishes in offering support and closeness to their communities during the pandemic. The Congregation suggests that live media coverage of the celebrations presided over by the Bishop be facilitated and favoured, encouraging the faithful who are unable to attend their own church to follow the diocesan celebrations as a sign of unity. The times of the Cathedral celebrations of the Sacred Triduum should be promoted in the Dioceses of Scotland alongside the local parish celebrations.

The Liturgy of the Hours and Online Participation

The *Liturgy of the Hours* should be promoted by parish priests to the faithful who are unable to attend the local church as an additional means of uniting themselves in prayer to the worship of the Universal Church. An extract from the [Liturgy of the Hours for the Sacred Triduum](#) is available on the Bishops’ Conference website. A [Guide to Foster Participation in the online liturgies of the Sacred Triduum](#) is also available.

Continued Importance of Hygiene Measures

The Church in Scotland is part of a wider community in which the possibilities of virus transmission are still high. Since we were last able to worship communally, a variant of the virus which is significantly more transmissible has become the dominant strain in Scotland. **It is essential, therefore, that the hygiene practices for the safety of those participating in communal worship are strictly adhered to.**

These include but are not limited to:

- The wearing of face coverings in church by the faithful (unless the person has a valid exemption from this regulation)
- Physical distancing of people within the church building
- Stewarding of the church premises to assist the faithful
- As much ventilation as possible in the church to minimise the risk of aerosol transmission
- Frequent hand cleansing, either with sanitiser or washing
- Suitable one-way systems in the building to prevent excessive interaction between people from different households and separate entrance and exit points where possible
- Cleaning of the church building after each act of public worship
- Keeping a register of names and a contact detail of those in attendance at each gathering
- The timely departure of the faithful after the acts of worship avoiding congregating in car parks or on the streets outside the church.

Priests, even if they have received a first or both doses of the vaccine, must continue to wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion and sanitise their hands.

The celebrations of the various liturgies of Holy Week should include those things that are necessary for the celebration, but not be prolonged in any way. In particular, those responsible for the planning of the liturgy should take into account:

- The time that people will be within the church buildings; the tension between a dignified celebration and the time to execute that celebration has to be recognised.
- The use of a cantor and music has to be taken into consideration as a prolonging factor in this case, remembering that congregational singing is not permitted. The use of well-chosen music and antiphons, however, will not unduly prolong the liturgy.
- The movement of people within the church building itself as a potential risk factor.

Because of the nature of the Holy Week Liturgies, a small number of ministers to assist the priest is permitted. At present, physical distancing should be observed between households for people of all ages.

Particular Guidance on the Celebration of Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum

Palm Sunday of the Passion of Our Lord

The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem should be celebrated within the church building.

The faithful should stand at their seated place. The Procession should not take place and the *Second Form: The Solemn Entrance* should be used.

The ministers should enter the Church at a suitable place where the palm branches have been prepared to be blessed. These should be blessed at the appropriate point and the Gospel of the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem is proclaimed. The palm branches blessed during the celebration of the liturgy should be distributed to the faithful. Those distributing the palm branches should wear single-use gloves when doing so.

After the Gospel, the ministers move to the Sanctuary and the Mass continues with the *Collect*.

The shorter form of the Passion from the Gospel of St Mark should be read in a dignified yet expeditious manner with or without multiple readers.

The crowd parts should not be exclaimed by the congregation.

The Chrism Mass

The Chrism Mass may be deferred to a later date, preferably in Eastertide. If the Chrism Mass is not deferred to a later date, then this should take place in the Cathedral Church of the Diocese (or in another church adept for the purpose). Those who participate in the Chrism Mass should represent the life of the diocese, first and foremost with a good representation of the diocesan presbyterate, but also recognising the role of the religious and lay faithful. The conditions for physical distancing must be taken into consideration.

A number of priests (preferably from different regions of the diocese) should concelebrate with the Bishop; others may participate in choir. The concelebrants should sanitise their hands and receive communion by intinction with care to ensure the bread and wine to be consecrated is covered until reception. Those participating in choir receive communion only under one kind, in the same manner as the faithful.

The *Renewal of Priestly Promises* should take place at the usual point in the Mass. Those priests who are unable to attend should be encouraged to participate in the Mass, and particularly in this act of renewal, from their homes via electronic means.

The distribution of the Holy Oils and the Sacred Chrism to the priests of the diocese needs particular consideration. Until new oil stocks are distributed, the priest has permission to use previous oil stocks.

Mass of the Lord's Supper

In the Decree of March 2020, the exceptional faculty to celebrate this Mass without the faithful was granted to all priests, and it is assumed that this is still permitted. However, the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper finds its fullest expression with a congregation.

The *Washing of the Feet* is to be omitted and there is to be no procession outside the sanctuary to an Altar of Repose. If an Altar of Repose is not used, the Reserved Sacrament is to be kept in the Tabernacle of the church. The altar need not be stripped in the usual manner, and most certainly not if the Blessed Sacrament is reserved at that altar.

