

WITH HUMBLE SPIRIT

MARCH 2023

CALENDAR NOTES

MAR 5

Second Sunday of Lent

MAR 12

Third Sunday of Lent

There are several liturgical notes regarding Masses where the First Scrutiny is Celebrated:

- **ORATIONS:** Prayers are found in the Roman Missal, Ritual Masses, #2. A.
- **PREFACE:** The preface is proper as found for this Sunday of Lent.
- **READINGS:** The Year A readings are used.
- **RITE OF SCRUTINY:** The Rite of the First Scrutiny is found in RCIA, #15off.
- **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER:** Note the interpolations of the Eucharistic Prayer as indicated in the Missal.

MAR 19

Fourth Sunday of Lent

The notes above for the First Scrutiny apply when the Second Scrutiny is celebrated. The Rite of the Second Scrutiny is found in RCIA, #164ff.

MAR 20

Solemnity of St. Joseph (transferred due to precedence of the Fourth Sunday of Lent)

- **PRINCIPAL PATRON:** St. Joseph is the principal patron of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City. Consider praying in a special way for the Archdiocese in the Universal Prayers.
- **GLORIA AND CREED:** Both the Gloria and Creed are said.

ARS CELEBRANDI

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: THE EASTER VIGIL, PART I

No liturgical celebration throughout the year is as important as the Easter Vigil. It is “The celebration of the Paschal Mystery in the great Easter Eucharist, summit and source of the liturgical action and life of God’s people” (Elliot, *Ceremonies of the Liturgical Year*, #255). Nonetheless, the successful (i.e. beautiful, smooth, and proper) celebration of the Easter Vigil which promotes the participation of all present requires significant preparation, cooperation, and rehearsal. Such work can often seem to be overwhelming for pastors, RCIA coordinators, musicians, and others whose hard work is indispensable. But it is precisely the work of preparation and execution which makes the liturgical celebration liturgy: the work on behalf of the people of God.

I wish to offer a two-part article which makes some practical notes about the celebration of the Easter Vigil. This first article will make some general suggestions along with noticing particular instructions found in the Roman Missal for the first two parts of the vigil. The second article will make suggestions regarding the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation within the Easter Vigil, drawing on instructions found in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, and some final comments on the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Certainly, every priest who celebrates the Easter Vigil will have his own preferences. I offer my reflections having prepared the rite and having served as Master of Ceremonies for the Easter Vigil the past 8 years in various situations.

Ideally there is someone at your parish who will act as Master of Ceremonies for the Easter Vigil. This person is competent and knowledgeable about the rite, can help keep the liturgy flowing, has an unassuming yet authoritative presence in the sanctuary, and will work ahead of time to coordinate the planning and rehearsal of the rite. This person could be a deacon, a concelebrating priest, a seminarian, or another layperson who will assist. The key to the MC’s success (and thus the success of the Easter Vigil) will be a personal investment in the work of preparation.

Another key to a successful Easter Vigil is the preparation of the rites themselves. Principally, the texts for the vigil come from 3 sources: The Roman Missal, its Lectionary, and the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (in the future, OCIA: “Order...”). A helpful suggestion is to prepare a single document which orders these texts to be followed during the Easter Vigil. The Master of Ceremonies, then, has a single binder which he uses to direct everything that happens in the liturgy – a binder which the music director, RCIA director, and others may also utilize simultaneously.

It is stated in many places, “The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on the Sunday.” The “Circular Letter Concerning Preparation and Celebration of Easter Feasts” by the Congregation for Divine Worship interprets this instruction: “This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense” (78). Sunset, therefore, is not a minimum benchmark for determining the start time for the Easter vigil.

