

**THE LITURGY OF HOLY WEEK  
AND THE PASCHAL TRIDUUM**

<b>PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD’S PASSION</b>	
<i>Missale Romanum (abbreviated rubrics)</i>	<i>Paschales Solemnitatis (excerpts)</i>
<p>On this day the church recalls the entrance of Christ the Lord into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal Mystery.</p> <p>The memorial of this entrance of the Lord takes place at all Masses in these expressions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Procession during the principal mass, on Sunday or even Saturday evening. (This is done only once.)</li> <li>2. The Solemn Entrance in all other Masses for the day.</li> <li>3. The Simple Entrance may be done as well. However, there is no blessing of palms when this rite is used.</li> </ol> <p><u>The Commemoration of the Lord’s Entrance into Jerusalem</u></p> <p><u>First Form: The Procession</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At an appropriate hour, a gathering takes place at a smaller church or other suitable place other than inside the church to which the procession will go.</li> <li>2. The faithful hold branches in their hands.</li> <li>3. Priests (and deacons) wear red sacred vestments as for Mass.</li> <li>4. Instead of the chasuble, the priest may wear a cope, which he leaves aside when the procession is over, and puts on a chasuble.</li> <li>5. Introductory Rite:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1. Sign of the Cross</li> <li>5.2. Greeting</li> <li>5.3. Introductory words</li> </ol> </li> <li>6. Blessing of Palms             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1. Prayer of Blessing over the palms</li> <li>6.2. Sprinkling with Holy Water</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Holy Week begins on Passion (or Palm) Sunday, which joins the foretelling of Christ’s regal triumph and the proclamation of the passion. The connection between both aspects of the paschal mystery should be shown and explained in the celebration and catechesis of this day.</p> <p>The commemoration of the entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem has, according to ancient custom, been celebrated with a solemn procession, in which the faithful in song and gesture imitate the Hebrew children who went to meet the Lord, singing “Hosanna.”</p> <p><u>The procession may take place only once, before the Mass that has the largest attendance, even if this should be in the evening of either Saturday or Sunday.</u></p> <p><u>The palms or branches are blessed so that they can be carried in the procession.</u><sup>3</sup> The palms should be taken home, where they will serve as a reminder of the victory of Christ, which they celebrated in the procession.</p> <p>Pastors should make every effort to ensure that this procession in honor of Christ the King be so prepared and celebrated that it is of great spiritual significance in the life of the faithful.</p> <p><u>The Missal, in order to commemorate the entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem, in addition to the solemn procession described above, gives two other forms, not simply for convenience, but to provide for those situations when it will not be possible to have the procession.</u></p> <p>The passion narrative occupies a special place. <u>It should be sung or read in the traditional way, that is, by three persons who take the part of</u></p>

<sup>3</sup> Reason why the palms are not blessed after the mass or any time outside of the mass.

- 6.3. Gospel Proclamation of the Lord's entrance into Jerusalem (the Gospel Book may be used, incense may be used)
- 6.4. Brief homily
7. The Procession: sequence
  - 7.1. Thurifer/boat bearer
  - 7.2. Processional Cross (may be decorated with palms)
  - 7.3. Processional Candles
  - 7.4. Gospel Book bearer (if it was used for the proclamation)<sup>1</sup>
  - 7.5. The Priest concelebrants (if any) carrying palms
  - 7.6. The Priest celebrant carrying palms
  - 7.7. The people carrying palms
8. At the Sanctuary
  - 8.1. The priest venerates the Altar and goes to the chair
  - 8.2. He omits the introductory rites and begins with the Collect.

#### Second Form: The Solemn Entrance

When a procession outside the church cannot take place, the entrance of the Lord is celebrated inside the church by means of a Solemn entrance before the principal Mass.

The sequence of the first form is used, but is done near the door of the church with a few representatives of the faithful, and with all the rest seated inside. They may turn towards the direction of the ritual when it begins.

After the brief homily, the procession begins with the ministers, the priests, and the representatives of the faithful. They walk towards the Altar as in the rite with the procession.

