DIOCESE OF
LONDON

Office of Liturgy

LITURGY ADVISORY
FOR THE SEASONS OF LENT AND EASTER
2026

The Season of Lent

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 [preparation for] 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. (See Ceremonial of Bishops, 249)

Regulations for Fasting and Abstinence

The following may be reproduced in parish bulletins for the purpose of reminding the faithful of the regulations for fast and abstinence:

Fasting is to be observed by all 18 years of age and older, who have not yet celebrated their 59th 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 14 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.

Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026 and Good Friday, April 3, 2026 are days of fast and abstinence. All the Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence.

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.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation

- During Lent the faithful should be urged to take a greater and more fruitful share in the Lenten liturgy. It is very appropriate for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation to be celebrated during Lent in a more solemn form, as described in the Rite of Penance (CB 251). The faithful should be clearly and positively encouraged to receive this sacrament during Lent. Schedules for confessions and communal celebrations should be arranged in each parish so that all may be served adequately. Ideally, the faithful would celebrate the sacrament of Penance before the Sacred Paschal Triduum begins; however, it is also permitted to offer this sacrament on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Efforts should be made to educate and plan accordingly (cf. RP 13).

Order of Celebrating Matrimony

- When a marriage is celebrated during Lent or other days of penance, the parish priest should advise the couple to take into consideration the special nature of these times. (cf. Order of Celebrating Matrimony, 32)

Whenever Marriage is celebrated within Mass, the Ritual Mass "The Celebration of Marriage" is used with sacred vestments of the color white or of a festive color. On those days listed in nos. 1-4 of the Table of Liturgical Days, however, the Mass of the day is used with its own readings, with the inclusion of the Nuptial blessing and, if appropriate, the proper formula for the final blessing. When the Mass "The Celebration of Marriage" is not said, one of the readings may be taken from the texts provided for the celebration of Marriage. (OCM, 34)

Table of Liturgical Days (according to their order of precedence)

1. *The Paschal Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord.*
2. *The Nativity of the Lord, the Epiphany, the Ascension, and Pentecost. Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter. Ash Wednesday. Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday up to and including Thursday. Days within the Octave of Easter.*
3. *Solemnities inscribed in the General Calendar, whether of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of Saints. The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed.*
4. *Proper Solemnities namely:*
   - *a. Solemnity of the principal Patron of the pace.*
   - *b. Solemnity of the dedication and of the anniversary of the dedication of one's own church.*
   - *c. Solemnity of the Title of one's own church.*
   - *d. Solemnity either of the Title, Founder, or principal Patron of a religious order.*

Funerals

- A funeral Mass may not be celebrated on the Sundays of Lent, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and the Sundays of the Easter Season. On these days the Funeral Liturgy outside Mass using the Order of Christian Funerals, Part I Chapter 4 may be used. (OCF 349).

The Sacraments of Initiation

Because Lent is oriented toward the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at Easter, care should be taken to maintain this central focus. Parishes may consider refraining from baptizing children until Easter Sunday or the Easter Season except in the case of emergency or pastoral necessity. Correspondingly, the celebration of Confirmation and the reception of First Holy Communion is more appropriate during the Easter Season. The exception would be in the case of the Bishop's Pastoral Visitation to the parish in order to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation to baptized Catholics.

- The Rite of Election will be celebrated at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica, on February 22, 2026 (the First Sunday of Lent) at 3:00p.m.
- Bishop Fabbro will call those catechumens who are to be initiated by the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the coming Easter Vigil. (CB 250, 408-419 and RCIA 116-124).

The liturgies at the Cathedral will be the Rite of Election (or Enrollment of Names) for catechumens. Candidates who have been studying with the Catechumens are welcome to attend the Rite.

The Rite of Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion (RCIA 494-509) may be celebrated in the parish for those who are baptized in a recognized Christian faith tradition and wish to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The proper time for this would be at the beginning of Lent during a liturgy.

