

Frequently Asked Questions on Lent and the Triduum

Liturgy Commission
Diocese of Tyler
Updated January 20, 2011

I. **What time should the Easter Vigil start this Holy Saturday, April 23, 2011?**

8:30 is a good time to start the Vigil Mass. The Vigil Mass should not start before nightfall, which is 8:22 PM this year in our area.

(Sunset in Tyler will be about 7:56 and the end of twilight 8:22

Sunrise for Tyler is 6:43 AM with Twilight starting 6:18

The U.S. Naval observatory has the precise time: www.usno.navy.mil

II. **What are the Regulations for Fast and Abstinence?**

1. The penitential days and times in the universal Church are every Friday of the whole year and the season of Lent. (Canon 1250) Therefore, some form of penance is especially encouraged on all Fridays of the year and throughout the Lenten Season.
2. Fasting and abstinence are of great importance to follow Jesus and really enter into the experience of Lent.
 - A) In the United States, Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of fast and abstinence; all other Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence only. All persons who have completed their fourteenth year are bound by the law of abstinence; all adults are bound by the law of fast up to the beginning of their sixtieth year. Pregnant women and people who are sick are not obliged to fast. Others who feel they are unable to observe the laws of fast and abstinence should consult a parish priest or confessor.
 - B) The law of abstinence forbids the eating of meat. The law of fasting prohibits eating between meals and allows most one full meal with two lighter meals in the course of the day. It should be noted that Christians often did this level of fasting for the entire Lenten season. For a single day of fasting one might easily discipline one's appetite more vigorously, but should not do harm to one's health.

III. **Is it permissible for someone over the age of 7 to be Baptized and then wait to be Confirmed by the Bishop?**

3. NO*. Church law is clear that anyone over the age of 7 who seeks Baptism needs to be prepared to celebrate Confirmation at the time of their Baptism, as well as receive the Eucharist. Similarly anyone over the age of 7 who is a baptized non-Catholic seeking to enter the Catholic Church needs to be prepared for Confirmation and reception of Communion along with their Profession of Faith. Such persons should be included, if possible, in the presentation to the Bishop at the Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent. Those who come into the Church during the year should be invited to come to Mass and be presented to the Bishop when he comes to the parish for Confirmation. (Memo from Faith Formation, March 8, 2005) * In the rare case that a person lacks the use of reason, they may be Confirmed even if they are not able to receive the Eucharist.

IV. When do the people in RCIA celebrate their First Confession?

4. Confession can only be celebrated by a person who has already been Baptized. Baptized candidates seeking Full Communion can approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation when they are ready. They are to be encouraged to monthly celebrate the Sacrament as part of their journey towards Confirmation and Eucharist. Those who will be Baptized at the Eater Vigil will have all their sins removed by their Baptism. They should be prepared to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation a few weeks later, but certainly at some point during the Easter season. Both groups should celebrate monthly for at least 10-12 months as part of their spiritual journey. All are free to choose the priest they confess to and to choose a suitable opportunity at either a regular scheduled time, or a special Reconciliation service, or even by appointment with a priest.

V. How do we reply to concerns about the RCIA rituals extending Mass?

5. Appropriate catechesis is necessary for the community to experience their role in the process of Christian Initiation. Also the rites can help parishioners reflect upon their experience of the Sacraments. If there is no catechesis it can be hard for people to fully, consciously, actively enter into the rituals.

VI. What are the Sacramental Records for RCIA?

6. A sacramental record has to be entered for anyone who is received into Full Communion with the Church. This must be recorded either in the parish's Profession of Faith Register (if the parish has one) or in the parish Baptismal Register (every parish must have an official registry book for Baptisms). When the date of the Profession of Faith is recorded, the Sacraments celebrated need to be clearly noted, i.e.: First Communion and Confirmation. Also, if they are married, a notation must also be made in the registry. The Profession of Faith record serves the place of a Baptismal record for the new Catholic as the place if official record. The parish will be notified of any future sacraments to be noted in the registry. If the parish does not have "Profession of Faith certificates" one can simply use a Baptismal Certificate, by clearly noting on it Profession of Faith. (See Canon 877; Diocesan Pastoral Manual see F1c3, page F-12. Also Baptismal records FIIG, page F-39).

VII. During Lent, can there be celebrations of Baptism, Marriage, First Communion, etc.?

7. Lent is a season characterized by penance and preparation. Traditionally, there are not weddings, or Baptisms celebrated during Lent. For pastoral reasons, there could be a wedding, or even a Baptism during Lent. Generally these would be celebrated in a simpler way and not in connection with a Sunday liturgy. The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick can be celebrated at anytime during the Lenten season or the Triduum as it is a Sacrament of Healing which is connected with forgiveness of sins. Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation can be celebrated during the Lenten Season.

VIII. When should Holy Water be removed from the Fonts?

8. Holy Water is a reminder of Baptism and should NOT be removed from the fonts before the end of the Holy Thursday liturgy (see Ordo or Sacramentary). It would then be replaced with new Easter water after the Vigil Mass of Easter. The idea of removing Holy Water throughout Lent is not proper theologically or liturgically, and is not to be done.

