



Office of the Bishop  
Diocese of Saint Cloud

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Dear Pastor,

I hope you are enjoying a blessed and holy Lenten season. As you plan for the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter, I have prepared a document in consultation with our Office of Worship specifying the protocols that parishes should follow for these liturgies. These protocols are consistent with safety recommendations set forth by the Minnesota Department of Health.

The document, "Guidance for Palm Sunday and Paschal Triduum 2021," is attached to this email. Please read the document in its entirety.

The document addresses the following topics:

- **Congregational singing** — Beginning on Palm Sunday, I am permitting the return of congregational singing in a limited capacity that follows strict protocols, including the wearing of masks.
- **Hymnals** — Beginning on Palm Sunday, parishes may again use hymnals and books containing the texts of the Mass. Please see the document for guidelines regarding their use.
- **Palm Sunday** — Palms may be handed out as people enter the church or given out after Mass. The document outlines additional guidelines for the Palm Sunday liturgy.
- **Holy Thursday** — The *Mandatum* (foot washing) ritual is to be omitted.
- **Good Friday** — The document gives guidance for the veneration of the Cross and other aspects of this liturgy.
- **Easter Vigil** — The document addresses gathering at the Vigil fire, the use of candles, and protocols for baptism and confirmation at the Vigil.

I also wish to address a few other topics:

- **Masks** — It is essential to follow all of our ongoing protocols for Mass attendance, especially the wearing of masks. While the COVID situation continues to improve and more people are getting vaccinated, it is still extremely important to do all we can to slow the spread of the virus, which still poses a significant threat to the vulnerable and elderly. The use of masks is one of the best ways to do this.

As I begin a new round of confirmations at our parishes, it is essential that everyone who attends a confirmation wear a mask as required by our diocesan protocols (with a few, very limited exemptions for young children and people with special medical conditions that prevent mask use). I ask parishes to have extra masks available to give to those who arrive at a confirmation Mass without one.

• **Adoration Chapels** — Up to now, in the interest of safety, I have limited the number of people who can be in parish adoration chapels to 2 people. Beginning on Palm Sunday, I am removing that limit. These chapels should follow the diocese's other protocols for worship: attendance limited to 50% of total chapel capacity, masks must be worn at all times, and social distancing guidelines must be followed. When possible, doors to chapels should remain open for better ventilation. Please be mindful that the longer someone spends in a smaller, enclosed space with others, the greater the risk of exposure to the virus.

If you have any questions regarding the protocols for Palm Sunday and the Paschal Triduum, please contact Aaron Carpenter, director of the Office of Worship, at [acarpenter@gw.stcdio.org](mailto:acarpenter@gw.stcdio.org) or 320-255-9068.

Please know of my continued prayers for you and for the people of our diocese.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

  
+Donald J. Kettler  
Bishop, Diocese of Saint Cloud