

**THE ORDER OF
PARALITURGICAL CELEBRATION
WITHIN THE FAMILY**

AND

**THE MEANS OF OBTAINING
INDULGENCES AND FORGIVENESS OF
SINS
DURING THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC**



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INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the Covid-19 crisis being experienced globally, precautionary measures are being put in place to mitigate the spread of the disease. One of such measures is the suspension of large gatherings, including religious ones. As a result, places of worship are being shutdown such that the faithful are no longer able to attend the celebration of the Holy Mass and other liturgical and paraliturgical activities in Churches.

Thanks to the gift of social media, arrangements have been made in many Dioceses to have live broadcasting of spiritual exercises, including the Holy Mass. The faithful are encouraged to make use of such means for their spiritual edification.

While encouraging more Dioceses to key into such arrangements of live streaming, this publication is produced as a way of making available an alternative provision for the faithful, having very specially in mind those families and communities of the faithful who are unable to afford the means of social communications through which these spiritual activities are aired or live-streamed. Dioceses are encouraged to adapt and translate this order of celebration into the various languages used within their Dioceses.

For the benefit of the faithful, this publication also contains a guide to obtaining indulgences and forgiveness of sins through various means during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic. Also contained, as an appendix, is the decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on how to celebrate the Sacred Triduum during this pandemic.

At this difficult time, the reality of families being domestic churches cannot but be emphasized. The homes of the faithful must now truly become such – domestic churches. In the words of St. Pope John Paul II,

Catholic parents must learn to form their family as a "domestic Church", *a church in the home* as it were, where God is honored, his law is respected, prayer is a normal event, virtue is transmitted by word and example, and everyone shares the hopes, the problems and sufferings of everyone else. All this is not to advocate a return to some outdated style of living: it is to return to *the roots of human development and human happiness!*

*(Homily during the Eucharistic Celebration at
Aqueduct Racecourse in Brooklyn, New York,
Friday, 6 October 1995)*

Priests – who by virtue of their sacred ordination have been configured to Christ, the Good Shepherd – are specially encouraged to find various means of being close to the faithful and to care for them as a shepherd cares for his flock, while taking necessary precautionary measures to protect themselves from being infected by the virus. Priest must imitate Christ and manifestly live out the Gospel truth that *the good shepherd never abandons his flock* (cf. John 10:11-14).

We acknowledge the fact that some of the contents of this publication have been borrowed from the wealth of the Church's spiritual treasury.

May our Lady, health of the sick, intercede for us. Amen.

Most Rev. John Ayah
Bishop of Uyo
Chairman, Pastoral Affairs Department
March 25, 2020
Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

I. THE ORDER OF PARALITURGICAL CELEBRATION WITHIN THE FAMILY

PREPARATION

Before the celebration, the following preparations should be made:

1. Set the Lectionary/Bible for the readings of the day. Having a missalet, such as *Living With Christ*, *Abide in My Word*, *Word Among us*, or other liturgical diaries will be of great help.
2. Appropriate hymns that rhyme with the liturgy of the day and foster active participation should be chosen beforehand.
3. Prior preparations should be made regarding anything that will be said that is not scripted, such as the introductory remarks, reflection on the readings, intercessions, etc.
4. It is recommended that the eldest in the family leads the celebration.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE SONG

1. An opening song is taken. All stand.

GREETING

2. **Leader:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

3. **Leader:** Blessed be the God of all consolation, who has shown us his great mercy. Bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

INTRODUCTION

4. The leader introduces the celebration in these or similar words.

We gather as a family and as a Domestic Church to express our faith in Christ Jesus. Christ himself is with us. He is always present where two or three are gathered in his name and he is present in the proclamation of God's word. As we cannot be present in Church and be united with our priest, we are unable to physically participate in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Let us, therefore, reflect on the Word of God and pray together as one family and as a Domestic Church.

Today we celebrate ... (name the particular liturgical weekday, Sunday, saint of the day or feast, in a sentence prepared beforehand.)

PENITENTIAL ACT

5. **Leader:** Dearly beloved in Christ, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to worship our Creator.

A brief pause for silence follows.

