

Chapter II: Paschaltide through Pentecost

“Let us keep the holy feast of Pascha and then, adding day by day the holy Pentecost, which we regard as feast upon feast, we shall keep the festival of the Spirit.” St. Athanasius (4th century)

Paschaltide Easter Season

“Bright Week”- The Easter Octave

The first eight days of the Easter season make up the Octave of Easter and are celebrated as Solemnities of the Lord.

Singing the Easter sequence, *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, at Mass throughout the Easter Octave **is recommended**, though not required.

At the end of Masses during the Easter Octave, the **dismissal, as at Easter, is sung** by the deacon or priest; to which the people respond in song, *“Thanks be to God, Alleluia! Alleluia!”*¹ **It is also sung at the public recitation of Morning and Evening Prayer during the octave.** This sung dismissal is also prescribed to end the Masses on Pentecost Sunday.

Lectionary for the Easter Season²

The Sundays of Easter: The Gospel readings for the first three Sundays recount the appearances of the risen Christ. The readings about the Good Shepherd are assigned to the Fourth Sunday. On the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sundays, there are excerpts from the Lord’s discourse and prayer at the end of the Last Supper.

The first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles, in a three-year cycle of parallel and progressive selections: material is presented on the life of the early Church, its witness, and its growth.

For the reading from the Apostles[second reading], the First Letter of Peter is in Year A, the First Letter of John in Year B, the Book of Revelation in Year C. These are the texts that seem to fit in especially well with the spirit of joyous faith and sure hope proper to this season.

The Weekdays of Easter: As on the Sundays, the first reading is a semicontinuous reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The Gospel readings during the Easter octave are accounts of the Lord’s appearances. After that there is a semicontinuous reading of the Gospel of John, but with texts that have a paschal character, in order to complete the reading from John during Lent. This paschal reading is made up in large part of the Lord’s discourse and prayer at the end of the Last Supper.

¹ CB, no. 373.

² *Lectionary for Mass, editio typica altera*, (1981),[hereafter LM] Introduction, nos. 100-101.

Neophytes at Masses³

For adults [and children of catechetical age] who have received Christian initiation during the Easter Vigil, the whole of this period is given over to mystagogical catechesis.

Since the distinctive spirit and power of the period of postbaptismal catechesis or mystagogy derive from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community, its main setting is the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season. Besides being occasions for the newly-baptized to gather with the community and share in the mysteries, these celebrations include particularly suitable readings from the *Lectionary*, especially the readings for Year A.

Intercession should be made in the Eucharistic Prayer [either by name, or in general] for the newly baptized through the Easter octave in all places [according to the provisions made in the *Sacramentary (Ritual Masses, I. Christian Initiation: 3. Baptism (there are inserts for all four major Eucharistic prayers))*].

Throughout the Easter season, the neophytes should be assigned their own special place among the faithful. All neophytes should endeavor to participate at Mass along with their godparents. The homily and, as circumstances suggest, the general intercessions should take into account the presence and needs of the neophytes.

Some celebration should be held to conclude the period of mystagogical catechesis on or about Pentecost Sunday, depending upon local custom.

Paschaltide

Easter Season

Fifty Days, A 'Week' of Weeks⁴

The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one "great Sunday." These above all others are the days for the singing of the Alleluia. The Sundays of this season rank as the paschal Sundays and, after Easter Sunday itself, are called the Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Sundays of Easter. The period of fifty sacred days ends on Pentecost Sunday [after second Vespers].

The Regina Coeli replaces the Angelus⁵

By disposition of Pope Benedict XIV (2 April 1742), the *Angelus* is replaced with the antiphon *Regina Coeli* during Paschaltide. This antiphon, probably dating from the tenth or eleventh century, happily conjoins the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word (*quem meruisti portare*) with the Paschal event (*resurrexit sicut dixit*). The ecclesial community addresses this antiphon to Mary for the Resurrection of her Son. It adverts to, and depends on, the invitation to

³ RCIA, nos. 247-8.

⁴ GNLY, nos 22-26.

⁵ DPPL, 196.

joy addressed by Gabriel to the Lord's humble servant who was called to become the Mother of the saving Messiah (*Ave, gratia plena*). As with the *Angelus*, the recitation of the *Regina Coeli* could sometimes take a solemn form by singing the antiphon and proclaiming the Gospel of the resurrection.

Keep live plants alive in the Church Environment

Since the Easter season lasts fifty days, planning will encompass ways to sustain the decor until the fiftieth day of Pentecost. The use of living flowers and plants, rather than artificial greens, serves as a reminder of the gift of life God has given to the human community. Planning for plants and flowers should include not only the procurement and placement but also the continuing care needed to sustain living things.⁶

With this in mind, it is suggested to keep back some funds for "Easter flowers" until partway through the Easter season to maintain the festive floral decorations all the way to Pentecost.

