

## Frequently Asked Questions on Lent

Liturgy Commission - Diocese of Tyler  
Updated February 19, 2006

What time should the Easter Vigil start this Holy Saturday, April 15, 2006?

The Vigil Mass should not start before nightfall, which is 8 PM this year in our area. (Sunset will be about 7:50 and the end of twilight 8:15)

The U.S. Naval observatory has the precise times: [www.usno.navy.mil](http://www.usno.navy.mil)

What are the Regulations for Fast and Abstinence ?-

Fasting and Abstinence are of great importance to follow Jesus and really enter into the experience of Lent. Some form of penance is especially encouraged on all Fridays throughout the year.

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 allows only one full meal and two lighter meals in the course of the day and prohibits eating between meals.

Is it permissible to have people wash hands at the Holy Thursday liturgy?

NO! One can not add innovations to the liturgy. The people have a right to experience the authentic ritual of the universal Church and in particular the ancient liturgies of the Triduum. The liturgy calls for the priest alone to wash the feet of the selected 12. (See also the FAQ below from last year)

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

Traditionally it is 12 men (males), calling to mind in a very direct way Jesus washing the feet of the 12 Apostles (See John 13). The rubrics in the Sacramentary would suggest it should be 12 men, but some parishes in the United States have the practice of using women as well as men. The rationale for using both men and women seems to shift the significance of this action from Christ's actions at the Last Supper. The men symbolize the Apostles, whereas a group of men and women has to symbolize the whole Church. The Congregation of Divine Worship and Sacraments has not reprobated the practice of using both men and women, so Bishop Corrada has allowed the practice of using men and women to continue for the present moment. It would seem appropriate that if children are used, they would be over the age of seven. Only the priest who is the main celebrant washes the feet of the 12.

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

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.)

Where can the Stations of the Cross be done?

The devotion to the Stations of the Cross utilizes a series of crosses setup to permit meditation on the Passion of our Lord. Formally, this is done with dedicated crosses that are fixed and blessed for this purpose, either in a church or along a path. Most of the time there are images at each Station Cross to help in this meditation on the Passion.

The Stations may also be done in a classroom or other suitable place.

The Stations of the Cross may also be done at home with the entire household, or even by oneself. This is particularly appropriate for the elderly or the sick.

Who can preside at the Station of the Cross devotion?

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 lead the devotion and do so vested in alb and stole. A lay person would not vest for leading devotions.

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

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 along with their Profession of the 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 Fatih Formation, March 8, 2005)

When do the people in RCIA make their First Confession?

Confession can only be celebrated by a person who has already been Baptized. Baptized candidates seeking Full Communion can approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a Catechumen when they are ready. As Elect, the Lenten season, (the period of enlightenment for the elect) is a particularly appropriate time as they are making final spiritual preparation to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation. They are free to choose the priest they confess to and to choose a suitable opportunity at either a regular scheduled time, or a special Lenten Reconciliation service, or even by appointment with a priest. Those who will be Baptized at the Easter Vigil will have all their sin 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.

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

Lent is a season characterized by penance and preparation. Traditionally there are no Weddings, etc done during Lent. For pastoral reasons, there could be a wedding, or even a Baptism done during Lent. Generally these would be done in a simpler way and not done in connection with a Sunday liturgy. Anointing of the Sick can be appropriately

done during the Lenten season as it is a Sacrament of Healing which is connected with forgiveness of sins. Generally First Communion would be better done outside of the Lenten season.

Where can I find suggestions for celebrating Lent?

There are many sources, one is the *Guidelines for Celebrating Secular Holidays during the Liturgical Year*, issued by the Diocesan Liturgical Commission under the authorization of Bishop Corrada. The document can be found at [www.dioceseoftyler.org/liturgy](http://www.dioceseoftyler.org/liturgy)

The following FAQ are reprinted from February 2, 2005

Sacramental Records for RCIA

Please note that there needs to be a record of anyone who is Received into Full Communion with the Church. This must be done 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 received there needs 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 of official record. The parish will be notified of any future sacraments are to be noted in the registry. If the parish does not have "Profession of Faith certificates" one can simply use a Baptismal Certificate, but clearly note on it Profession of Faith. (See Canon 877; Diocesan Pastoral Manual see F I c 3 page F-12. Also Baptismal records F II G page F-39.)

When should Holy Water be removed from the Fonts?

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). 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 nor liturgically, and is not to be done.

Can someone who is over the age of 7 be Baptized and then prepared for Confirmation at a later time?

NO. (See Canon 883, 885) The priest should confirm whenever he Baptizes someone who has reached the age of reason, as mandated in universal law with the Rites of Christian Initiation of Adults. The person seeking Baptism over the age of 7, should be admitted to the Catechumenate, and can then receive both marriage and burial from the Church. The person needs to be prepared for Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion, this preparation may take over a year, but at the point they are ready for Baptism, they are to be ready for the other sacraments as well. Similarly anyone who is admitted to Full Communion with the Church that is over the age of 7, should be confirmed at that time and then receive Communion. The Bishop can be consulted if in a specific case there is a special reason why an exception to this practice seems warranted.

Can a crucifix be used on Good Friday:

Either a cross or a crucifix maybe used for veneration on Good Friday. Only one cross should be used, and 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.

Can the Passion on Good Friday be replaced by a drama or by Stations of the Cross?

NO. The reading of the Passion is an essential part of the Good Friday Liturgy. One can have a Passion Play and/or Stations of the Cross at some other time, even immediately before the Good Friday Liturgy, but the Passion Play can not take the place of the proclamation of the Passion in the Liturgy of Good Friday.

What about duplicate services on the Triduum?

Holy Thursday: There should only be one celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This Mass particularly focuses on the union in the Eucharist. In a bilingual community, this Mass can be done bilingually.

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.

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.

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

NO. We do not have to create a diorama of a desert! The environment should call them to this through the scriptures; not tell them it is a "desert"!! Keep it simple. A single cross with Lenten purple fabric. 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.

Also, the Lenten environment for the Liturgy might be created by looking at what to take "out" of the sanctuary and not what to clutter it up with. Having people reflect on what they need to take "out" of their lives. What is missing from their lives is their desert experience. It is different for everyone. 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).

See GIRM #305 and it briefly states about flowers and musical instruments in the Ordo pg 51.