



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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April 1, 2020
Wednesday of Passiontide

Dear Brother Priests and Pastoral Administrators:

In previous letters or memoranda to you dated March 12, 2020, March 17, 2020, March 20, 2020, and March 27, 2020, I wished to encourage you in your dedicated ministry to Jesus Christ and His people, as well as offer you guidance in a number of pastoral and sacramental areas of parochial life. I take this opportunity to renew my prayers and gratitude to you and your staffs for your cooperation as we continue to deal with the tragic effects of the Coronavirus Disease. United in prayer, let us continue to ask for the intercession of Mary, whom Pope Francis referred to as “Health of the People and Star of the Stormy Sea,” that the world may soon be free of this pandemic and its very painful effects.

As promised, I wish to offer some ongoing clarifications to you as some questions have arisen. In particular, please note that the 10-point New York State “PAUSE” Executive Order remains in effect, having been extended through April 15, 2020, so **there are to be no gatherings or assemblies of the faithful. All ceremonies are to occur without the faithful present.**

1. **Palm Sunday:** As addressed in my letter of March 27, 2020, kindly be reminded that the following is reiterated:

“Blessed palms *may* be made available during the week, in a prudent manner that respects travel and gathering restrictions.”
Priests and Pastoral Administrators are to prudently determine if times, locations and methods are possible for palms to be made available, while ensuring appropriate social distancing and that the faithful do not assemble. Multiple locations, as well as tables inside and at the entrance of the church, may be beneficial. If there is a well-founded concern that this is not possible, the palms should not be made available at this time. Blessed palms may be saved at the parish for distribution at a later date after the travel and gathering restrictions are lifted.”

Any distribution of palms must respect and follow this restriction while also maintaining social distancing. **If circumstances are such that the distribution of palms is not feasible, per the March 27th Memorandum they may be properly stored and distributed at a later date, when restrictions are lifted.**

2. **The Chrism Mass** will occur on Tuesday, April 7th, at 6:00 p.m., without the faithful present. The *Catholic Courier* will stream this Mass. Priests are asked to watch via livestream so even in this limited way, we may be united in prayer as a presbyterate. Regarding the holy oils, the Deans will pick up the oils from the Cathedral of the

Sacred Heart for all parishes within their respective Deanery and who will make them available to their parishes. A directive has been sent to the Deans. As in previous years, the three oils will be provided in a Ziplock bag in clearly marked containers. Pastors / administrators should inform their Dean no later than Monday, April 6th, identifying the number of sets of oil containers needed. Oils blessed and consecrated at the 2019 Chrism Mass may continue to be used until the new oils are received.

3. **Good Friday:** Today, April 1, 2020, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has issued an additional version of the intercession that can be used with the Solemn Intercessions on Good Friday. (See attached).
4. **Weddings:** At this time, weddings may be celebrated; however, no more than 10 people may be in attendance and must strictly follow the precautions stated in previous instructions. A simplified form of the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass* is to be used and social distancing must be maintained by those in attendance. **N.B.** In accord with the State of New York's PAUSE Executive Order, many, if not all city/town offices are now closed, and marriage licenses are not available. Marriages are not to be witnessed without a marriage license. Couples also should be advised that at any time additional restrictions may be forthcoming from local, state or federal governments.
5. **Accessibility of Churches:** As recent as March 20, 2020, we received clarification from state officials through the New York State Catholic Conference that that **"churches can remain open for personal prayer but not congregant services."** As of today, this remains.
6. **Abstinence from Meat on Fridays during Lent:** The faithful of the Diocese of Rochester are granted a dispensation from the law of abstinence from meat on the Fridays of Lent for this year in an effort to assist people who may have difficulties in shopping for food or other reasons which would make this practice difficult at this time. Fridays of Lent remain days of penance and prayer, which unite us ever closer to Jesus Christ. **N.B.** Please note that abstinence from meat on Good Friday is universal law and no dispensation can be granted.
7. **Mass in Time of Pandemic:** Pope Francis has granted permission for a Mass in Time of Pandemic to be offered on any day *except* Solemnities, the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, days within the Octave of Easter, the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day), Ash Wednesday and the days of Holy Week (cf. *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 374), for the duration of the pandemic. More information will be communicated in a separate memorandum.
8. **Diocesan Offices:** Please be reminded that our diocesan offices, while physically closed, will be available to the extent possible. Offices of the Pastoral Center may still be contacted by email and/or telephone using the auto attendant; while most employees are working remotely, emails and calls will be returned as soon as possible but communication should be limited to important or urgent matters due to our present limitations and restrictions. We continue to regularly monitor this situation and updates will be provided.