Annual Blessing of Families in their Own Homes⁷

Pastors must regard as one of their primary pastoral duties the faithful visitation of families to bring the message of Christ's peace. They will thus obey the command of Christ to his disciples: "On entering any house, first say: 'Peace to this house'" (Luke 10:5).

They and their assistants must therefore consider as a sacred trust the custom of an annual visit, particularly during the Easter season, to the families living in their parish. The occasion is a rich opportunity to fulfill pastoral responsibilities that grow in effectiveness the more the priests come to know the families.⁸

Paschal Communion of the Homebound⁹

Pastors of souls will take every care to make it possible for the sick and aged to receive the Eucharist frequently, even if they are not gravely ill or in danger of death. In fact, if possible, this could be done every day, and should be done in paschal time especially.

Paschaltide

Octave of Easter, namely, *Divine Mercy Sunday*

In connection with the octave of Easter, recent years have witnessed the development and diffusion of a special devotion to the Divine Mercy based on the writings of St. Faustina Kowalska who was canonized 30 April 2000.¹⁰ Indeed, "the paschal Christ is the definitive

⁶ *Built of Living Stones*, nos 125, 129.

⁷ *Book of Blessings*, nos. 68-89. see also "Blessing of Homes During the Christmas and Easter Seasons," *Book of Blessings*, nos. 1597-1621.

⁸ *Book of Blessings*, nos. 68-9.

⁹ Sacred Congregation of Rites. Instruction, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*. 25 May 1967. no. 40.

¹⁰ *DPPL*, no. 154.

incarnation of mercy, his living sign which is both historico-salvific and eschatological. At the same time, the Easter liturgy places the words of the psalm on our lips: 'I shall sing forever of the Lord's mercy' (Ps 89)."¹¹

A booklet prepared by the religious Congregation of Marians of the Immaculate Conception, custodians of the National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, states the following:

To be sure, the Holy Father [Pope John Paul II] was well aware that the visions of Christ received by St. Faustina, and the messages and disciplines flowing from them, remain in the category of private revelations. St. Faustina's revelations add nothing new to this deposit of Faith, nor anything novel to the official liturgy of the Church. Thus, it remains true that no one is required by the Holy See, on Mercy Sunday, to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, or venerate the Image of The Divine Mercy, or do anything else that springs from St. Faustina's revelations. No priest could be called a "heretic", or in any way disobedient to liturgical law, for ignoring these things entirely.¹²

Mercy Sunday - Plenary Indulgence¹³

In a decree dated August 3, 2002, the Apostolic Penitentiary announced that in order to ensure that the faithful would observe this day (Divine Mercy Sunday) with intense devotion, the Supreme Pontiff himself established that this Sunday be enriched by a plenary indulgence...

The Second Sunday of Easter in the *Missale Romanum* (*editio typica tertia*) now bears the name, "*DOMINICA II PASCHÆ seu de divina Misericordia*" in English: *Sunday 2 of Easter, namely, Divine Mercy Sunday.*" While the readings and prayers for Mass on this day remain unchanged, the decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary gives the following guidance to preachers as they reflect on the mystery of Divine Mercy:

The Gospel of the Second Sunday of Easter narrates the wonderful things Christ the Lord accomplished on the day of the Resurrection during his first public appearance: *On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad to see the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you,' and then he breathed on them, and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained' (Jn 20,19-23).*

The plenary indulgence is granted under the usual conditions:

¹¹ Pope John Paul II. Encyclical letter, *Dives in Misericordia*, no. 8.

¹² Robert Stackpole, STD. *Understanding Divine Mercy Sunday*. John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, (Stockbridge, MA: 2003), p.6. www.divinemercysunday.com/UnderstandDM.pdf

¹³ *The Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (BCL) Newsletter*, February 2003, p.7.

- sacramental confession
- Eucharistic communion
- and prayer for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff

to the faithful who, on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honor of Divine Mercy,

or who,

in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite:

- the *Our Father* and the *Credo*, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. *Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!*).

Additional provisions are offered for those who are impeded from fulfilling these requirements, but wish to acquire the plenary indulgence. The full text of the decree may be found at: www.vatican.va/roman_curia/tribunals/apost_penit/documents/rc_trib_appen_doc_20020629_decree-ii_en.html.

