



DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF WORSHIP

Reminders for the Season of Lent 2025

*This is a supplement to the "Precepts for Celebrating the Liturgical Calendar."
Please refer to that document for more complete information regarding the Season of Lent.*

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday will be celebrated on March 5, 2025. "On Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, which is observed everywhere as a fast day, ashes are distributed." (General Instruction of the Roman Missal, nos. 27-29)

Ashes are blessed and imposed after the homily. These ashes are of branches of the olive tree, or, according to custom, of the palm tree or other trees, which have been blessed the previous year.

Apart from Mass, a Liturgy of the Word precedes the rite of blessing, concluding with general intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, a concluding prayer, a blessing, and a hymn (see Book of Blessings, nos. 1656-1678).

The ordinary minister for the blessing of ashes is a priest or deacon. Others (e.g., extraordinary ministers of holy communion) may assist with the imposition of ashes where there is genuine need, especially for the sick and shut-ins. One of the following formulas is used:

"Repent, and believe in the Gospel."

or

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Administration of Ashes

Ashes may be imposed on a person's forehead in the usual manner or by means of the European custom of sprinkling ashes on the crown of a person's head. Advance notice and catechesis that these options are allowable by the ritual should be communicated to parishioners prior to Ash Wednesday.

The Season of Lent

“Lent is ordered to preparing for the celebration of Easter, since the Lenten liturgy prepares for celebration of the Paschal Mystery both catechumens, by the various stages of Christian Initiation, and the faithful, who recall their own Baptism and do penance.

The forty days of Lent run from Ash Wednesday up to but excluding the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. From the beginning of Lent until the Paschal Vigil, the *Alleluia* is not said or sung. (Hymns that include the word “Alleluia” are also not to be used.)

Abstinence

All Catholics who have reached their 14th birthday are bound to abstain totally from meat on the following days: Ash Wednesday, all Fridays of Lent and Good Friday.

Fasting

All Catholics between their 18th and 59th birthdays are also bound to observe the Law of Fast on the following days: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. This practice involves limiting oneself to a single full meal and avoiding food between meals. Light sustenance may be taken on two other occasions in the course of the day.

Easter Duty

After they have been initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist, all the faithful are bound by the obligation of receiving Communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season, unless for a good reason it is fulfilled at another time during the year. This obligation may be fulfilled between March 9, 2025 (First Sunday of Lent) and June 15, 2025 (Trinity Sunday).

Baptism

There is no universal rule that would forbid the practice of baptism during Lent. However, given that Lent is traditionally focused on the preparation for baptism, many parish families have policies that discourage it. This is left to the discretion of the pastor / staff.

Holy Matrimony

While weddings may be celebrated during the Season of Lent (except for the Sundays of Lent), the priest/ deacon preparing the couple should make the couple aware of the special nature of the proposed date for celebration and its penitential character. They should be discouraged from too much pomp or display. (See *Order of Celebrating Holy Matrimony* no. 32)

Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)

The use of the new *Order* is mandatory as of March 5, 2025 (Ash Wednesday). Formation sessions for clergy, team members and others responsible for OCIA ministries will be held throughout the remainder of the year. The first sessions in regard to Lent will be held virtually on February 25, 2025. Please contact the Office of Worship to register. To stay up to date, OCIA ministers should visit <https://tinyurl.com/BufaloOCIATeam> to update their contact information.

The Rite of Election will occur on the First Sunday of Lent, March 9, 2025, at 3:00 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral in the context of a Liturgy of the Word. The Rite of Sending should be celebrated in the context of regular parish Masses. Catechumens and Candidates are required to register via <https://tinyurl.com/BufaloRiteOfElection/>

Scrutinies seek to remove all obstacles to holistic conversion of the elect (unbaptized) and deepen their resolve to bind themselves to Christ, to carry out their mission to love God above all else. (They are distinctly offered for the elect, not our candidates.)

The Scrutinies must be celebrated with the congregation of your Family of Parishes on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. Any dispensation from them requires the permission of the Bishop. (Please email worship@buffalodiocese.org with details and questions/concerns.)

Year A readings with appropriate chants are used. The *Roman Missal* contains specific orations and prefaces suited to these celebrations. (See *Roman Missal*, “Ritual Masses: 2. For the Celebration of the Scrutinies”)

If anyone over the age of reason is to be baptized, then all the Sacraments of Initiation are to be celebrated at once. They may not be delayed or separated in any way (i.e. First Communion for a 9- or 10-year old in May instead of at the Easter Vigil). The only adaptation made is in the style/age-appropriate level of catechesis; these “younger adults” will receive the sacraments along with the other elect.

Forms will be distributed from the chancery for pastors to request the faculty to Confirm those baptized in the Catholic Church, in accord with Canons 883 and 884.

The Presentation of the Creed takes place in the Third Week of Lent; The Presentation of the Lord’s Prayer takes place in the Fifth Week Lent. Both would preferably be completed with a community of faithful present, within Mass. Please note that, according to the rite, the proclamation of these sacred texts is the method of reception, not a scroll or other written form.

Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens may be done in the period of the Catechumenate, prior to the Rite of Election. Anointing may be used whenever it seems beneficial—at a milestone of discernment, experience of weakness or weariness in faith or life, when faith is challenged, or entering into final discernment for baptism. *Please note that unlike infant baptism, this oil is not used at the time of baptism.*

Scheduling Notes for Lent and Easter 2025

- Sunday, March 9, 2025 — The Rite of Election — 3:00 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral

Catechumens and Candidates are required to register by March 5th via <https://tinyurl.com/BuffaloRiteOfElection>

- Tuesday, April 15, 2025 — Chrism Mass — 7:00 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral

****** Please empty, clean, and return your oil bottle set as you enter the Cathedral. Thank you to those who have already returned their bottles. A new set will be issued this year, and the current set will be reused next year.**

- Sunset will be at approximately 8:00 PM on Saturday, April 19, 2025. This means that the Easter Vigil should not begin before 8:30 PM.
- Please note that weddings are not permitted from Thursday, April 17, 2025 through Sunday, April 27, 2025 (the Triduum and Octave of Easter).
- Monday, June 9, 2025, the Monday after Pentecost, is the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. (See usccb.org/motherofthechurch)

Holy Week in Families of Parishes

Now that all Families of Parishes have formed in the Diocese of Buffalo, there are some important considerations/adaptations to the liturgical celebrations of Holy Week and Easter that should be considered.

Morning Prayer during the Triduum

As is custom, many parishes opt to celebrate Morning Prayer as a chance for the community to gather, distinct from the major celebrations of the Triduum. However, no other Masses should be celebrated apart from the Mass of the Lord's Supper, Solemn Service on Good Friday and Easter Vigil (which constitutes one liturgy). Please keep this in mind should a funeral arise during this time. Please remember that "Communion Services" are no longer allowed except in the case of emergency on Sundays. Likewise, the reception of Communion should not be combined with Morning Prayer on these sacred days.

Celebrating the Triduum in a Family of Parishes

When two or more parishes come together for the celebration of the Triduum, a number of liturgical issues arise since this is not what is envisioned by the *Roman Missal*. When gathering a Family of Parishes into a single worshipping community for the Church's high-point of the liturgical year, the Triduum, it is important to do so with care and attentiveness to liturgical law and principles. These are learning experiences for us all. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Worship.

It is recommended that in places where a priest has responsibility of several smaller parishes, the entire Triduum should be carried out in the principal parish, but this may be determined by many factors (capacity, parking, etc.)

Of course, each parish church may have celebrations on Easter Sunday morning, celebrate the Sacrament of Penance on Good Friday or celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours or devotional practices outside of the liturgy (e.g. stations of the cross).

The principal liturgies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil to be celebrated in *one* of the churches. While this means that the celebrations may change locations throughout the Triduum, the ideal would be to celebrate one liturgy each day.

This is particularly true on Holy Thursday. As stated in the *Roman Missal*, “Thursday of the Lord’s Supper At the Evening Mass #1”:

The Mass of the Lord’s Supper is celebrated in the evening, at a convenient time, with the full participation of the whole local community and with all the Priests and ministers exercising their office.

That is, a Family of Parishes should schedule one celebration of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, with all priests assigned concelebrating at one Mass. The *mandatum* or Washing of the Feet should include representatives from each of the parishes within the Family.

Altar of Repose

The rites presume that the Eucharist is normally reserved in churches in a separate Blessed Sacrament chapel. The procession with the Eucharist therefore leaves from the altar and goes to the chapel of repose, where the liturgy concludes. If a church does not have a blessed sacrament chapel, one should be set up for the occasion in the best way possible.

In a Family of Parishes, the procession may proceed to a different church within the family. However, *only one altar of repose should be set up per family*. Processions should not “split” into multiple places of repose merely to facilitate traditional devotional customs like the visitation of seven churches. Chapels of repose should remain open until midnight.

Good Friday

Preparations for the Mass of the Lord’s Supper should, as always, anticipate enough Eucharist to be consecrated for the Solemn Service of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday. As with the other celebrations, one Solemn Service should be planned. Please recall that the Triduum is one continuous liturgy and, as such, a deacon may not serve as presider/principal celebrant at the Solemn Service.

Multiple Paschal Candles

“The Roman Missal, not envisioning the pastoral situation of mission churches or cluster parishes, specifies that only one paschal candle is used. To accommodate the particular circumstances, the Secretariat of Divine Worship might suggest that the candles from the mission churches or other parish churches could be present at the Easter Vigil, having been prepared in advance, and blessed alongside the main candle (perhaps having deacons or other representatives holding them).

In keeping with the rubrics, *for the lighting and procession only one candle should be lit* (the principal one, i.e. the one which will remain in that particular church).

As the candles of the congregation are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. *The paschal candles of other churches are not to be processed.* Once all the congregational candles are extinguished after the singing of the *Exsultet*, the other paschal candles are extinguished and put aside.

On Easter Sunday morning, those paschal candles could be taken to each of the other parishes where they will be kept and carried (lit) in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary.” (from USCCB Secretariat on Divine Worship)

Unity of the Celebration of the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil

“According to the ancient practice preserved in the Roman liturgy itself, an adult may not be baptized without receiving Confirmation immediately after Baptism, unless very serious reasons stand in the way. The same is true in the Diocese of Buffalo for children of catechetical age (See *OCIA* nos. 215, 14). Please contact the Office of Worship if there are questions in regard to specific pastoral circumstances.

Sacramental Record Keeping

Please refer to the recently updated diocesan policies for sacramental record keeping. Recall that regardless of parish of registration or affiliation, the sacraments celebrated at the Easter Vigil are to be recorded *only* in the sacramental registers of the church where they occur. They may be noted electronically in the parish of registration, but should not be cross-referenced in any other written sacramental registers.

For questions or clarifications on any of the above, please contact the Office of Worship at (716) 847-5545 or worship@buffalodiocese.org.