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Adaptations to Holy Week Ceremonies because of COVID

Hello Everyone,

As we look ahead to the ceremonies of Holy Week, some have asked whether some adjustments would still be appropriate in view of the continuing need to reduce the impact of Covid. I propose that we adopt the same provisions as last year in regard to Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

The Mass of **Holy Thursday** usually includes the **Washing of Feet** after the homily and a **Procession with the Blessed Sacrament** to “a place of repose”. In line with directions given by the Congregation for Divine Worship for the time of pandemic, the Washing of Feet and the Procession with the Blessed Sacrament **may be omitted**. The Congregation has indicated that the Blessed Sacrament could simply be taken to the tabernacle after communion as usual. This would not rule out providing some time for people to stay for **quiet prayer after the Mass**, as is the custom particularly on Holy Thursday.

For **Good Friday**, the Congregation for Divine Worship provided a prayer related to the time of pandemic. This prayer can be added to the Solemn Intercessions, between the usual ninth and tenth prayers. The text is on the next page, under the heading “For the afflicted in time of pandemic”. The Good Friday ceremony includes **Veneration of the Cross**. Once again, I propose that people be invited to come forward to venerate the cross by **bowing before the cross** rather than by touching or kissing the cross.

I also note **several general provisions** that go beyond Holy Week. I remind everyone of the directive that, during this time of pandemic, **communion should be received in the hand** rather than on the tongue. Also, while Covid is still occurring frequently in the community, there should be **no sharing of the chalice**, those distributing Holy Communion should use **hand sanitiser** prior to distribution and **not touch anyone when giving a blessing**, and **holy water fonts should still be empty**.

May the peace of Christ be with us all as we continue our journey through Lent and come to celebrate Holy Week and Easter.

God bless you all.

Bishop Paul

Additional Intercession for Good Friday

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.