



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Priests and Pastoral Administrators

From: Bishop Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop of Rochester

Date: March 27, 2020, *Friday of the Fourth Week of Lent*

Re: Guidance for Palm Sunday with limitations imposed during this time of COVID-19, the Coronavirus Disease

In response to additional information received yesterday, March 26, 2020, from the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, concerning Holy Week during this time of COVID-19, the Coronavirus Disease, it should be noted that for **Palm Sunday**, which is to be celebrated **without the presence of the faithful**:

“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.**” (emphasis added).

The “third form: the simple entrance” does not include a blessing of palms. However, the blessing of palms, again without the presence of the faithful, may occur **separate from** the Palm Sunday Mass this year in parishes wishing to bless palms. The formula provided in the *Roman Missal* is to be used.

The provisions set forth in my March 20, 2020 letter to you about the availability of palms to the faithful remain, namely that “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.