

PRESBYTERIUM MEETING

6 February 2023

Isabel, Leyte

LITURGY UPDATES, REMINDERS and OTHER MATTERS

1. CBCP

- a. last October 2022, the CBCP has encouraged the faithful to return to physical participation in Masses
- b. February 11 is World Day of Prayer for the Sick
- c. during the latest CBCP gathering (January 2023), CBCP declared an official end to the Oratio Imperata against Covid 19 and it will be replaced with an Oratio Imperata of Thanksgiving February 11 until February 22 (Ash Wednesday).

2. RCAP CONCERNS

- a. Statutes of Mission stations – this has already been reviewed in the vicariates and by the Judicial Vicar; and it is due for official signing of the archbishop.
- b. Document on Co-Pastorship – for vicariate discussion and feedback
- c. Statutes of the Parish Finance Council – to be updated. For discussion in the vicariates
- d. Guidelines for Announcements – for implementation
- e. Guidelines for Lent and Holy Week 2023

BASIC PRINCIPLES / CONSIDERATIONS

1. Since we are already out of the grave threat of the pandemic, all our church activities should be back to normal, i.e. to pre-pandemic times. However, for parishes who still continue sharing their liturgies via live streaming, you may continue doing so, but with the strong admonition that online liturgies are never a substitute for actual participation in the liturgy; it is only for those who are prevented due to health and advance in year.

In the preparation and planning of the Lenten and Holy Week activities and even the program, three important Church Documents should be followed: General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (GNLYC, 1969), The Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts (Paschalis Solemnitatis, 1988), and the Roman Missal (3rd ed., 2002, especially the Order of Holy Week).

2. GNLYC 28: the purpose of Lent is two-fold:

to prepare those will receive baptism and for those who are already baptized, to renew their baptism (through penitential acts)

How:

1. for the unbaptized, catechumenate or intensive catechesis
 - for those who have candidates for baptism on Easter Vigil, it would be good if we follow the Order of the RCIA, especially in the presentation of the catechumens or the candidates for baptism on the First Sunday of Lent.

2. for the baptized, Penitential acts (fasting and abstinence) and reception of the sacrament of reconciliation (confession).

- again it is worth mentioning that among the commandments of the church are the precepts to confess one's sins at least once a year and to receive Holy Communion during Easter time. This is actually the reason why we give retreats and administer the sacrament of confession and even celebrate sacramental marriages for those who are already cohabiting (the purpose of which is to enable them also to fulfil the precept of the church to receive Holy Communion during Eastertime).

3. Preparatory Rite / Celebration – Rite of Palm to Ashes. This should be celebrated before Ash Wednesday, either on the Sunday before or on the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday/

4. Solemnities and other celebrations during Lent

1. *St. Joseph*: March 20 is a Monday.

2. *The Annunciation*: The Solemnity of the Annunciation will be on March 25, a Saturday.

Memorials:

3. *St. Pedro Calungsod*: This year 2023, the Memorial may be celebrated on April 1 (since April 2 is already Palm Sunday)

4. *St. Vincent Ferrer*: April 5 is Holy Wednesday (hence the Mass in his honor cannot be celebrated on this day); you can only use the Proper Mass formulary on April 17, the Monday after Easter Week.

ON PARTICULAR CELEBRATIONS

A. Ash Wednesday

1. The imposition of the ashes may be done either by places or sprinkling ashes on the crown of the head or by marking the forehead; in the latter case, the ashes are mixed with a little chrism or blessed oil.

- Question: can we commission the Lay Presiders to administer the imposition of ashes in the barangays? Yes, on two conditions: first, they should not bless the ashes (but the ashes should have been first blessed the priest preferably the first parish Mass in the morning; and secondly, the rite should be preceded by the celebration of the Word and there is not communion Rite after it.

B. Celebration of the Sacrament of Confession / Reconciliation and Lenten Retreats or Recollections

1. Confession should be made available to all. And so, parishes should have a regular schedule for confessions, including the chapels.

2. The practice of *Kumpisalang Bayan* – when many are expected to go to confessions – should first start with a penitential rite (even a short one).
3. To safeguard the integrity of the sacrament, the use of the electronic devices (video or phone) and writing pads / paper should be avoided.
4. In case a general absolution is given, a Penitential Rite should be celebrated and the conditions should be observed and made known to all, especially the obligation to confess mortal or serious sins once individual confessions are available.