In Oklahoma City, Archbishop Coakley has established the

CALENDAR NOTES, CONT'D

MAR 20-26

Taste and See: Forty Hours Devotion Week

- **VOTIVE MASSES:** On March 21-24, Archbishop Coakley has given permission for the following votive Masses to be celebrated: #5: The Most Holy Eucharist, #7: The Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

MAR 25

The Annunciation of the Lord

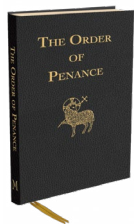
- **GLORIA AND CREED:** Both the Gloria and Creed are said. During the Creed, all genuflect at the words, "and by the Holy Spirit..."

MAR 26

Fifth Sunday of Lent

The notes above for the First Scrutiny apply when the Third Scrutiny is celebrated. The Rite of the Third Scrutiny is found in RCIA, #171ff.

RESOURCES FROM OUR OFFICE



The Order of Penance Revised 2023

The revised Order of Penance may be used now, and must be used beginning Divine Mercy Sunday, April 16, 2023. The official ritual books have been published by 4 different publishers, all of which are available for purchase in the office of the Secretariat for Divine Worship. In addition, other resources including pamphlets for the penitent and examinations of conscience are available for purchase.

Visit <https://archokc.org/new-penance> for more details.

following policy: The normal start of the Easter Vigil is at 8:30pm. It may not begin before 8:00pm without the explicit permission of the archbishop. This year (2023), sunset on Holy Saturday in Oklahoma City is at 7:57pm. Civil Twilight ends at 8:22pm. Therefore, the most appropriate time, according to liturgical norms, is to begin at 8:30pm or later.

"The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium" includes the blessing of the new fire, preparation, and lighting of the Paschal Candle, the entrance procession into the church, and the chanting of the Easter Proclamation (Exultet). Most Paschal Candles are already prepared. It would seem appropriate not to omit entirely #11 (the cutting of the cross, numbers, and alpha/omega) but instead to trace with a stylus or a finger that which is already prepared.

The procession into the church happens at this time. It is not envisioned by the Roman Missal that the liturgy of the Word or the vigil readings happen at a different location apart from the church where the rest of the liturgy occurs. Thus, the procession with the Paschal Candle is precisely into the church where the vigil occurs.

After the procession, the instruction reads, "And lights are lit throughout the church, except for the altar candles" (17). Elliot comments, "The lights of the church are supposed to be switched on at this point, but in practice it seems much better to defer this until after the Exultet and, where possible, to increase the light gradually until the church is fully illuminated at the Gloria" (#279). To fulfill the letter of the law, it might be suggested that some lights throughout the church are lit and dimmed if possible, but the full electric lighting of the church happen when the altar candles are lit at the *Gloria*.

The Liturgy of the Word includes nine readings in total. They are arranged in such a way that they represent seven Old Testament readings which would make up the vigil readings, and then an Epistle and Gospel, which are the readings for the Mass (as structured before the reform of the liturgy after the Second Vatican Council). The vigil used to have twelve Old Testament readings before the Holy Week revision of Pius XII reduced it to four. How many of the seven Old Testament readings should be read? The minimum is three, but if all seven are not read, four might be the most appropriate number given schema of the Holy Week revision. However, the third reading provided, the Exodus, may never be omitted.

The *Gloria* (which is the first indication that we are in a Mass) is sung while bells are rung as custom dictates. These may be the *Sanctus* bells, the church bells, or other bells. Note that it is the priest himself who is to intone the *Gloria*. The missal does not suggest that the altar should be incensed during this time, however, nor is it suggested that it be incensed before this. The altar is only incensed at the Easter Vigil during the preparation of the gifts, which is the Liturgy of the Eucharist proper.

After the reading of the Gospel, the homily may not be omitted. Due consideration might be given to the length of the vigil and the power of the rites themselves, however, and the homily should not be prolonged.

In the next article, we will investigate the last two parts of the vigil: the Baptismal liturgy and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. For a more detailed commentary on the Easter Vigil, see "[The Easter Vigil](#)" from *Ceremonies of the Liturgical Year* by Bishop Peter Elliott.

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Go Make Disciples

DIVINE WORSHIP

ARCHDIOCESE OF OKLAHOMA CITY