- The Scrutinies for the Elect are celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent. The Mass at which the scrutiny takes place uses the texts from the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of the Scrutinies found in the Roman Missal. The Readings for Year A are used at these Masses (RCIA 133).
- The Penitential Rites for baptized candidates preparing for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church are outlined in the Rite (RCIA 522-530).

NB The Paschal Triduum, Holy Thursday through Easter Vigil, are considered one liturgy. For this reason, a deacon may not preside at the Good Friday Celebration of the Passion of the Lord. Pastors should schedule only as many services as the priests at the Family of Parishes are able to cover.

Season of Lent (February 18, 2026 – April 5, 2026; late afternoon Holy Thursday)			
February 2026			Ordo page
18	**Wednesday**	**Ash Wednesday** The blessing and distribution of ashes may take place at either a celebration of the Eucharist or at a Liturgy of the Word. The Season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. It is not permissible to anticipate Ash Wednesday with a "Vigil Mass" or a Liturgy of the Word with the Distribution of Ashes on Tuesday evening. The Penitential Act is omitted in all celebrations of the Eucharist on this day. The blessing and distribution of ashes follows the homily. Clergy may be assisted by others (e.g., extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion) in the distribution of ashes.	112
22	**Sunday**	**First Sunday of Lent** The Rite of Election will be celebrated at the St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica at 3:00 p.m.	116
	March 2026		Ordo pg
	Sunday	**Second Sunday of Lent**	121
8	**Sunday**	**Third Sunday of Lent** Celebration of the First Scrutiny (see notes on pg. 3)	124
15	**Sunday**	**Fourth Sunday of Lent** (Laetare Sunday) Celebration of the Second Scrutiny (see notes on pg. 3)	86
19	**Thursday**	**Solemnity of Saint Joseph** Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary Principal Patron of Canada	89
22	**Sunday**	**Fifth Sunday of Lent** Celebration of the Third Scrutiny (see notes on pg. 3)	92

		Crosses and images may be veiled on the Fifth Sunday of Lent. Crosses are unveiled following the Good Friday Liturgy, while images are unveiled before the beginning of the Easter Vigil.	
	March 2026		Ordo Pg
25	**Wednesday**	Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord Mass includes Gloria and Creed (genuflection at "and by the Holy Spirit…)	94
29	**Sunday**	**Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord** (Holy Week begins) Blessing and Distribution of Palms – Three forms are offered for the beginning of the liturgy on this day: the procession, the solemn entrance, and the simple entrance. Masses beginning with either the procession or solemn entrance omit the Act of Penitence. The Sign of the Cross and Greeting begin the celebration of the Liturgy. While the text of the Gospel for the Procession is included in the Missal, the Book of Gospels should be used. 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, if there is no Deacon, by a Priest. 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. Red Vestments are worn for both the Procession (cope) and the Eucharist (chasuble) which follows.	98

		A solemn blessing for the Passion of the Lord is also found in the blessings provided at the end of the "Order of Mass." This blessing may also be used on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week.	

Monday—Wednesday, March 30- April 1: A Funeral Mass is permitted Monday—Wednesday Ritual and Votive Masses are not permitted. Ordo pages 6 &7

30	**Monday**	**Monday of Holy Week** Chrism Mass, St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica at 7:00 p.m. Blessing of Oils and Renewal of Priestly Promises	

Triduum (Late afternoon April 2, 2026 – Evening Prayer April 5, 2025)

Ritual Masses are not permitted; a funeral Mass is not permitted; on Holy Saturday the sacraments are not celebrated until the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night except for the Sacrament of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. Holy Communion may be brought to the sick during the Triduum except on Holy Saturday—on Holy Saturday Holy Communion may be given only as viaticum.