C. Holy Week Activities

- a. there is no substitute for planning.
- b. we should be able to distinguish what is officially liturgical and what is popular (or purely devotional). We should never abandon the official liturgy for a purely devotional practice.
- c. in planning, we have to strike a healthy balance between the two aspects (the official and popular) in order to further help the faithful in their spiritual disposition
- d. we should never introduce activities or even substitute old religious practices with newer practices without fully understanding the historical background of an older practice and their implications (e.g. when the Holy Wednesday procession of the Passion which supposedly ended the Lenten days was abandoned, another activity was introduced; in Palo, a procession on “the search of Judas” was introduced which later was abandoned because of its dubious and purely invented origin), nor should we just outrightly dismiss even a supposedly “superstitious” practice connected with the Lenten observance (e.g. the belief not to take a bath on Good Friday which actually was a form of penance for people whose fasting and abstinence, as understood canonically, would not have great impact since in the first place they only have meagre food and seldom eat meat).

1. Palm Sunday

- a. First Form of the Blessing of Palms is recommended in the Main parish Mass. As noted earlier, the priest can bless palms in other masses in the parish.
- b. Lay ministers are not allowed to bless the palms. Because blessed palms are considered as sacramental; people place them in their altar and even doors as a religious symbol.
- c. The proclamation of the Passion Narrative in the main parish mass should be done in the traditional way – different parts are assigned to different lectors with the priest taking the part of Jesus.

2. Holy Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

- a. Aside from the masses allowed on these days, our churches should be open for the faithful to avail of the sacrament of Confession and for other devotional practices including the *Visita Iglesia*.

b. After the last mass on Holy Wednesday, all consecrated hosts should have been consumed, i.e., the tabernacle should be empty.

3. Holy Thursday

a. Morning Prayer on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday should be celebrated with the people. Nowadays, people have a great interest in the Office of the Tenebrae which is basically the celebration of the Office of the Readings and Morning Praise.

b. The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral on Holy Thursday, April 6, 2023 at nine thirty in the morning. All priests working the Archdiocese of Palo are required to attend.

c. The Mass of the Lord's Supper can only be celebrated starting at five in the afternoon, not earlier.

d. The washing of the feet can now be done to both men and women.

-cf. January 2016 Decree of the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments: "Pastors of the Church may choose the participants in the rite from among all the members of the People of God."

- The Mandatum is a ritualization of a meaning of the Eucharist, it is important that we start doing away with a "dramatization" of that event, especially in new parishes and mission stations. This activity should make people understand concretely what the Eucharist is all about.

In the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper, two explanatory Rites have been inserted – the washing of the feet and the offertory procession of the gifts for the poor (which by the way in a "requisite" in the Mass; it is only in this mass, that an offertory antiphon is given: "ubi caritas").

e. The place of Reposition for the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament which follows the Mass of the Lord's Supper or the Visita Iglesia should accommodate a large number of people.

4. Good Friday

a. The Meditation of the Lord's Passion (*Siete Palabras*) may be given inside or outside the church.

b. The celebration of the Lord's Passion can only be celebrated at three in the afternoon. Please take note that the Pontifical Collection on this day is for the Holy Land.

c. The procession of the Holy Burial (*Santo Entierro*) follows the Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion. Although this is not found in the official Roman Missal, in our country this has already acquired an official status. This is in fact a ritualization of the article of faith "Christ has died."

5. Holy Saturday

Considered as aliturgical, the communal celebration of Morning Praise or Lauds is only liturgy that is recommended in morning Holy Saturday. Parishes should celebrate the Office of the Readings and the

Lauds. There is no problem with having a Way of the Cross on that morning, but we should never abandon the Office Readings and Lauds.

6. Easter Vigil

- a. For the Order of the Easter Vigil, as well as in other Holy Week Liturgies, it is important to follow the order or parts and labels/headings given in the Roman Missal, not just follow what has been printed in previous parish programs (e.g. the four major parts of the Easter Vigil: Lucernarium, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of Baptism and Liturgy of the Eucharist). This helps the people in understanding better what transpires in the liturgy.
- b. The Easter Vigil is celebrated at nightfall, when it is already pitch dark.
- c. For a richer and fuller celebration, there should be a celebration of baptism on the very night. The newly baptized is the image of the NEW MAN. However, the Blessing of Water should never be omitted.
- d. The *Sugat* is officially the Entrance Rite of the first Mass of Easter Sunday in the Philippines.
- e. Easter Octave / Easter Week is one Great Easter celebration. The Mass of the Day is celebrated like a Sunday.

7. Other Liturgy Concerns

- a. ALL should STAND for the singing of the Alleluia; unless one is the Presider who first has to place incense in the thurible while sitting, all priests stand as the singing of the Alleluia starts.
- b. In special celebrations and there is need for singing (but because of some constraint, on the part of the community or the presider), at least the following should be sung: Alleluia, Sanctus and Great Amen. The entrance and communion antiphons, provided in the mass formulary, may just be recited.
- c. The Mass should never be considered a setting for other activities; let it stand out as it is. This is root of the problem with the many insertions in the masses – including announcements and awarding ceremonies, and even special blessings, etc. All these extra activities could be done outside, either before or after the Mass.