#### The Liturgy of the Word

The narrative of the Lord's passion is read without candles and without incense, with no greeting or signing of the book. It is read by a Deacon or,

Christ, the narrator, and the people. The passion is proclaimed by deacons or priests, or by lay readers. In the latter case, the part of the Christ should be reserved to the priest.

The proclamation of the passion should be without candles and incense; the greeting and the signs of the cross are omitted; and only a deacon asks for the blessing, as he does before the Gospel. For the spiritual good of the faithful, the passion should be proclaimed in its entirety, and the readings that proceed it should not be omitted.

After the passion has been proclaimed, a homily is to be given.

<sup>1</sup> The Gospel Book will be brought in procession only when it is used for the Rite of Blessing of Palms, or will be used for the Proclamation of the Passion. If it will NOT be used for both, it is not brought in procession. If it is used for the Blessing of Palms, and will not be used for the proclamation of the Passion, it may be brought in procession, but not placed at the altar but returned to its place inside the Sacristy.

if there is no Deacon, by a priest.<sup>2</sup> It may also be read by readers, with the part of Christ, if possible, reserved to a priest. Deacons, but not others, ask for the blessing of the priest before singing the passion, as at other times before the gospel. After the narrative of the passion, a brief homily should take place, if appropriate. a period of silence may also be observed. The creed is said, and the universal prayer takes place.

The mass continues in the usual manner, beginning with the Preparation of the Gifts and the Altar.

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<sup>2</sup> A priest concelebrant may take the part of the narrator. If there is none, a duly commissioned lector, but he/she proclaims from the Ambo.

**HOLY THURSDAY: EVENING MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER**

*Missale Romanum (abbreviated rubrics)*

*Paschales Solemnitatis (excerpts)*

Introductory Rites:

The Gloria in excelsis (Glory to God in the highest) is said. While the hymn is being sung, bells are rung, and when it is finished, they remain silent until the Gloria in excelsis of the Easter Vigil, unless, if appropriate, the Diocesan Bishop has decided otherwise. Likewise, during this same period, the organ and other musical instruments may be used only so as to support the singing.

Liturgy of the Word

After the proclamation of the Gospel, the Priest gives a homily in which light is shed on the principal mysteries that are commemorated in this Mass, namely, the institution of The Holy Eucharist and of the priestly Order, and the commandment of the Lord concerning fraternal charity.

The Liturgy of Foot-Washing<sup>4</sup>

After the Homily, where a pastoral reason suggests it, the Washing of Feet follows. Those who have been chosen<sup>5</sup> are led by the ministers to seats prepared in a suitable place. Then the Priest (removing his chasuble if necessary) goes to each one, and, with the help of the ministers, pours water over each one's feet and then dries them.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

When all this has been done, the ministers place the corporal, the purificator, the chalice, the pall, and the Missal on the altar. At the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, there may be a procession of the faithful in which gifts for the poor may be presented with the bread

With the celebration of Mass on the evening of Holy Thursday "the Church begins the Easter Triduum, and recalls the Last Supper, in which the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, showing his love for those who were his own in the world, he gave his body and blood under the species of bread and wine offering to his Father and giving them to the Apostles so that they might partake of them, and he commanded them and their successors in the priesthood to perpetuate this offering."

Careful attention should be given to the mysteries which are commemorated in this Mass: the institution of the Eucharist, the institution of the priesthood, and Christ's command of brotherly love; the homily should explain these points.

The Tabernacle should be completely empty before the celebration. Hosts for the Communion of the faithful should be consecrated during that celebration. A sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated to provide also for Communion on the following day.

For the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, a place should be prepared and adorned in such a way as to be conducive to prayer and meditation; seriousness appropriate to the liturgy of these days is enjoined so that all abuses are avoided or suppressed.

When the tabernacle is located in a chapel separated from the central part of the church, it is appropriate to prepare the place of repose and adoration there.

The washing of the feet of chosen men which, according to tradition, is performed on this day, represents the service and charity of Christ, who came "not to be served, but to serve."<sup>9</sup> This tradition should be maintained, and its proper significance explained.

<sup>4</sup> The rite strictly follows the sequence: Gospel, homily, the liturgy of foot-washing. There is no place for elements that reduce the rite to a mere re-enactment of the events of the Lord's Supper.