April 2026			Ordo Pg
2	**Thursday**	**Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper (Holy Thursday)** Lent ends before Evening Prayer is celebrated. The Easter triduum begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper and ends with the conclusion of Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. Evening Prayer on Holy Thursday is celebrated only by those not participating in the evening Mass. The Mass of the <u>Lord's Supper is the principal Liturgy of the day and the only Mass to be celebrated.</u> The tabernacle is empty (and open) before the Liturgy begins. The remaining Eucharist may be kept in a ciborium at a secure location in the sacristy. Enough bread should be consecrated at this Mass for the Liturgy of Good Friday as well. The altar may be decorated with flowers with a moderation that accords with the character of this day. (OM 5) All efforts should be made that there be only one Mass of the Lord's Supper which would include the many languages and cultures of a particular parish community. If pastoral needs of a particular ethnic group in a parish so dictate, another	103

		Mass of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated in their language. All the Propers (Orations and Preface) and the form of Eucharistic Prayer I with all special forms of the Communicantes, Hanc igitur, and Qui pridie already inserted into the text, is included in this section of the Roman Missal for convenience. The Reception of the Holy Oils may take place in parishes either before the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper or at another time that seems more appropriate. The proper text for the Reception of the Holy Oils can be found in the appendix at the end of this advisory. During the singing of the Glory to God the church bells, both outdoors and indoors, are rung. The bells remain silent until the Glory to God at the Easter Vigil. The washing of the feet (Mandatum) should be celebrated in a way that allows for people to engage with and participate in the symbolism and meaning of the ritual. Regarding the rubric in the Roman Missal (No. 11: Thursday of the Lord's Supper) and the Ceremonial of Bishops (No. 301 and No. 299), which restricts those to have their feet washed only to males, Pope Francis directed that it be changed to represent "a group of faithful representing the variety and unity of every part of the People of God. This group may consist of men and women and ideally of the young and old, healthy and sick, clerics, consecrated persons and laypeople." (Decreto In Missa in Cena Domini, "Lavanda dei Piedi", CDWDS, January 21, 2016). While pastoral adaptations and experimentations have occurred, care must be taken that this ritual action reflect the action of Christ who came to serve not to be served. The best way to insure this is to stay close to the rubrics as they are presented in the Roman Missal with the adaptation made by Pope Francis. At an appropriate moment during Communion, the priest entrusts the Eucharist from the table of the altar to deacons or acolytes or other extraordinary ministers, so that afterwards it may be brought to the sick who are to receive Holy Communion at home (#33).	

		Following the Prayer after Communion, the Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the place of repose. This may be the usual tabernacle if it is in a separate chapel or area removed from the sanctuary. The place of reservation should be noble yet simply decorated. Under no circumstances is the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed in a monstrance or ciborium. (CL 55, 56) The order for the procession is explicitly outlined (#38). Those in the procession who are not carrying cross or incense, are to follow and may carry lighted candles. The faithful should be encouraged to spend some time in adoration throughout the remainder of the evening (CL 55, 56). Solemn Adoration, with the door of the tabernacle closed, continues only until midnight. After midnight adoration should take place without solemnity. Under no circumstances is it permitted to reserve the Precious Blood for adoration on Holy Thursday and for distribution on Good Friday (Norms #30).	
3	**Friday**	**Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)** The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer, is strongly encouraged. If a priest or deacon presides, a red cope is to be worn. The celebration of the Lord's Passion, the principal celebration of this day, should take place at about 3:00 pm. This liturgy is comprised of three parts: The Liturgy of the Word; The Adoration of the Holy Cross; and Holy Communion. The Roman Missal does not allow for the rearrangement of any of these components other than the order that they are given. Red Vestments “as for mass” are to be worn for the Celebration of the Passion. **This Liturgy, by its very nature, is to be celebrated by a Priest (OM #4).** 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, if there is no Deacon, by a Priest.	