Then all recite together the formula of general confession:

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I

have done and in what I have failed to do, (and, striking their breast, they say:) through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Leader:

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

6. The Kyrie, eleison (Lord Have Mercy) invocations follow:

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

GLORIA

7. The Gloria is said on Sundays outside Lent or Advent and on feasts and Solemnities:

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,

**Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

COLLECT

8. The leader says the Collect: (The Collect of that particular day as found in the Missal should be used. If the family has no access to such prayer, another one could be prepared beforehand. In this case, the readings, feast, particular weekday or Sunday celebration should guide the composition of the prayer. The model presented below may be used).

Leader: Let us pray

(Some silence is observed during which the people offer their petitions to God. Then the leader continues with the prayer)

**Almighty ever-living God, who govern all things,
both in heaven and on earth,
mercifully hear the pleading of your people
and bestow your peace on our times.
Keep us safe from every evil and affliction
And may we remain ever faithful to you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.**

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

READINGS

9. All sit.

- The reading of the particular day as found in the Missal should be used. If the family is unable to determine the reading of the day as found in the missal, other appropriate readings from the Sacred Scriptures may be carefully chosen.
- After each reading, a brief silence is observed.
- Any family member can read.
- The sequence of the readings is as follows:
 - The First Reading
 - The Psalm
 - The Second Reading is taken on Sundays and solemnities
 - The Gospel Acclamation
 - The Gospel – this is taken by the leader

10. The Gospel

All Stand.

Leader: A Reading from the Gospel according to St. [Matthew/Mark/Luke/John].

All: Glory to You, O Lord.

At the end of the Gospel, the leader says:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

11. Reflection period: the leader can give a brief exposition of the Gospel to the family or the family can briefly discuss what the texts of the readings meant to them. After the reflection or sharing, there should be a brief period of silence to facilitate a prayerful response to the Word they have heard.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

12. After an introduction by the leader, petitions are offered for the whole Church and for the world, as well as for the local community and other needs. Members of the family may be encouraged to pray spontaneously. The following order is a model:

Leader: Gathered in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, we pray with confidence to our Father because we know he will hear our prayers.

Members of the family are invited to pray for the following intentions:

1. for the needs of the Church;
2. for the public authorities and the salvation of the whole world;
3. for Nigeria and our local community.
4. other needs;

The following prayer to end the Covid-19 outbreak is then said:

Almighty and merciful Father, who shows your love to all creation, we come before you asking for a quick control of the Coronavirus currently ravaging our world. Hear graciously the prayers we make for those affected by the virus in various parts of the world.

Grant healing to the sick, eternal life to the dead and consolation to the bereaved families. We pray that an effective medicine to combat the sickness be speedily found. We pray for the relevant Governments and Health Authorities that they take appropriate steps for the good of the people. Look upon us in your mercy and forgive us our fallings. We ask this through our Lord Jesus. Amen.

(Composed by the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar - SECAM)

Other individual intentions could be mentioned in silence. This is followed by the following:

We commend all these prayers into the hands of our Blessed Mother Mary that she may intercede for us as she did at the wedding at Cana as we say:

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

The leader concludes with the following prayer:

Leader: O God, our refuge and our strength, hear the prayers of your Church, for you yourself are the source of all devotion, and grant, we pray, that what we ask in faith we may truly obtain. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

LITURGY OF LONGING FOR COMMUNION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

13. Leader: At the Saviour's command, and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Leader: Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we wait the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All: For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

14. The family then prays the Spiritual Communion together.

**My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there**

**and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.**

HYMN TO THE LORD

15. A fitting Hymn to our Lord may be sung.

SILENCE

16. A period of silence is most appropriate so that all may praise God in silent prayer.

THE MAGNIFICAT

17. The *Magnificat* (Lk. 1:46-55) is sung or recited as a hymn of thanksgiving

**My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name.
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.
He puts forth his arm in strength
and scatters the proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty from their thrones
and raises the lowly.
He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy,
the mercy promised to our fathers,
to Abraham and his sons for ever. Amen.**

CONCLUDING PART

CONCLUDING PRAYER

18. Members of the family are to say the following prayers together:

PRAYER TO THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

Dear Guardian Angel,
Go for me to the church,
there kneel down at Mass for me.
At the Offertory, take me to God,
and offer Him my service:
What I am, what I have, offer as my gift.
At the Consecration, with your seraphic strength,
adore my Saviour truly present,
praying for those who have loved me,
for those who have offended me,
and for those now deceased,
that the blood of Jesus may purify them all.
During Holy Communion,
bring to me the Body and Blood of Jesus
uniting Him with me in spirit,
so that my heart may become His dwelling place.
Plead with Him, that through His sacrifice
all people throughout the world may be saved.
When the Mass ends,
bring home to me and to every home,
the Lord's blessing. Amen.