<sup>5</sup> Modified from "selected men." Hence, the possibility of selecting various sectors of society (including women) for those whose feet will be washed.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. The rubric from *Missale Romanum* on the liturgy of foot-washing (footnote #5)

and wine. Meanwhile the following, or another appropriate chant, is sung.<sup>6</sup>

### The Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament

Sequence:

1. After the Post-Communion Prayer, a ciborium is left on the Altar.
2. After a brief moment of silence, the priest incenses the Blessed Sacrament.
3. He then wears a humeral veil and covers the ciborium with its ends.
4. A procession is formed<sup>7</sup>, and the Blessed Sacrament is carried through the church to the place of repose prepared in a part of the church or in a chapel suitably decorated<sup>8</sup>.
5. The order of the procession:
  - 5.1. Cross bearer
  - 5.2. Candle bearers
  - 5.3. Thurifer and boat bearer
  - 5.4. The priest carrying the Blessed Sacrament
6. When the procession reaches the place of repose, the Priest, with the help of the Deacon if necessary, places the ciborium in the tabernacle, the door of which remains open.
7. Then he puts incense in the thurible and, kneeling, incenses the Blessed Sacrament, while *Tantum ergo Sacramentum* or another eucharistic chant is sung. Then the Deacon or the Priest himself places the Sacrament in the tabernacle and closes the door.
8. After a period of adoration in silence, the Priest and ministers genuflect and return to the sacristy.

At an appropriate time, the altar is stripped and, if possible, the crosses are removed from the church. It is expedient that any crosses which remain in the church be veiled.

Vespers (Evening Prayer) is not celebrated by those who have attended the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

Gifts for the poor, especially those collected during Lent as the fruit of penance, may be presented in the offertory procession, while the people sing "Ubi caritas est vera."

It is more appropriate that the Eucharist be borne directly from the altar by the deacons, or acolytes, or extraordinary ministers at the moment of communion for the sick and infirm who must communicate at home, so that in this way they may be more closely united to the celebrating Church.

The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a closed tabernacle or pyx. Under no circumstances may it be exposed in a monstrance.

The place where the tabernacle or pyx is situated must not be made to resemble a tomb, and the expression "tomb" is to be avoided. The chapel of repose is not prepared so as to represent the "Lord's burial" but for the custody of the eucharistic bread that will be distributed in Communion on Good Friday.

After the Mass of the Lord's Supper the faithful should be encouraged to spend a suitable period of time during the night in the church in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament which has been solemnly reserved. Where appropriate, this prolonged eucharistic adoration may be accompanied by the reading of some part of the Gospel of St. John (chs. 13-17).

From midnight onwards, however, the adoration should be made without external solemnity, because the day of the Lord's passion has begun.

After Mass the altar should be stripped. It is fitting that any crosses in the church be covered with a red or purple veil, unless they have already been veiled on the Saturday before the Fifth Sunday of Lent. Lamps should not be lit before the images of saints.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For liturgico-pastoral significance, this practice is to be highlighted, especially as the expression of one of the themes of the celebration: Christ's command of brotherly love. The Sacred oils may also be brought in procession at this time.

<sup>7</sup> Note that this is not a Eucharistic Procession, but a ritualized reposition of the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose.

<sup>8</sup> Note that in some larger churches, such as Cathedrals, there exists side chapels. Chapel here does not refer to any place outside of the church itself.

<sup>10</sup> Both practices of covering Crosses and images of Saints are acceptable.

The faithful are invited to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable length of time during the night, according to local circumstances, but after midnight the adoration should take place without solemnity.

If the celebration of the Passion of the Lord on the following Friday does not take place in the same church, the Mass is concluded in the usual way and the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle.