		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. The introduction to each of the Solemn Intercessions is to be read by a Deacon, or in his absence, by a lay minister, and not by the Priest. (#11) The Priest-Celebrant may remove his chasuble and shoes for the Adoration of the Cross (#18). Only one cross should be offered for adoration. If, because of the large number of people, it is not possible for all to approach individually, the Priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored, takes the Cross and, standing in the middle before the altar, invites the people in a few words to adore the Holy Cross and afterwards holds the Cross elevated higher for a brief time, for the faithful to adore in silence (#19). In addition to the chants provided for the Adoration of the Cross, the Stabat Mater may also be sung (#20). The Deacon (or Priest) who brings the Blessed Sacrament to the Altar from the place of repose is to wear a humeral veil and use a shorter route than the previous evening. He is to be accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles (#22). After the distribution of Communion, 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. In keeping with the character of this day, this action is performed without solemnity. Once Communion is complete, after the Prayer after Communion and Prayer Over the People, the ministers, after genuflecting to the Cross, depart in silence (#32). The Altar is stripped following the service but the Cross and candles remain (#33).	
4	**Saturday**	**The Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday)**	

		The Liturgy of the Hours, particularly Morning Prayer, is strongly encouraged. If a priest or deacon presides, a violet cope is to be worn. Violet vestments are worn if the food is blessed before the Easter Vigil. If the food is blessed after the Easter Vigil or on Easter Sunday white vestments are worn. According to Liturgical Norms, it is not appropriate to sing Easter Hymns or verses containing the "Alleluia" before its' solemn intonation at the celebration of the Easter Vigil. white The Roman Missal states that the Easter Vigil is to begin "after nightfall" (OM #3). Therefore, in the London, the Easter Vigil is not to be scheduled before 8:00 pm. It is most appropriate and laudable that the Vigil should begin when it is fully dark, maintaining the integrity and symbolism of keeping vigil during the night as well as the significance of the light of the Paschal Candle as a symbol "to overcome the darkness of this night." (OM: Exsultet) The Order of Mass of the Roman Missal states that the Cross and candles are not carried in the procession (#8). The order of the procession is outlined at #15. The Liturgy begins with the Sign of the Cross and Greeting (#9). The Lucernarium calls for a "blazing fire" to be prepared outside of the Church. Prudence dictates that this fire must be supervised, that there a fire extinguisher in the vicinity of the fire, that there be a responsible person who is capable of extinguishing the fire, and that there be a means of readily contacting the fire department if the fire gets out of control. The Easter Candle is to be prepared according to the rubrics of the Roman Missal. The Easter Candle must be made of wax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size, that it may evoke the truth that Christ is the light of the world (CL 82). The Easter candle is to be lighted for all liturgical celebrations of the season (CB 372). The order for the procession of the candle and for the intonations ("The Light of Christ"): at the door of the church, in the middle and before the altar is found in the Roman Missal nos. 15-17.	

		The book containing the Exultet as well as the Candle are to be incensed (#19). The Exsultet (Easter Proclamation) is sung by a Deacon or a cantor. Primary consideration should be given to the rendering of the sung text well, both musically and intelligibly and to the edification of the assembly. The Exsultet is chanted from the ambo. The Glory to God should be sung. The ringing of the Church bells accompanies this hymn. 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 (OM #20). 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 (OM #21). At least three of the seven Old Testament readings (with respective Psalms and Prayers) must be proclaimed. The reading from Chapter 14 of the Book of Exodus with its canticle may never be omitted (OM #20-21). The homily is not to be omitted (OM #36). Adults and children of catechetical age being baptized or received into full communion during the Easter Vigil are to be confirmed by the presiding priest (RCIA 208). The newly baptized present the bread and wine for the celebration (OM #60). A Commemoration is made in the Eucharistic Prayer for both the newly baptized and their godparents (OM #63). The special commemorations are found in the “Mass for the Conferral of Baptism.” The Priest is to briefly address the newly baptized about their first Communion (OM#64). Communion under both kinds is to be encouraged. The Final Blessing formula may come from that of Easter, or from the Rite of Baptism of Adults and Children as circumstances suggest.	
5	**Sunday**	**Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord** (Solemnity) The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost (April 5, 2026 — May 25, 2026) are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better, as one "great Sunday."	