Holy Communion should be given under one kind according to the previous *Guidance* offered by the Bishops' Conference.

To keep the gathering more brief, *Watching* at the Altar of Repose should not take place this year.

Clergy who are not able to celebrate this Mass should pray *Vespers* from the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

Good Friday

The *Celebration of the Passion of the Lord* should take place in the church with a congregation wherever possible. Sufficient ministers should be prepared to assist in this liturgy. Care should be taken for the numbers of people present for this liturgy which is very popular with the faithful.

If necessary, additional celebrations can be considered, taking into account the risks associated for the faithful in travelling to and from church.

The proclamation of the *Passion according to St John* should be read in a dignified yet expeditious manner with or without multiple readers. The crowd parts should not be exclaimed by the congregation.

The *Universal Prayer* should be carried out without undue delay. Like last year, a special intention (*For the afflicted in time of Pandemic*) is to be inserted before the intercession *For those in Tribulation (X)*. This prayer is printed below.

IX b. For the afflicted in time of pandemic

Let us pray also for all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
only support of our human weakness,
look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children
who suffer because of this pandemic;
relieve the pain of the sick,
give strength to those who care for them,
welcome into your peace those who have died
and, throughout this time of tribulation,
grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love.
Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

For *The Showing of the Holy Cross*, the First Form should be used to avoid moving through the church with the Cross. The use of the violet veil is optional. Candles need not be carried by ministers when the observation of two metre physical distance between households is difficult.

For the *Adoration of the Holy Cross*, veneration is limited to the celebrant alone. After he has done this, he should “invite the people present 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 in silence.” (Rubrics #19).

This may be expressed by the faithful through a short period of silent prayer, a gesture such as a genuflection or bow in their places, followed by another short period of silent prayer.

Holy Communion should be given under one kind from the Reserved Sacrament, as is normal practice on Good Friday, according to the previous *Guidance* offered by the Bishops’ Conference.

Other Celebrations on Good Friday

Celebrations of the *Stations of the Cross* should not involve the congregation moving around the church. The celebrant may move from Station to Station, or even remain at the chair, with the people remaining in their places. *Walks of Witness* should not take place indoors or outdoors.

It is earnestly requested that at all acts of worship on Good Friday in the churches of Scotland, the opportunity for the faithful to contribute to the Holy See collection for the *Holy Places of Palestine* should be available.

The Easter Vigil

This should be celebrated in Cathedrals and Parish Churches only. If a priest is unable to celebrate the Easter Vigil, he should pray the prescribed *Office of Readings* for Easter Day noting the number of readings, chants and prayers to be used.

At *The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium* the preparation and lighting of the fire and the procession may be omitted. Outdoor gatherings around a fire should not take place. The Paschal candle may be prepared, enthroned and lit in the Sanctuary before the people gather in the church. Rubrics #11 and #12 may be completed in advance.

The ministers should make their way in silence to the sanctuary where the Celebrant begins the celebration with the Sign of the Cross and the Greeting, *Dear brothers and sisters, on this most sacred night....*

At the end of the Greeting, the *Easter Proclamation (the Exsultet)* immediately follows, preferably using the Shorter Form. This is either said or sung by a single voice. The faithful should not have individual candles for the Easter Vigil.

The *Liturgy of the Word* follows. In order to expedite the liturgy in a dignified way, it is recommended that we use not more than **three** Old Testament readings from both the Law and the Prophets with their respective psalms. Please note that the reading of Exodus 14 and its canticle must always be one of these readings (Rubrics, #21).

After the proclamation of the Gospel, the *homily* is not to be omitted, but is to be brief (Rubrics, #36).

This year, the *Baptism of Catechumens, the Reception of other Christians into full Communion with the Catholic Church and Confirmation* is permitted during the Easter Vigil as long as it does not unduly lengthen the service. Similarly, you may wish to consider administering the sacraments of initiation during Mass on a weekday of the Easter Octave or at another time during Eastertide.

The celebrant should *bless the baptismal water* in the font or in a suitable receptacle in the sanctuary. The *Renewal of Baptismal Promises* should be made by those present. The celebrant, after sanitising his hands and putting on a mask, may sprinkle the faithful. Holy water stoups should not be refilled at this time.

The *Liturgy of the Eucharist* follows.

Holy Communion should be given under one kind from the newly consecrated Sacrament according to the previous *Guidance* offered by the Bishops' Conference.

Although this is the most solemn night of the Church's calendar, for reasons of brevity you may choose, for example, not to sing but speak the *Exsultet*, to use *Eucharistic Prayer II*, to omit the repeated psalm response and sing the verses sequentially with the response at the beginning and end only.

Mass of Easter Day

The Mass on Easter Sunday should be as prescribed in the *Roman Missal* but without the sprinkling of water as part of the *Renewal of Baptismal Promises*.