<b>GOOD FRIDAY: THE COMMEMORATION OF THE LORD'S PASSION AND THE ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS</b>	
<i>Missale Romanum (abbreviated rubrics)</i>	<i>Paschales Solemnitatis (excerpts)</i>
<p>On this and the following day, by a most ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments at all, except for Penance and the Anointing of the Sick.</p> <p>On this day, Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful only within the celebration of the Lord's Passion; but it may be brought at any hour of the day to the sick who cannot participate in this celebration.</p> <p>The altar should be completely bare: without a cross, without candles and without cloths.</p> <p><b>THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD</b></p> <p>On the afternoon of this day, about three o'clock (unless a later hour is chosen for a pastoral reason), there takes place the celebration of the Lord's Passion consisting of three parts, namely, the Liturgy of the Word, the Adoration of the Cross, and Holy Communion.</p> <p>In the United States, if the size or nature of a parish or other community indicates the pastoral need for an additional liturgical service, the Diocesan Bishop may permit the service to be repeated later. This liturgy by its very nature may not, however, be celebrated in the absence of a Priest.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>The Priest and the Deacon, if a Deacon is present, wearing red vestments as for Mass, go to the altar in silence and, after making a reverence to the altar, prostrate themselves or, if appropriate, kneel and pray in silence for a while. All others kneel.</p> <p>Then the Priest, with the ministers, goes to the chair where, facing the people, who are standing, he says, with hands extended, one of the following prayers, <u>omitting the invitation Let us pray.</u></p>	<p>On this day, when "Christ our passover was sacrificed," the Church meditates on the passion of her Lord and Spouse, adores the cross, commemorates her origin from the side of Christ asleep on the cross, and intercedes for the salvation of the whole world.</p> <p>On this day, in accordance with ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist: Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful during the Celebration of the Lord's Passion alone, though it may be brought at any time of the day to the sick who cannot take part in the celebration.</p> <p>Good Friday is a day of penance to be observed as of obligation in the whole Church, and indeed through abstinence and fasting.</p> <p>All celebration of the sacraments on this day is strictly prohibited, except for the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick. Funerals are to be celebrated without singing, music, or the tolling of bells.</p> <p><u>The Order for the Celebration of the Lord's Passion (the Liturgy of the Word, the adoration of the cross, and Holy Communion), that stems from an ancient tradition of the Church, should be observed faithfully and religiously, and may not be changed by anyone on his own initiative.</u></p> <p><u>The priest and ministers make a reverence to the altar prostrating themselves. This act of prostration, which is proper to the rite of the day, should be strictly observed, for it signifies both the abasement of "earthly man," and also the grief and sorrow of the Church.</u></p> <p>As the ministers enter the faithful should be standing, and thereafter should kneel in silent prayer.</p> <p>The General Intercessions are to follow the wording and form handed down by ancient tradition maintaining the full range of intentions so as</p>

<sup>11</sup> In the USA, some parishes are combined due to the lack of priests.

### The Liturgy of the Word

The Proclamation of the Passion is done in the same way as Palm Sunday, with the Priest delivering a homily, however brief, and then followed by some period of meditation.

### The Solemn Intercessions

The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the Solemn Intercessions, which take place in this way: the Deacon, if a Deacon is present, or if he is not, a lay minister, stands at the ambo, and sings or says the invitation in which the intention is expressed. Then all pray in silence for a while, and afterwards the Priest, standing at the chair or, if appropriate, at the altar, with hands extended, sings or says the prayer.

The faithful may remain either kneeling or standing throughout the entire period of the prayers.

Before the Priest's prayer, in accord with tradition, it is permissible to use the Deacon's invitations Let us kneel—Let us stand, with all kneeling for silent prayer.

In a situation of grave public need, the Diocesan Bishop may permit or order the addition of a special intention.

## SECOND PART: THE ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

After the Solemn Intercessions, the solemn Adoration of the Holy Cross takes place. Of the two forms of the showing of the Cross presented here, the more appropriate one, according to pastoral needs, should be chosen.

### The Showing of the Holy Cross

#### FIRST FORM

1. From the sacristy, a Deacon (if present), or another minister (altar server) moves in procession to the sanctuary carrying the Cross, which is covered with a violet veil, and accompanied by two ministers carrying candles.

to signify clearly the universal effect of the passion of Christ, who hung on the cross for the salvation of the whole world. In case of grave public necessity the local Ordinary may permit or prescribe the adding of special intentions.

