

**LITURGICAL COMMISSION**  
**ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SASKATOON**

Memorandum

2 February 2021

As we approach the Lenten Season, we draw your attention to the following liturgical matters:

- The *Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments* in response to concerns during this year's pandemic has specified how the blessing and distribution of the Ashes is to take place:

*The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel", or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything. (cf. Appendix I – CDWDS)*

- Some have asked whether the distribution can take place outside of Mass. This is indeed possible. We draw your attention to the rubrics in the Missal which specifies how this ideally may be done on Ash Wednesdays:

*The blessing and distribution of ashes may also take place outside Mass. In this case the rite is preceded by a Liturgy of the Word, with the Entrance Antiphon, the Collect, and the readings with their chants as at Mass. Then there follow the Homily and the blessing and distribution of ashes. The rite is concluded with the Universal Prayer, the Blessing, and the Dismissal of the Faithful. (cf. The Roman Missal, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*

During these extraordinary times the priests may use this or a simplified format (perhaps omitting homily or music etc.) of this distribution where pastorally necessary. This option may assist in safely and practically facilitating a greater participation of the faithful throughout this day which marks the beginning of the Lenten season. Priests may also choose to distribute Ashes as pastorally necessary beyond Ash Wednesday into the initial days of Lent.

- The CCCB – after consultation with and direction from Rome (CDWDS) – has approved the amendment to the English translation of the Trinitarian conclusion for the 'Proper' Prayers of the Mass (i.e. Collect, Over the Gifts, Post-Communion). The priest concludes the prayers with the omission of the word 'one' such that it reads as the following (GIRM n.54):

- a) if the prayer is directed to the Father: *Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever;*
- b) if the prayer is directed to the Father, but the Son is mentioned at the end: *Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever;*
- c) if the prayer is directed to the Son: *Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.*

These changes take effect Ash Wednesday 2021. Practically speaking, it is not necessary to mark up the Missal with the changes as it so frequently occurs – rather the celebrant is to simply integrate the change into his recitation. You will note that upcoming translations of new prayers and revised rituals will include this change in future publications. (cf. Appendices ii-iv include the CDWDS & CCCB documents).

- Each year, questions arise regarding the commencement time of the Easter Vigil. The rubrics speak of the Vigil's timing: *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.* (cf. The Roman Missal, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). This means sometime after sundown which in the Saskatoon area is 7.45pm on April 3, 2021. Customarily, some time is given after this point for the lingering light to fade. It is suggested that the Easter Vigil celebration this year not be scheduled prior to 8.00pm.

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After consulting the appended resources – if you have any further questions regarding these our other liturgical matters – feel free to contact Fr. Geoffrey Young ([gyoung@rcdos.ca](mailto:gyoung@rcdos.ca) | 639-471-3246).