THE MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known
that anyone who fled to thy protection,
implored thy help, or sought thine intercession
was left unaided.
Inspired by this confidence,
I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother;
to thee do I come, before thee I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,

**despise not my petitions,
but in thy mercy hear and answer me.
Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

19. The Leader says this blessing while making the sign of the cross:

May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

DISMISSAL

20. Leader: Our celebration is ended, let us continue to love and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

CLOSING SONG

An appropriate song is taken to conclude the celebration.

II. A CALL TO FERVENT PRAYER

At a time like this, when the world is faced with the Covid-19 pandemic, all the faithful, as individuals and families, are called to exercise their faith in God and to turn to Him in fervent prayer.

Some prescribed prayers include the following:

- a. The Liturgy of the Hours – the Divine Office
- b. Prayers to the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- c. Divine Mercy to be said at 3.00am or 3.00pm
- d. The Holy Rosary
- e. Novena to Our Lady, Undoer of Knots, to St. Rita, to St. Jude and other novenas and devotions
- f. Prayer to St. Michael, the Archangel
- g. Litany of the saints
- h. Stations of the Cross
- i. Angelus at 12.00 noon and 6.00pm
- j. Psalms 23, 91, 121 - morning, afternoon and night
- k. Spontaneous Prayers

These and other prayers may be accompanied with fasting, charity to those in need and holiness of life.

Let us cry out to God, asking Him to save us from the Virus, to heal those who are down with it and to grant eternal rest to all those who have died of it.

III. THE HOLY SEE ON OBTAINING INDULGENCES AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS IN THE CURRENT PANDEMIC

PRELIMINARIES

Q1. In March, 2020, the Apostolic Penitentiary issued two documents for the good of the faithful during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic. What are these documents about?

A1. One of the documents is about the granting of special indulgences to the faithful in various circumstances during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The second document is on ways of administering the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this crisis period.

Q2. What are the titles of these two documents from the Apostolic Penitentiary?

A2. The document granting the special indulgences is titled "*Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary on the granting of special Indulgences to the faithful in the current pandemic, 20.03.2020*"; while the other document is titled "*Note from the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the current pandemic, 20.03.2020*".

ON SPECIAL INDULGENCES

Q3. What motivated the granting of the special indulgences?

A3. The granting of the special indulgences was majorly motivated by the Churches care for the sick and suffering. According to the decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary,

The Church, following the example of her Divine Master, has always had the care of the sick at heart. ... Pope Francis, too, in these recent days, has shown his paternal closeness and renewed his invitation to pray incessantly for those who are sick with the Coronavirus.

So that all those who suffer because of COVID-19, precisely in the mystery of this suffering, may rediscover "the same redemptive suffering of Christ", this Apostolic Penitentiary, *ex auctoritate Summi Pontificis*, trusting in the word of Christ the Lord and

considering with a spirit of faith the epidemic currently underway, to be lived in a spirit of personal conversion, grants the gift of Indulgences ...

Q4. What is an indulgence?

A4. "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints." (CCC 1471).

Q5. What authority does the Church have to grant indulgences?

A5. The Church's authority to grant indulgences is "by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus ..." as found in Mt. 18:18 – "Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Q6. What is meant by "temporal punishment due to sins"?

A6. Our sins bring about eternal and temporal punishments. Eternal punishment refers to eternal damnation after life on earth. Nothing can be done to relieve eternal punishment once incurred. Our sins also bring about temporal punishment which can be relieved here on earth or in purgatory. An example of temporal punishment as a result of sin is that which God inflicted on Adam and Eve (cf. Gen. 3:16-19).