For veneration of the cross, let a cross be used that is of appropriate size and beauty, and let one of the forms for this rite as found in the Roman Missal be followed. The rite should be carried out with the splendor worthy of the mystery of our salvation: both the invitation pronounced at the unveiling of the cross, and the people's response should be made in song, and a period of respectful silence is to be observed after each act of veneration—the celebrant standing and holding the raised cross.

**Only one cross should be used for the veneration, as this contributes to the full symbolism of the rite.**

After the celebration, the altar is stripped; the cross remains however, with four candles. An appropriate place (for example, the chapel of repose used for reservation of the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday) can be prepared within the church, and there the Lord's cross is placed so that the faithful may venerate and kiss it, and spend some time in meditation.

Devotions such as the "Way of the Cross," processions of the passion, and commemorations of the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary are not, for pastoral reasons, to be neglected. The texts and songs used, however, should be adapted to the spirit of the Liturgy of this day. Such devotions should be assigned to a time of day that makes it quite clear that the Liturgical celebration by its very nature far surpasses them in importance.

2. At the sanctuary, the Priest, while singing the words: “Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the Savior of the world,” slowly unveils the cross.
  - 2.1. The upper part
  - 2.2. The right arm
  - 2.3. The left arm (completely unveiled)
3. The people respond: Come, let us adore.
4. After the Cross is completely unveiled, he raises it for the adoration of the faithful.

## SECOND FORM

1. The sequence of the first form is followed, but instead of coming from the sacristy, the priest and/or deacon or minister carrying the cross processes from the door of the church.
2. The singing of the words “Behold the wood of the Cross...” in which the cross is slowly unveiled is done in these areas:
  - 2.1. Near the door of the church
  - 2.2. The middle part of the church
  - 2.3. At the foot of the Sanctuary

### The Adoration of the Holy Cross

Then, accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, the Priest or the Deacon carries the Cross to the entrance of the sanctuary or to another suitable place and there puts it down or hands it over to the ministers to hold. Candles are placed on the right and left sides of the Cross.

For the Adoration of the Cross: First option

1. First the Priest Celebrant alone approaches and adores the cross with duly approved gestures. The chasuble and his shoes may be removed, if appropriate.
2. The priest concelebrants follow.
3. Then the lay ministers, and the faithful approach, moving as if in procession, and showing reverence to the Cross by a simple genuflection or by some other sign appropriate to the usage of the region, for example, by kissing the Cross.

Second option:

1. If due to a large assembly of the faithful, the adoration of all present presents a difficulty, a limited number of the faithful may approach the Holy Cross.
2. The remainder of the faithful may approach the Holy Cross after the Post Communion Prayer.

Third option:

1. In view, still of a large number of the faithful, the Priest, after adoring the Holy Cross, may stand in the middle of the altar and invite the people in a few words to adore it in silence.
2. He may then raise it up for the people to adore in silence.

When the adoration has been concluded, the Cross is carried by the Deacon or a minister to its place at the altar. Lighted candles are placed around or on the altar or near the Cross.<sup>12</sup>

### THIRD PART: HOLY COMMUNION

A cloth is spread on the altar, and a corporal and the Missal put in place. Meanwhile the Deacon or, if there is no Deacon, the Priest himself, putting on a humeral veil, brings the Blessed Sacrament back from the place of repose to the altar by a shorter route, while all stand in silence.

Two ministers with lighted candles accompany the Blessed Sacrament and place their candlesticks around or upon the altar.

When the Deacon, if a Deacon is present, has placed the Blessed Sacrament upon the altar and uncovered the ciborium, the Priest goes to the altar and genuflects.

When the distribution of Communion has been completed, the ciborium is taken by the Deacon or another suitable minister to a place prepared outside the church or, if circumstances so require, it is placed in the tabernacle.

Then the Priest says: Let us pray, and, after a period of sacred silence, if circumstances so suggest, has been observed, he says the Prayer after

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<sup>12</sup> Note that there is no provision that suggests the adoration of more than one Cross.

Communion, and concludes with the Prayer over the People, with his hands extended over them.

The Liturgy concludes with the Priest and ministers leaving the Sanctuary in silence.