IX. What about duplicate services on the Triduum?

9. Holy Thursday: There should only be one celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This Mass particularly focuses on union in the Eucharist. In a bilingual community, the Mass can be done bilingually.
10. Good Friday: Pastorally in a community that has both English and Spanish speakers, there should be two separate celebrations of the Good Friday Liturgy, one in English and one in Spanish. Also, there probably should be Stations of the Cross in both languages. This respects the very different cultural expressions of devotion and piety.
11. Holy Saturday: The Easter Vigil, which should always be held after dark, could be celebrated bilingually, or maybe celebrated only in English or Spanish, depending on the community. For pastoral reasons an additional Mass could be celebrated after the Easter Vigil, in either English or Spanish. The Sacramentary notes such a Mass could use the expanded Liturgy of the Word from the Vigil and should include the renewal of Baptismal promises.

X. Do we have to use broken pots, sand & cactus for the Liturgical environment during Lent?

12. NO. We do not have to create a diorama of a desert! The environment should call people to this through the scriptures; not tell them it is a "desert"! Keep it simple. A single cross with Lenten purple fabric is appropriate. Even though we don't have flowers during Lent, we don't have to replace them with "something!" Lent is about the reality that something is missing...the season calls each of us to seek out what is missing in our own journey to holiness.
13. Also, the Lenten environment for the Liturgy might be created by looking at what to take "out" of the sanctuary, thus inspiring people to reflect on what they need to take "out" of their lives. Each person should be encouraged by the environment to reflect on their own life. If items are used, please take time to READ the SCRIPTURES and prayerfully reflect before you do anything. Try to use items that are already symbols used in the liturgy on Ash Wednesday or Holy Thursday, such as ashes, the bowl and pitcher (maybe the ones that will be used Holy Thursday)
14. See GIRM #305 and Ordo page 65 for brief statements about flowers and musical instruments.

XI. On Holy Thursday does the priest have to wash the feet of 12 men?

15. The main celebrant is to wash the feet of men (adult males). Generally 12 men are selected, but the ritual does not require 12 (may be adjusted for example to accommodate a small space). In the context of the Holy Thursday liturgy, the ritual of washing the feet of men suggests that strong connection between Christ's washing His Apostles' feet and the institution of the Eucharist and Holy Orders. Christ chose on this occasion the twelve men he had chosen to be Apostles. We must conclude, then, that the ritual is intimately connected to the priesthood and the institution of the Eucharist. Its symbolism cannot be reduced to a general theme of service to the whole Church. Therefore, the priest should wash the feet of a select group of men only. Other types of "washing", i.e. washing of hands or members of the congregation washing each other's feet is not allowed. (*Decree Concerning the "Washing of the Feet" Ritual of the Holy Thursday, Alvaro Corrada, S.J., Bishop of Tyler, March 10, 2010*) Full text can be found at <http://www.dioceseoftyler.org/documents/WashingoftheFeet031810.pdf>

XII. Can a monstrance be used on Holy Thursday?

16. NO. The Blessed Sacrament is to be carried in a ciborium and placed in the closed Tabernacle at the Altar of Repose, in accord with the directives in the Sacramentary.

XIII. May the proclamation of the Gospel be replaced or supplemented by an enactment or dramatization?

17. NO. The proclamation of the Gospel is an essential part of the liturgy of the Church. The solemn reading of the Word is not to be omitted, nor is the Gospel to be treated as a narrative of a play or skit. (e.g. the proclamation of the Passion can not be replaced by a Passion play nor can the Christmas Gospel be made into a play for the children.) The Passion uniquely may be divided in parts, but it may not be dramatized. The part of Jesus should be proclaimed by the priest. The other parts can be proclaimed by clerics, Lectors, or trained lay readers. (see Ordo for Palm Sunday)

XIV. Do the Stations of the Cross require specially dedicated stations?

18. The devotion to the Stations of the Cross utilizes a series of 14 crosses setup to permit meditation of the Passion of our Lord. Formally, dedicated crosses are fixed and blessed for this purpose, either in a church or along a path. These station crosses are accompanied by images at each station to help in meditation on the Passion. The Stations may also be prayed in a classroom or other suitable place. The Stations of the Cross may also be prayed at home with the entire household or even by oneself. This is particularly appropriate for the elderly or the sick.

XV. Who can preside at the Station of the Cross devotion?

19. The Stations of the Cross is not a liturgical celebration, it is a devotion. Anyone can preside at the Stations, but as a parish family, we are an ordered assembly. It is fitting that a Priest or Deacon led the devotion and do so vested in alb and stole, (or cassock, surplice and stole). A lay person would not vest for leading devotions.

XVI. May a crucifix be venerated on Good Friday?

20. Either a cross or a crucifix may be used for veneration on Good Friday. It should be noble. That is while not ornate, it should be of high quality so as to inspire reverence. It should be of significant size to be readily seen and easily venerated. If a large number of people desire to venerate, more than one cross/crucifix may be used.

XVII. Where can I find suggestions for celebrating Lent?

21. There are many sources, the *Guidelines for Celebrating Secular Holidays during the Liturgical Year*, and the *Directive on Celebration of Mass for Catholics Completing Sacramental Initiation* issued by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission under the authorization of Bishop Corrada are two options. The documents can be found at www.dioceseoftyler.org/liturgy