		On Easter Sunday, the tradition in the U.S. has been to replace the Creed with the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, followed by a sprinkling with blessed water. The prayers and ritual are found with the Mass texts for the Easter Vigil (#55). The Easter Sequence is to be sung on Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord (GIRM #64). The Ordo reminds us that the Easter Sequence may be sung during the entire Octave of Easter (Easter Sunday through the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive). The double Alleluia is added to the sung dismissal during the octave (Easter Vigil through the Second Sunday of Easter inclusive) and on the Vigil of Pentecost and Pentecost Sunday (CB 373). <u>The use of the double Alleluia is not indicated outside of what is mentioned above.</u> The Paschal Candle remains in the sanctuary, most preferably near the ambo, and is lighted for every celebration during the Easter Season. It remains in position until after the last Mass on Pentecost Sunday or the conclusion of Vespers, if celebrated in community. However, in the celebration of funerals the Paschal Candle should be placed near the coffin.	

The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the Octave of Easter and are celebrated as Solemnities of the Lord (CB 371, 373).

REFERENCES

CB Ceremonial of Bishops

CL Circular Letter concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts (Congregation for Divine Worship, 1988)

GIRM General Instruction to the Roman Missal

OCF Order of Christian Funerals

OCM Order of Celebrating Matrimony

OM Order of Mass of the Roman Missal

RCIA Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RP Rite of Penance

RECEPTION OF OILS

The Roman Missal, Third Edition, implemented in 2011, introduces a new rubric at the conclusion of the Chrism Mass.

The first option for the reception of the holy oils is before the Mass begins, but according to pastoral necessity and any guidelines of the diocesan Bishop, "another time that seems more appropriate" could also include the offertory procession (as in the original ritual) or perhaps before the Penitential Act.

The original text of the Reception of the Holy Oils is still in force as an optional rite in Canada as indicated in its introduction, the text may be adapted as needed. Whether or not a formal reception of the oils is celebrated, the pastor may wish to acknowledge the presence of the newly received holy oils as a sign of unity with the Bishop and the diocesan Church.

1. It is appropriate that the Oil of the Sick, the Oil of Catechumens, and the holy Chrism, which are blessed by the Bishop during the Chrism Mass, be presented to and received by the local parish community.

2. The reception of the holy oils may take place at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday or on another day after the celebration of the Chrism Mass.

3. The oils should be reserved in a suitable repository in the sanctuary or near the baptismal font.

4. The oils, in suitable vessels, are carried in the procession of the gifts, before the bread and wine, by members of the assembly.

5. The oils are received by the Priest and are then placed on a suitably prepared table in the sanctuary or in the repository where they will be reserved.

6. As each of the oils is presented, the following or other words may be used to explain the significance of the particular oil.

7. The people's response may be sung.

Reception of the Holy Oils

Presenter of the Oil of the Sick: The Oil of the Sick.

Priest: May the sick who are anointed with this oil experience the compassion of Christ and his saving love, in body and soul.

The people may respond: Blessed be God for ever.

Presenter of the Oil of Catechumens: The Oil of Catechumens.

Priest: Through anointing with this oil, may our catechumens who are preparing to receive the saving waters of Baptism be strengthened by Christ to resist the power of Satan and reject evil in all its forms. The people may respond: Blessed be God for ever.

Presenter of the Holy Chrism: The holy Chrism.

Priest: Through anointing with this perfumed Chrism may children and adults, who are baptized and confirmed, and Priests, who are ordained, experience the gracious gift of the Holy Spirit.

The people may respond: Blessed be God for ever.

The bread and wine for the Eucharist are then received and the Mass continues in the usual way.