

NOTE OF THE CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS

CELEBRATION OF HOLY WEEK 2021

Prot. N. 96/21

**NOTE TO BISHOPS AND EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES
ON THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY WEEK 2021**

The intention of this Note is to offer some simple guidelines in order to aid Bishops in their task of judging concrete situations and providing for the spiritual welfare of pastors and faithful in living this Great Week of the liturgical year.

We are still facing the drama of the COVID-19 pandemic which has brought many changes, even to our normal way of celebrating the liturgy. The norms and directives contained in the liturgical books, drawn up with normal times in view, are not entirely applicable in exceptional moments of crisis such as these. For this reason, the Bishop as moderator of the liturgical life of his Church, is called upon to make prudent decisions in order that the liturgy can be celebrated fruitfully for the People of God and for the good of the souls entrusted to his care, while respecting the safeguarding of health and what has been prescribed by the authorities responsible for the common good.

Once again we remind Bishops of the [Decree issued by this Dicastery by mandate of the Holy Father on 25 March 2020](#) (Prot. N. 154/20) in which some guidelines were offered for the celebration of Holy Week. That statement is also valid this year. We therefore invite you to re-read it in view of the decisions that Bishops will have to make about the upcoming Easter celebrations in the particular situation of their country. Many countries still have strict lockdown conditions in force rendering it impossible for the faithful to be present in church, while in others a more normal pattern of worship is being resumed.

- The use of social media has greatly aided pastors in offering support and closeness to their communities during the pandemic. Alongside these positive results problematic aspects were also observed. For the celebration of Holy Week it is suggested that media coverage of the celebrations presided over by the Bishop be facilitated and favoured, encouraging the faithful who are unable to attend their own church to follow the diocesan celebrations as a sign of unity.

- In all celebrations, in conjunction with the Episcopal Conference, attention should be paid to some particular moments and gestures, in accordance with healthcare requirements (cf. Letter of the Cardinal Prefect to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences *Let us return to the Eucharist with joy!*, 15 August 2020, Prot. N. 432/20).

- The Chrism Mass can be moved to another more suitable day, if necessary; a significant representation of pastors, ministers and faithful should participate.

- For the celebration of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil the indications given last year are valid.

- The preparation of suitable aids for family and personal prayer is encouraged, also by making use of some parts of the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

The Congregation sincerely thanks Bishops and Episcopal Conferences for responding in a pastoral manner to a rapidly changing situation over the course of the year. We are aware that the decisions

taken have not always been easy for pastors or the lay faithful to accept. However, we know that they were taken with a view to ensuring that the sacred mysteries be celebrated in the most effective way possible for our communities, while respecting the common good and public health.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Ash Wednesday, 17 February 2021.

Robert Card. Sarah
Prefect

✠ Arthur Roche
Archbishop

L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition, 19 February 2021.