



NATIONAL CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CENTENARY HOUSE, NEAR TETTEH QUARSHIE INTERCHANGE

Tel: +233-0302-500491/0302-976222

E-mail: president@cbcgaha.org/
secretarygeneral@cbcgaha.org

P. O. Box KA 9712
Airport - Accra
Ghana/West Africa

COMPLEMENTARY GUIDELINES FROM THE GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE 2021 HOLY WEEK & SACRED TRIDUUM

Introduction

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has issued a note to Bishops and Episcopal Conferences on the celebration of 2021 Holy Week. The text offers basic guidelines to assist bishops in their task of providing for the spiritual welfare of pastors and faithful in living this great week in the Church's liturgical year. The Covid-19 pandemic presents the key challenge once again this year in celebrating these liturgies normally. The note calls for "prudent decisions in order that the liturgy can be celebrated fruitfully for the People of God...while respecting the safeguarding of health and what has been prescribed by the authorities responsible for the common good."

The Congregation refers to a **Decree it issued on March 25, 2020** and notes that the guidelines offered for the celebration of Holy Week in that document can be followed this year as well.

The following guidelines are therefore to moderate the celebrations of this year's Holy Week and Sacred Triduum:

- 1. Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord:** Holy Week begins with the celebration of Palm Sunday. "The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated within sacred buildings", the Decree says. When celebrated in Cathedral Churches, it specifies the second form from the Roman Missal is to be used, and the third form when it takes place in Parish Churches.

2nd 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 Passion of the Lord, Roman Missal, no. 12). The rubrics no. 13 continue: "Holding branches in their hands the faithful gather either outside, in front of the church door, or inside the church itself. The Priest and ministers and a representative group of the faithful go to a suitable place in the Church outside the sanctuary, where at least the greater part of the faithful can see the rite." According to the Decree, the second form is to be used in Cathedral Churches as indicated earlier.

- a. **3rd Form: The Simple Entrance:** This form does not include the blessing of the palms. Mass begins the usual way. According to the Decree, this form is to be used in Parish Churches and in other places.
- b. **Palm branches:** parishioners are to bring their palm branches and hold them high for the blessings.

2. The Chrism Mass

It is to be celebrated in every diocese on Holy Thursday, on another day of Holy Week or transferred to an appropriate time later.

3. Holy Thursday

The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the procession is also omitted. While respecting the two-hour duration given by the State, parishioners may be allowed to adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament before It is transferred to the place of repose.

4. Good Friday

i. **Dramatization of the Passion of Jesus**

It has become a common practice that the Passion of Jesus is dramatized by the youth before the commencement of the **Way of the Cross**. It is recommended that the drama be cancelled for this year.

ii. **The Solemn Intercessions**

In the Solemn Intercessions, Bishops could arrange to have a special intention prepared for those who find themselves in distress, the sick, the dead, (cf. *Missale Romanum*).

iii. **Adoration of the Holy Cross**

Concerning the adoration of the Cross, the first form is to be used; that is: "The priest, standing before the altar and facing the people, receives the Cross, uncovers a little of its upper part and elevates it while beginning the **Behold the wood of the Cross**. Then the priest uncovers the right arm of the Cross and again, raising up the Cross, begins: **Behold the wood of the Cross** and everything takes place as above. Finally, he uncovers the Cross entirely and, raising it up, he begins the invitation **Behold the wood of the Cross** a third time and everything takes place like the first time." Kissing of the Cross is to be discouraged. A simple bow to show reverence to the Cross is recommended.

5. The Easter Vigil: This Vigil called the Mother of all vigils is in four parts:

a. **Service of the Light** or *Lucernarium*

It has to be celebrated outside the Church respecting the Covid-19 protocols.

b. The Liturgy of the Word

During the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word, no commentaries should be allowed. Two Old Testament readings are to be chosen in addition to the obligatory text: Exodus 14: 15: 15: 1; the readings from the Epistle, Romans 6 and the Gospel, Mark 16 should be maintained.

c. Baptismal Liturgy

To be able to work within the two-hour duration directive given by the President of the nation, only the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” is to be maintained.

d. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

This part of the Mass should not be unduly prolonged.

6. Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is indeed the Day the Lord has made. Most Parishes conduct Mini Harvests on this special day. While celebrating this joyful day, pastors should bear in mind and respect the two-hour duration of religious activities instructed by the President of the nation.

7. Easter Monday Picnic Celebration

It has become a common practice that the Monday after Easter Sunday parishes organize picnic, the social aspect of the celebration of the Lord’s resurrection. This year’s picnic should be cancelled so that the gatherings will not become breeding grounds for the spread of the pandemic.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude this guideline with this beautiful prayer from **PREFACE IV OF EASTER** which becomes our prayer in the midst of the COVID-19: “For, with the old order destroyed, a universe cast down is renewed and integrity of life is restored to us in Christ.” Through this annual celebration of the Solemnity of Easter, may the Resurrected Christ heal our land and our world. Happy Easter to you all!



MOST REV. PHILIP NAAMEH
METROPOLITAN ARCHBISHOP OF TAMALE &
PRESIDENT, GHANA CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021