Knowing your genuine love and pastoral care for your people, I understand how difficult these restrictions are for us all. However, local, state and federal governments have put these restrictions in place for the welfare of the entire community. We make these sacrifices also in service to the Community and recommending to the faithful the benefits of Spiritual Communion as described herein:

*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 in 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.*

In closing, with every question that comes to me, I see behind that question a dedicated priest or pastoral administrator who seeks to comfort the people in your care. United to Jesus upon the cross, we hand over to Him the pain that is ours as we behold God's people yearning for Him. Yet, my brother priests, we can stand at the altar each day and celebrate Holy Mass for the intentions of our people. The power emanating from each Mass is not our power, but the power of Christ to embrace His people even from afar with His Sacred Heart with love unbounded.

Assuring you of my gratitude and continued prayers and longing with you for the peace of the Risen Christ, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Salvatore R. Matano
The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester

-with attachment-

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 thy 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.

ENGLISH

Prot. N. 155/20

DECREE
on the special intention to be added to the Solemn Intercessions
during the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord
for the year 2020 only

The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday this year has a particular significance because of the terrible pandemic that has stricken the whole world.

Indeed, on the day on which we celebrate the redeeming passion and death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, who like a slain lamb has taken upon himself the suffering and sin of the world, the Church raises her voice in prayer to God the Father Almighty for all humanity, and in particular for those who suffer most, while she awaits in faith the joy of the resurrection of her Spouse.

Therefore this Congregation, in virtue of the faculties granted to it by the Supreme Pontiff FRANCIS, availing itself of a possibility already granted in the Roman Missal to the Diocesan Bishop in a situation of grave public need, proposes an intention to be added to the Solemn Intercessions of the above mentioned celebration, so that the prayers of those who invoke him in their tribulation might reach God the Father and so that, even in their adversity, all can experience the joy of his mercy.

The text of the invitation and the prayer is attached to this Decree.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 30 March 2020.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

✠ Arthur Roche
Archbishop Secretary

FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

The Solemn Intercessions

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.

Prot. N. 155/20

DECRETO
sobre la intención especial para añadir en la Oración Universal
durante la Celebración de la Pasión del Señor
en el año 2020

La Celebración de la Pasión del Señor en el Viernes Santo tiene este año una característica particular por la terrible pandemia que afecta al mundo.

En efecto, el día en el que celebramos la pasión y muerte redentora de Jesucristo en la cruz, que, como Cordero degollado, cargó sobre sí el dolor y el pecado del mundo, la Iglesia eleva súplicas a Dios Padre omnipotente por toda la humanidad, particularmente por los que más sufren, mientras espera con fe el gozo de la resurrección de su Esposo.

Por tanto, esta Congregación, en virtud de las facultades concedidas por el Sumo Pontífice FRANCISCO, haciendo uso de una posibilidad ya concedida en el Misal Romano al obispo diocesano en una grave necesidad pública, propone una intención para añadir en la Oración universal de la mencionada celebración, a fin de que lleguen hasta Dios Padre las súplicas de quienes lo invocan en su tribulación, para que todos sientan en sus adversidades el gozo de su misericordia.

Se une a este decreto el texto de la invitación y de la oración.

No obstante cualquier disposición contraria.

En la sede de la Congregación para el Culto Divino y la Disciplina de los Sacramentos, a 30 de marzo de 2020.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefecto

✠ Arthur Roche
Arzobispo Secretario

VIERNES SANTO EN LA PASIÓN DEL SEÑOR

Oración universal

IX b. Por quienes sufren en tiempo de epidemia

Oremos también por todos los que sufren las consecuencias de la epidemia actual: para que Dios Padre conceda la salud a los enfermos, fortaleza al personal sanitario, consuelo a las familias y la salvación a todas las víctimas que han muerto.

Oración en silencio. Prosigue el sacerdote:

Dios todopoderoso y eterno,
singular protector de la enfermedad humana,
mira compasivo la aflicción de tus hijos
que padecen esta epidemia;
alivia el dolor de los enfermos,
da fuerza a quienes los cuidan,
acoge en tu paz a los que han muerto
y, mientras dura esta tribulación,
haz que todos
puedan encontrar alivio en tu misericordia.
Por Jesucristo, nuestro Señor.

R/. Amen.