Paschaltide

Second Week of Easter

Gospel Incipits are missing during the 2nd Week of Easter

In the *Lectionary*, the first words of the reading are called the *incipit*. For some readings this is a customary introductory phrase such as: ‘*At that time,*’ ‘*In those days,*’ ‘*Brothers and Sisters,*’ ‘*Dearly Beloved,*’ or ‘*Thus says the Lord.*’ These words are not given when the text itself provides sufficient indication of the time or the persons involved or where such phrases would not fit in with the very nature of the text. When the text is separated from its context, for the intelligibility of those hearing the proclamation, the *incipit* is supplied and is the proper beginning of the reading.¹⁴

As the *ordo* notes, on the Wednesday and Thursday of the Second Week of Easter (*LM* numbers 269 & 270) the publishers left out the proper *incipits* for the Gospel reading. The missing *incipit*, to give the context for the Lord’s words are: **“Jesus said to Nicodemus:”** This phrase should be supplied by the priest or deacon who proclaims the Gospel on these days.

Paschaltide

Special Days in the Easter Season

World Day of Prayer for Vocations (4th Sunday of Easter)

“Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: ‘For this is the will of God, your sanctification’.”¹⁵

¹⁴ see *LM*, no. 124.

¹⁵ Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 39.

Special prayers are to be offered today for those discerning their vocation/state in life. Particular prayers should be offered for an increase in vocations to the ministerial priesthood and consecrated religious life in the diocese of Crookston.

Feast of the Ascension

On November 16, 1998, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the provisions of canon 1246 §2, approved a procedure whereby the bishops of each ecclesiastical province would determine whether the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord would be transferred to the Seventh Sunday of Easter in their ecclesiastical province. The decision, confirmed by the Holy See in 1999, has now been acted upon by all ecclesiastical provinces in the United States. The ecclesiastical provinces of Boston, Hartford, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Atlanta and Nebraska have retained the celebration of the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord on the proper Thursday, while **all other provinces have transferred [permanently] this celebration to the Seventh Sunday of Easter.**¹⁶

7th Sunday of Easter readings

When the Ascension of the Lord is celebrated the following Sunday [replacing the 7th Sunday of Easter], the second reading and Gospel from the Seventh Sunday of Easter may be read on the Sixth Sunday of Easter.¹⁷

Yom ha Shoah: "Holocaust Remembrance Day"

While bearing their unique witness to the Holy One of Israel and to the *Torah*, the Jewish people have suffered much at different times and in many places. But the *Shoah* was certainly the worst suffering of all. The inhumanity with which the Jews were persecuted and massacred during this century is beyond the capacity of words to convey. All this was done to them for the sole reason that they were Jews.

The very magnitude of the crime raises many questions. Historians, sociologists, political philosophers, psychologists and theologians are all trying to learn more about the reality of the *Shoah* and its causes. Much scholarly study still remains to be done. But such an event cannot be fully measured by the ordinary criteria of historical research alone. It calls for a "moral and religious memory" and, particularly among Christians, a very serious reflection on what gave rise to it.¹⁸

"On the Sunday closest to *Yom ha Shoah*, Catholics should pray for the victims of the Holocaust and their survivors." The following serve as examples of petitions for the general

¹⁶ *The Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (BCL) Newsletter*; March 2001.

¹⁷ see *Lectionary for Mass* no. 57. (readings for 6th Sunday of Easter see *Lectionary for Mass*, no. 61)

¹⁸ Pontifical Commission For Religious Relations With the Jews, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*. March 16, 1998. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_16031998_shoah_en.html

intercessions at Mass.¹⁹ [Dates for Yom ha Shoah in upcoming years; Sat 10 April 2010; Sat 30 April 2011.]

- For the victims of the Holocaust, their families, and all our Jewish brothers and sisters, that the violence and hatred they experienced may never again be repeated, we pray to the Lord.
- For the Church, that the Holocaust may be a reminder to us that we can never be indifferent to the sufferings of others, we pray to the Lord.
- For our Jewish brothers and sisters, that their confidence in the face of long-suffering may spur us on to a greater faith and trust in God, we pray to the Lord.

Pentecost Novena

The weekdays after the Ascension until the Saturday before Pentecost inclusive are a preparation for the coming of the Holy Spirit.²⁰

The New Testament tells us that during the period between the Ascension and Pentecost “all...joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers” (Acts 1, 14) while they awaited being “clothed with the power from on high” (Lk 24, 49). The pious exercise of the Pentecost novena, widely practiced among the faithful, emerged from prayerful reflection on this salvific event.

Indeed, this novena is already present in the *Missal* and in the *Liturgy of the Hours*, especially in the second vespers of Pentecost: the biblical and euchological texts, in different ways, recall the disciples’ expectation of the Paraclete.