**HOLY SATURDAY: EASTER VIGIL OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION**

<i>Missale Romanum (abbreviated rubrics)</i>	<i>Paschales Solemnitatis (excerpts)</i>
<p>FIRST PART: The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium</p> <p><u>The Blessing of the Fire and Preparation of the Candle</u></p> <p>A blazing fire is prepared in a suitable place outside the church.<sup>13</sup> When the people are gathered there, the Priest approaches with the ministers, one of whom carries the paschal candle. The processional cross and candles are not carried.</p> <p>The sequence of the Rite:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sign of the Cross</li> <li>2. Greeting and short introduction or instruction.</li> <li>3. Prayer of Blessing over the new fire<sup>14</sup></li> <li>4. Preparation of the Paschal Candle             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Tracing of the vertical and horizontal arms</li> <li>4.2. Tracing of the Alpha and Omega symbols</li> <li>4.3. Tracing of the Current Year</li> <li>4.4. Placing of the incense grains</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. Lighting of the Paschal Candle</li> <li>6. The Priest puts charcoal and incense in the thurible</li> <li>7. The Procession: order of ministers             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1. Minister carrying the Paschal candle</li> <li>7.2. Priest Concelebrants (if any) carrying unlighted candles</li> <li>7.3. The Priest Celebrant carrying an unlighted candle</li> <li>7.4. Other ministers carrying unlighted candles</li> </ol> </li> <li>8. The lighting of the candles             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1. At the door of the Church, the procession stops and the Deacon (if he carries the Paschal Candle), or the Priest sings "The Light of Christ," while the people respond: "Thanks be to God." Then the Priest alone lights his candle from the Paschal Candle.</li> <li>8.2. At the Middle part of the church, the procession once again stops and the Deacon or Priest sings the same. Then the priest</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>A. The Easter Vigil</p> <p>77. According to a most ancient tradition, this night is "one of vigil for the Lord,"<sup>79</sup> and the vigil celebrated during it, to commemorate that holy night when the Lord rose from the dead, is regarded as the "mother of all holy vigils."<sup>80</sup> For in that night the Church keeps vigil, waiting for the resurrection of the Lord, and celebrates the sacraments of Christian initiation.<sup>81</sup></p> <p>1. The Meaning Of The Nocturnal Character Of The Easter Vigil</p> <p><u>"The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday." This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. Reprehensible are those abuses and practices which have crept into many places in violation of this ruling, whereby the Easter Vigil is celebrated at the time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses.</u></p> <p>The Passover Vigil, in which the Hebrews kept watch for the Lord's passover which was to free them from slavery to Pharaoh, is an annual commemoration. It prefigured the true Pasch of Christ that was to come, the night that is of true liberation, in which "destroying the bonds of death, Christ rose as victor from the depths."<sup>84</sup></p> <p>From the very outset the Church has celebrated that annual Pasch, which is the solemnity of solemnities, above all by means of a night vigil. For the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of our faith and hope, and through Baptism and Confirmation we are inserted into the Paschal Mystery of Christ, dying, buried, and raised with him, and with him we shall also reign.</p> <p>The full meaning of Vigil is a waiting for the coming of the Lord.</p>

<sup>13</sup> It is recommended to begin in complete darkness for a more significant symbolism

<sup>14</sup> Holy water is not used for the blessing

concelebrants (if any), all the ministers, as well as all the people light their candles from the Paschal Candle.

8.3. At the foot of the Sanctuary, the procession stops again and the same words are sung, and all the lights of the church are turned on, except the lights of the altar candles.

8.4. The minister places the Paschal Candle on the stand and the Exultet is proclaimed.

9. The Exultet or Solemn Easter Proclamation

9.1. The Priest incenses the Book (containing the Exultet), and the Paschal Candle (if there is no Deacon)

9.2. The Easter Proclamation may be made, in the absence of a Deacon, by the Priest himself or by another concelebrating Priest. If, however, because of necessity, a lay cantor sings the Proclamation, the words Therefore, dearest friends up to the end of the invitation are omitted, along with the greeting The Lord be with you.

