

Official Guidelines for Lent and Easter 2016

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle

The annual observance of Lent is the special season for the ascent to the holy mountain of Easter. Through its twofold theme of repentance and Baptism, the season of Lent disposes both the catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery. Catechumens are led to the sacraments of initiation by means of the rite of election, the scrutinies, and catechesis. The faithful, listening more intently to the word of God and devoting themselves to prayer, are prepared through a spirit of repentance to renew their Baptismal promises (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 249).

Regulations for Fast and Abstinence

Ash Wednesday, **February 10, 2016**, and Good Friday, **March 25, 2016**, are days of fast and abstinence. Fridays of Lent are also days of abstinence.

Fasting is to be observed by all eighteen years of age and older, who have not yet celebrated their sixtieth birthday. On a fast day one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids, including milk and juices, are allowed.

Abstinence is observed by all fourteen years of age and older. On days of abstinence no meat is allowed. Note that when health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. When in doubt concerning fast and abstinence, the parish priest should be consulted.

Fasting, almsgiving, and prayer are the three traditional disciplines of Lent. The faithful and catechumens should undertake these practices seriously in a spirit of penance and of preparation for Baptism or of renewal of Baptism at Easter. (*Code of Canon Law*, 1249-1252).

Penitential Practices

In addition to the universal Lenten disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, *Paschale Solemnitatis* specifically commends the celebration of the form of the Rite of Penance according to the rite of reconciliation of several penitents with individual confession and absolution (*PS 15, CB 281*).

Particular Liturgies during the Season of Lent and Easter

Ash Wednesday, February 10, 2016

Ashes of branches of the olive tree or the palm tree are blessed and imposed on this day.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord, March 20, 2016

On this day the Church remembers Christ's entrance into Jerusalem to accomplish his paschal mystery. The commemoration on this day with the blessing of palms and the procession is not an historical re-enactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem but a ritual action that marks our entry into Holy Week and the celebration of the Christian Passover.

Chrism Mass, Thursday, March 17, 2016

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at St. James Cathedral, Seattle, at 7:00 PM. The faithful are invited to attend this liturgy where Archbishop Sartain will bless the Oil of the Catechumens and the Oil of the Sick, and consecrate the Sacred Chrism to be used in the Sacramental life of the Church.

Holy Thursday, March 24, 2016

With the celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, "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, 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." (CB, 297).

Good Friday, March 25, 2016

"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. (PS, 58).

"The celebration of the Lord's Passion is to take place in the afternoon, at about three o'clock" (PS, 63). The Liturgy of the Hours is strongly encouraged.

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord and the Easter Time

Holy Saturday, March 26, 2016

The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night may begin no earlier than 8:10 PM throughout the Archdiocese of Seattle, allowing for the new fire to break the darkness of night. (*Roman Missal*, Easter Vigil, 3).

The fifty days from Easter Sunday (March 27, 2016) to Pentecost (May 15, 2016), audibly and visually, are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one "great Sunday." The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the Octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord. The Paschal Candle evokes the truth that Christ is the light of the world and, remaining near the ambo throughout Easter Time, is lighted for all liturgical celebrations of the season.

Ascension of the Lord

In Region XII, the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord has been transferred to Sunday and will therefore be celebrated on May 8, 2016.

Pentecost

Pentecost Sunday is on May 15, 2016. Easter Time ends with the conclusion of Evening Prayer (Vespers) on Pentecost.