Q7. What is meant by "temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven"?

A7. We find an example of this when God forgave David for his act of adultery but inflicted a penalty on him: "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.' Nathan answered David: 'For his part, the Lord has removed your sin. You shall not die, but since you have utterly spurned the Lord by this deed, the child born to you will surely die.'" (2 Sam 12:13-14)

Q8. What are the different kinds of indulgences?

A8. "An indulgence is partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin." (CCC 1471).

Q9. What kind of indulgence did the Apostolic Penitentiary grant during this Covid-19 pandemic?

A9. The Apostolic Penitentiary granted Plenary Indulgence, which brings about the remission of all the temporal punishments due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven.

Q10. Who are the beneficiaries of the special Indulgence granted by the Apostolic Penitentiary during this period of Covid-19 pandemic?

A10. The beneficiaries of the special indulgence are:

- i. The faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes.
- ii. health care workers, family members and all those who in any capacity care for those mentioned in A10 (i)
- iii. The faithful who, on the occasion of the current world epidemic, implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.
- iv. Those who, at the point of death, find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the *Viaticum*.

Q11. What are the conditions necessary to be a beneficiary of this special plenary indulgence?

A11. There are different conditions for persons in different circumstances:

- i. For those persons mentioned in A10 (i) the plenary indulgence is gained if:
 - a. they have a spirit of detachment from any sin;
 - b. they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion;
 - c. where 'b' is not possible, they recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters;
 - d. they have the will to fulfil the usual conditions of going for sacramental confession, receive the Holy Eucharistic and pray for the Holy Father's intentions, as soon as possible.

- ii. For those persons mentioned in A10 (ii), the document provides as follows:

Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the divine Redeemer: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (*Jn 15: 13*), will obtain the same gift of the *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions.

- iii. For those persons mentioned in A10 (iii), the document provides as follows:

This Apostolic Penitentiary also willingly grants a *Plenary Indulgence* under the same conditions on the occasion of the current world epidemic, also to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.

- iv. For those persons mentioned in A5 (iv) the document provides as follows:

The Church prays for those who find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the *Viaticum*, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a *Plenary Indulgence* on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended.

Q12. What are the general conditions required to gain a Plenary Indulgence?

A12. The general conditions to gain a Plenary Indulgence are as follows:

- i. have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin;
- ii. have sacramental confession
- iii. receive the Holy Eucharist
- iv. pray for the intentions of the Holy Father (by praying one Father and one Hail Mary or other forms of prayer).

Where it is impossible to immediately fulfil some of the conditions, they are to be fulfilled as soon as possible.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Q13. What motivated the Apostolic Penitentiary to issue the note on the Sacrament of Reconciliation during this Covid-19 pandemic?

A13. The motivation for issuing this note, as found in the document, is as follows: “the gravity of the present circumstances calls for reflection on the urgency and centrality of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, together with some necessary clarifications, both for the lay faithful and for ministers called to celebrate the Sacrament.”

Q14. What areas of the Sacrament of Reconciliation does this document treat?

A14. The areas of the Sacrament of Reconciliation treated by this document include: individual confession and absolution; general absolution without prior individual confession; precautionary measures confessors are to take during this pandemic; and the question of perfect contrition;

Q15. What is meant by ‘general absolution’ without prior individual confession?

A15. A general absolution without prior individual confession is that form of administering the sacrament of reconciliation that allows the minister, under given circumstances, to absolve sins of a group of penitents at once and collectively without each person having to go to confession before receiving the absolution.

Q16. Can the general absolution be used as the ordinary means of imparting absolution?

A16. No. According to canon 960, “individual and integral confession and absolution constitute the only ordinary means by which a member of the faithful who is conscious of grave sin is reconciled with God and with the Church.”

Q17. When is it permissible to impart general absolution?

A17. General absolution to many penitents without prior individual confession is used only in extra-ordinary circumstances. According to canon 961, this form of imparting absolution cannot be used unless:

- i. danger of death threatens and there is insufficient time for the priest or priests to hear the confessions of the individual penitents;
- ii. Or there exists a grave necessity (cf. canon 961, § 2), the consideration of which is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop, taking into account the criteria agreed upon with the other members of the Episcopal Conference and the supreme good of the salvation of souls (cf. canon 1752).