Where possible, the Pentecost novena should consist of the solemn celebration of vespers [on Pentecost Sunday]. Where such is not possible, the novena should try to reflect the liturgical themes of the days from Ascension to the Vigil of Pentecost.²¹

Paschaltide

Pentecost Sunday

Pentecost Extended Vigil Mass

This sacred period of fifty days concludes with Pentecost Sunday, when the gift of the Holy Spirit to the apostles (cf. Acts 2, 1-4), the beginnings of the Church, and the start of its mission to all tongues and peoples and nations are commemorated.

²⁰ GNLY, no. 26.

²¹ DPPL, no. 155.

The prolonged celebration of Mass in the form of a Vigil should be encouraged in cathedrals and some parishes. This Vigil, *whose character is not baptismal as in the Easter Vigil, but is one of urgent prayer, after the example of the apostles and disciples, who persevered together in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as they awaited the Holy Spirit.*²²

The Mass begins as usual; following the penitential rite, the priest or bishop sings (or says) the alternative opening prayer indicated in the *Sacramentary*.

The priest then invites the people, after the example of the Blessed Virgin, along with the Apostles and other disciples, to meditate upon God's wonderful deeds, and to pray that the work of the Spirit be made more manifest in the world.

After this, four readings from the Old Testament are proclaimed. The faithful are encouraged to meditate on these readings by the singing of a responsorial psalm, followed by a silent pause, and then by the celebrant's prayer [as at the Easter Vigil]. The prayers are to be chosen from the opening prayers of the days of the Seventh Week of Easter.

The order is as follows:

- ▶First Reading: Gen. 11:1-9;
- ▶Responsorial Psalm: Ps. 33: 10-15 (*Lectionary*, no. 339)
- ▶(Opening) Prayer from Monday of 7th Week of Easter
- ▶Second Reading: Exod. 19:3-8a, 16-20b;
- ▶Responsorial Psalm: (Ps) Dan 3: 52-56 (*Lectionary*, no. 164/165)
- ▶(Opening) Prayer from Tuesday of 7th Week of Easter
- ▶Third Reading: Ezek. 37:1-14;
- ▶Responsorial Psalm: Ps. 107:2-9 (*Lectionary*, no. 423)
- ▶(Opening) Prayer from Friday of 7th Week of Easter
- ▶Fourth Reading: Joel 3:1-5;
- ▶Responsorial Psalm: Ps 104:1-2a,24,35c,27-8,29bc-30 (*Lectionary*, no. 62/63)
- ▶(Opening) Prayer from Saturday of 7th Week of Easter
- ▶After the fourth prayer, all stand and sing the *Gloria*.
- ▶All are seated while Romans 8: 22-27 is proclaimed.
- ▶Pentecost Sequence (*Veni Sancte Spiritus*)
- ▶Gospel
- ▶The rest of the Mass is as usual.

At the end of Masses on Pentecost the **dismissal, as at Easter, is sung** by the deacon or priest; to which the people respond in song, **"Thanks be to God, Alleluia!, Alleluia!"**²³

²² PS, no. 107. The forms, biblical texts and prayers for the vigil of Pentecost - already published in some [non-English] editions of the *Missale Romanum* - are to be found in *Notitiae* 24 (1988) 156-159. cf. the *Ordo*.

²³ CB, no. 373.

Pentecost Sequence

The Sequence is a liturgical hymn that is sung [after the responsorial psalm and second reading] before the Gospel Acclamation on certain days. On Pentecost Day the sequence (*Veni Sancte Spiritus*), is required.²⁴

The Sequence may be sung by all together, or in alternation between the congregation and choir and cantor, or by the choir or cantor alone. The text from the *Lectionary for Mass* may be used, or a metrical paraphrase may be sung, provided that it is found in an approved collection of liturgical songs (i.e. a Catholic hymnal).²⁵ It would be of great pastoral advantage to make note of the origins and purpose of the sequence in the introduction to the Liturgy.

Sung Dismissal

At the end of Masses on Pentecost the dismissal, as at Easter, is sung by the deacon or priest; to which the people respond in song, “**Thanks be to God, Alleluia! Alleluia!**”²⁶

Pentecost Vespers

The period of fifty sacred days ends on Pentecost Sunday [after second Vespers].²⁷ Some celebration should be held to conclude the period of mystagogical catechesis on or about Pentecost Sunday, depending upon local custom.²⁸

²⁴ GIRM, 2002, no. 64.

²⁵ USCCB Committee on Divine Worship. *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, (a revision of *Music in Catholic Worship*). November 14, 2007. nos. 165-166.

²⁶ CB, no. 373.

²⁷ GNLY, nos 22-26.

²⁸ RCIA, nos. 247-248.