9.3. The Proclamation may also be sung in the shorter form.

SECOND PART: The Liturgy of the Word<sup>15</sup>

In this Vigil, the mother of all Vigils, nine readings are provided, namely seven from the Old Testament and two from the New (the Epistle and Gospel), all of which should be read whenever this can be done, so that the character of the Vigil, which demands an extended period of time, may be preserved.

Nevertheless, where more serious pastoral circumstances demand it, the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced, always bearing in mind that the reading of the Word of God is a fundamental part of this Easter Vigil.<sup>16</sup> At least three readings should be read from the Old Testament, both from the Law and from the Prophets, and their respective Responsorial Psalms should be sung. Never, moreover, should the reading of chapter 14 of Exodus with its canticle be omitted.

Sequence of the Liturgy of the Word:

The Structure Of The Easter Vigil And The Significance Of Its Different Elements And Parts

The order for the Easter Vigil is arranged so that after the service of light and the Easter Proclamation (which is the first part of the Vigil), Holy Church meditates on the wonderful works which the Lord God wrought for his people from the earliest times (the second part or Liturgy of the Word), to the moment when, together with those new members reborn in Baptism (third part), she is called to the table prepared by the Lord for his Church—the commemoration of his death and resurrection—until he comes (fourth part).

This liturgical order must not be changed by anyone on his own initiative.

The first part consists of symbolic acts and gestures, which require that they be performed in all their fullness and nobility, so that their meaning, as explained by their introductory words of the celebrant and the liturgical prayers, may be truly understood by the faithful.

The paschal candle should be prepared, which for effective symbolism must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size so that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world. It is blessed with the signs and words prescribed in the Missal or by the Conference of Bishops.

The procession, by which the people enter the church, should be led by the light of the paschal candle alone. Just as the children of Israel were guided at night by a pillar of fire, so similarly, Christians follow the risen Christ. There is no reason why to each response "Thanks be to God" there should not be added some acclamation in honor of Christ.

<sup>15</sup> Since the lights of the Church are turned on before the singing of the Exultet, the Liturgy of the Word is not celebrated in darkness. Hence, there is no need to provide extra lights for the lectors and psalmists.

<sup>16</sup> The lengthy celebration of the Easter Vigil does NOT constitute a serious pastoral circumstance. Hence, there is no reason to shorten the liturgy of the Word.

1. Introductory words and invitation of the Priest to listen to the Proclamation of God's Word.
2. Seven Readings from the Old Testament with their respective Responsorial Psalms.
3. The Prayer led by the Presider after each of the Psalms and some periods of silence.
4. After the seven readings from the Old Testament, the Gloria is intoned by the Priest Celebrant and is sung by the assembly, with the bells ringing. The candles of the altar are lit at this time.
5. The Collect
6. The Epistle
7. The solemn proclamation of the Alleluia by the Priest
8. The chanting of Psalm 118 (117) with the people responding Alleluia
9. Gospel Proclamation. At the Gospel lights are not carried, but only incense.
10. Homily<sup>17</sup>

#### THIRD PART: The Baptismal Liturgy

After the Homily the Baptismal Liturgy begins. The Priest goes with the ministers to the baptismal font, if this can be seen by the faithful. Otherwise a vessel with water is placed in the sanctuary.

#### FOURTH PART: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The light from the paschal candle should be gradually passed to the candles which it is fitting that all present should hold in their hands, the electric lighting being switched off.

The deacon makes the Easter Proclamation which tells, by means of a great poetic text, the whole Easter mystery placed in the context of the economy of salvation. In case of necessity, where there is no deacon, and the celebrating priest is unable to sing it, a cantor may do so. The Bishops' Conferences may adapt this proclamation by inserting into it acclamations from the people.

The readings from Sacred Scripture constitute the second part of the Vigil. They give an account of the outstanding deeds of the history of salvation, which the faithful are helped to meditate calmly upon by the singing of the responsorial psalm, by a silent pause and by the celebrant's prayer.

The restored Order for the Vigil has seven readings from the Old Testament chosen from the Law and the Prophets, which are in use everywhere according to the most ancient tradition of East and West, and two readings from the New Testament, namely from the Apostle and from the Gospel. Thus the Church, "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets" explains Christ's Paschal Mystery. Consequently wherever this is possible, all the readings should be read so that the character of the Easter Vigil, which demands that it be somewhat prolonged, be respected at all costs.

88. The third part of the Vigil is the baptismal liturgy. Christ's passover and ours is now celebrated. This is given full expression in those churches which have a baptismal font, and more so when the Christian initiation of adults is held, or at least the Baptism of infants. Even if there are no candidates for Baptism, the blessing of baptismal water should still take place in parish churches. If this blessing does not take place at the baptismal font, but in the sanctuary, baptismal water should be carried afterwards to the baptistry there to be kept throughout the whole of paschal time. Where there are neither candidates for Baptism nor any

<sup>17</sup> The homily is never omitted, however brief it may be.

need to bless the font, Baptism should be commemorated by the blessing of water destined for sprinkling upon the people.

Next follows the renewal of baptismal promises, introduced by some words on the part of the celebrating priest. The faithful reply to the questions put to them, standing and holding lighted candles in their hands. They are then sprinkled with water: in this way the gestures and words remind them of the Baptism they have received. The celebrating priest sprinkles the people by passing through the main part of the church while all sing the antiphon "Vidi aquam" or another suitable song of a baptismal character.<sup>98</sup>

The celebration of the Eucharist forms the fourth part of the Vigil and marks its high point, for it is in the fullest sense the Easter Sacrament, that is to say, the commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross and the presence of the risen Christ, the completion of Christian initiation, and the foretaste of the eternal pasch.

It is fitting that in the Communion of the Easter Vigil full expression be given to the symbolism of the Eucharist, namely by consuming the Eucharist under the species of both bread and wine. The local Ordinaries will consider the appropriateness of such a concession and its ramifications.<sup>101</sup>

### 3. Some Pastoral Considerations

The Easter Vigil Liturgy should be celebrated in such a way as to offer to the Christian people the riches of the prayers and rites. It is therefore important that authenticity be respected, that the participation of the faithful be promoted, and that the celebration should not take place without servers, readers and choir exercising their role.

The celebration of the Easter Vigil for special groups is not to be encouraged, since above all in this Vigil the faithful should come together as one and should experience a sense of ecclesial community.

The faithful who are absent from their parish on vacation should be urged to participate in the liturgical celebration in the place where they happen to be.

	<p>For a better celebration of the Easter Vigil, it is necessary that pastors themselves have an ever deeper knowledge of both texts and rites, so as to give a proper mystagogical catechesis to the people.</p>
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**THE BAPTISMAL LITURGY**

Candidates to be baptized	Litany of the Saints	Blessing of Baptismal Water	Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Confirmation for adults Baptism for Infants	Renewal of Baptismal Promises by the People
No candidates to be baptized, but the font is to be blessed	Litany of the Saints	Blessing of Baptismal Water	xxx	Renewal of Baptismal Promises by the People
No candidates to be baptized, Font is not to be blessed	xxx	Blessing of Water <sup>18</sup>	xxx	Renewal of Baptismal Promises by the People

Celebration of Baptism						Celebration of Confirmation		
Adult Candidates (Baptism and Confirmation)	Profession of Faith	Baptism with water	xxx	Clothing with white garment	Handing of the baptismal candle	Laying on of hands	Anointing with Chrism	Greeting of Peace
Adults and Infants (Baptism and Confirmation for adults/Baptism for infants)	Profession of Faith by adult candidates/by parents and godparents of infants	Baptism with water	Anointing with Chrism for infants only	Clothing with white garment	Handing of baptismal candle to adult candidates/parents and godparents of infants	Laying on of hands for adult candidates  xxx	Anointing with Chrism for adult candidates  xxx	Greeting of Peace for adult candidates  xxx
Infants (Baptism)	Profession of Faith by parents and godparents of infants	Baptism with water	Anointing with Chrism	Clothing with white garment	Handing of baptismal candle to parents and godparents			

<sup>18</sup> Cf with Roman Missal: The Prayer of Blessing over Baptismal Water is different from the Prayer of Blessing when there are no candidates for Baptism and the font is not blessed