Q18. What happens when there is a sudden and urgent need to impart general absolution?

A18. According to the document from the Apostolic Penitentiary, “should there arise a sudden need to impart sacramental absolution to several faithful together, the priest is obliged to warn the diocesan bishop as far as possible or, if he cannot, to inform him as soon as possible.”

Q19. Why is the Apostolic Penitentiary placing emphasis on general absolution at this time?

A19. According to the document: “this Apostolic Penitentiary believes that, especially in the places most affected by the pandemic contagion and until the phenomenon recedes, the cases of serious need mentioned in can. 961, § 2 CIC above mentioned, will occur.”

Q20. In what concrete ways can the general absolution be imparted during this period of the Covid-19 pandemic?

A20. According to the document, “it is always up to the diocesan bishop to determine, in the territory of his own ecclesiastical circumscription and with regard to the level of pandemic contagion, the cases of grave necessity in which it is lawful to impart collective absolution: for example, at the entrance to hospital wards, where the infected faithful in danger of death are hospitalised, using as far as possible and with the appropriate precautions the means of amplifying the voice so that absolution may be heard.”

Q21. What is expected of each beneficiary of the general absolution?

A21. According to canon 962 §1, “for a member of the Christian faithful to validly receive sacramental absolution given to many at one time, it is required not only that the person is properly disposed but also at the same time intends to confess within a suitable period of time each grave sin which at the present time cannot be so confessed.”

Q22. Does the promotion of imparting general absolution imply that individual confession and absolution is not to be used at this time?

A22. No. Individual confession remains the ordinary means of celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation and can be used whenever it is possible.

Q23. What precautionary measures should be adopted in hearing confessions of individuals?

A23. According to the document from the Apostolic Penitentiary, “in the present pandemic emergency, it is therefore up to the diocesan bishop to indicate to priests and penitents the prudent attentions to be adopted in the individual celebration of sacramental reconciliation, such as the celebration in a ventilated place outside the confessional, the adoption of a suitable distance, the use of protective masks, without prejudice to absolute attention to the safeguarding of the sacramental seal and the necessary discretion.”

Q24. What can the faithful do when they cannot receive sacramental absolution in any form?

A24. The document from the Apostolic Penitentiary provides thus: “Where the individual faithful find themselves in the painful impossibility of receiving sacramental absolution, it should be remembered that perfect contrition, coming from the love of God, beloved above all things, expressed by a sincere

request for forgiveness (that which the penitent is at present able to express) and accompanied by *votum confessionis*, that is, by the firm resolution to have recourse, as soon as possible, to sacramental confession, obtains forgiveness of sins, even mortal ones (cf. CCC, no. 1452).”

Q25. What other exhortation is contained in the document in relation to pastorally serving the faithful?

A25. According to the document, “Consideration should be given to the need and advisability of setting up, where necessary, in agreement with the health authorities, groups of “extraordinary hospital chaplains”, also on a voluntary basis and in compliance with the norms of protection from contagion, to guarantee the necessary spiritual assistance to the sick and dying.”

IV. APPENDIX

DECREE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF EASTER FROM THE CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

IN TIME OF COVID-19

During this difficult time which we are living because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and considering the impediment to the community celebration of the liturgy in church as per the direction of Bishops for their territories, a number of queries have come to this Congregation concerning the imminent celebration of Easter. In this regard, the following general indications are offered along with some suggestions for Bishops:

1 – Concerning the date of Easter

Easter is the heart of the entire liturgical year and is not simply one feast among others. The Easter Triduum is celebrated over the arc of three days which is preceded by Lent and crowned by Pentecost and, therefore, cannot be transferred to another time.

2 – The Chrism Mass

Having evaluated the concrete situation in the different countries, the Bishop has the faculty to postpone it to a later date.

3 – Indications for the Paschal Triduum

Wherever the civil and ecclesiastical authorities have put restrictions in place, the Sacred Triduum must be celebrated in the following way:

Bishops will give indications, which have been agreed with the Episcopal Conference, so that, in the Cathedral and parish churches, though without the physical participation of the faithful, the Bishop and parish priest(s) can celebrate the liturgical mysteries of the Paschal Triduum.

The faithful should be informed of the times of the celebration so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes. On this occasion, the means of live (not recorded) televisual or internet broadcasts are helpful.

The Episcopal Conference and individual dioceses will see to it that resources are provided to support family and personal prayer.

Holy Thursday

In Cathedral and parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one responsible, the priest(s) of the parish can celebrate the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.

The faculty to celebrate Mass on this day in a suitable place, without the people, is granted in an exceptional manner to all priests. The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted.

At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers of the day (*cf. Liturgia Horarum*).

Good Friday

Good Friday, in Cathedral and parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one responsible, the Bishop/Parish Priest will celebrate the Passion of the Lord. In the Universal Prayer, the Bishop will see to it that there is a special intention for the sick, the dead, for those who feel lost or dismayed (*cf. Missale Romanum, pag. 314 n. 13*).

Easter Sunday

The Easter Vigil

Is to be celebrated only in Cathedral and parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one

responsible. At “The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium” the preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted, the Paschal Candle is lit, the procession is omitted and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) follows.

The “Liturgy of the Word” then takes place. For the “Baptismal Liturgy” the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” alone is necessary (*cf. Missale Romanum, pag. 371, n. 55*). The “Liturgy of the Eucharist” then follows.

Those who have absolutely no possibility of uniting themselves to the Paschal Vigil celebrated in a church should pray the Office of Readings for Easter Sunday (*cf. Liturgia Horarum*).

Decisions regarding monasteries, seminaries and religious communities shall be made by the Diocesan Bishop.

Expressions of popular piety and processions which enrich the days of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum can be transferred to other suitable days in the year, for example 14 and 15 September, according to the judgement of the Diocesan Bishop.

By mandate of the Supreme Pontiff, for the year 2020 only.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 19 March 2020, on the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church.

Robert Card. SARAH
Prefect

+ Arthur ROCHE
Archbishop Secretary

DECREE

IN TIME OF COVID-19 (II)

Considering the rapidly evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and taking into account observations which have come from Episcopal Conferences, this Congregation now offers an update to the general indications and suggestions already given to Bishops in the preceding decree of 19 March 2020.

Given that the date of Easter cannot be transferred, in the countries which have been struck by the disease and where restrictions around the assembly and movement of people have been imposed, Bishops and priests may celebrate the rites of Holy Week without the presence of the people and in a suitable place, avoiding concelebration and omitting the sign of peace.

The faithful should be informed of the beginning times of the celebrations so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes. Means of live (not recorded) telematic broadcasts can be of help. In any event it remains important to dedicate an adequate time to prayer, giving importance above all to the *Liturgia Horarum*.

The Episcopal Conferences and individual dioceses will see to it that resources are provided to support family and personal prayer.

1 - Palm Sunday. The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated within sacred buildings; in Cathedral churches the second form given in the Roman Missal is to be adopted; in parish churches and in other places the third form is to be used.

2 – The Chrism Mass. Evaluating the concrete situation in different countries, the Episcopal Conferences will be able to give indications about a possible transfer to another date.

3 – Holy Thursday. The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the procession is also omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. On this day the faculty to celebrate Mass in a suitable place, without the presence of the people, is exceptionally granted to all priests.

4 – Good Friday. In the Universal Prayer, Bishops will arrange to have a special intention prepared for those who find themselves in distress, the sick, the dead,

(cf. *Missale Romanum*). The adoration of the Cross by kissing it shall be limited solely to the celebrant.

5 – The Easter Vigil: Is to be celebrated only in Cathedral and parish churches. For the “Baptismal Liturgy” only the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” is maintained (cf. *Missale Romanum*).

Seminaries, houses of clergy, monasteries and religious communities shall follow the indications of this decree.

Expressions of popular piety and processions which enrich the days of Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum can be transferred to other suitable days in the year, for example 14 and 15 September, according to the judgement of the Diocesan Bishop.

De mandato Summi Pontificis pro hoc tantum anno 2020.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 25 March 2020, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

+ Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary