

# MEMORANDUM



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
**DIOCESE**  
*of Calgary*

DATE Tuesday, January 12, 2021

TO Parishes

FROM Fr. Wilbert Chin Jon

SUBJECT REVISED LITURGICAL GUIDANCE: The Optional Memorial of Saint Blaise, World Day of the Sick, Ash Wednesday, and Palm Sunday

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This liturgical guidance is being sent to you today since Ash Wednesday (February 17) is almost a month away and the corresponding decisions such as the ordering of palms for Palm Sunday is looming.

Liturgical guidance on the season of Lent and on the Paschal Triduum will be released in installments.

## The Optional Memorial of Saint Blaise

- The optional memorial of Saint Blaise is on Wednesday, February 3.
- Throats may be blessed after Mass on the day of the memorial or at any time during the year. (Ordo notes, page 135)
- The crossed candles are not used for the blessing this year.
- The blessing after Mass should be given to the congregants all at once using the prescribed formula with the sign of the cross.
- Individual blessings outside of the Mass can also be given using the prescribed formula, but candles are not to be used this year to avoid any physical contact. Masks will be required of the priest/deacon and the faithful.

## World Day of the Sick

- The optional memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes is traditionally used to commemorate the World Day of the Sick on Thursday, February 11.
- Before the pandemic, the celebration of the Anointing of the Sick during the Mass was a practice that was taking place in some parishes in the Diocese. Under current conditions of the pandemic, parishes are strongly discouraged from incorporating the celebration of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick with the Mass.
- An appropriate petition should be included in the Universal Prayer. (Ordo notes, page 141)
- This year, we should especially keep in mind those who have suffered from COVID-19. Additional resources will be provided through the Beyond Bulletin Insert mail-out.

## Ash Wednesday

### Preparation and Planning

- Previous to the pandemic, Ash Wednesday Masses were well attended. Parishes should determine with the parish leadership team if additional Masses are required on Ash Wednesday this year.
- Any parish that may experience difficulty in securing ashes this year should inform the dean for assistance.
- The distribution of the ashes either on days before or after Ash Wednesday (February 17) is not allowed.
- The Diocese will provide communication materials ahead of Ash Wednesday on the distribution of ashes, please share this message to your parishioners through the bulletin and mail-out, parish website and social media, and announcements at Mass.

### The Distribution of Ashes

- The formula for the distribution (Repent... / Remember...) is said once as a general pronouncement to the congregation and one general response (“Amen”) is to be made by all congregants.
- The ashes are to be distributed by sprinkling on the crown of the head and not by tracing on the forehead. This removes any physical contact that may increase the risk of transmission.
- Similar to the distribution of Holy Communion, all who intend to receive the ashes are required to wear a mask, even those who claim mask exemption due to health conditions. Face shields are not considered masks.
- **NOTE:** Avoid moistening the ashes with the holy water since the ashes will be sprinkled. This year, we do not need to make a paste of the ashes.
- For further details, please refer to the attached **NOTE ON ASH WEDNESDAY: Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic** released by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.

### The Proper Setting for the Distribution

- As a pastoral provision, when the distribution takes place outside of the liturgical gathering, in one-on-one settings such as when visiting the sick or when parishioners come to the office on Ash Wednesday to request the ashes, the formula is said while properly distanced before approaching to sprinkle the ashes on the crown of the head. Masks remain mandatory for both the minister and the faithful.
- Most of the schools are going to be on a break during the week of Ash Wednesday. Parishes and the schools that are in session can decide if ashes will be distributed to students and the location based on the restrictions and protocols of the time.
- If care centres request the distribution of ashes, parishes should comply with their protocols and should keep the distribution brief.
- The distribution of the ashes outdoors in the parking lot or in the streets are not allowed as these may be deemed as outdoor gatherings and these places do not lend themselves to a prayerful setting such as when done within the liturgical service.

### Palm Sunday

- Parishes have the ability to decide if palms are going to be distributed on Palm Sunday this year. Therefore, the ordering of palms is not a requirement. Liturgical guidance on *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord* will be provided in the coming weeks.

Anglice

Prot. N. 17/21

**NOTE ON ASH WEDNESDAY**  
**Distribution of Ashes in Time of Pandemic**

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.

From the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, 12 January 2021.

Robert Card. Sarah  
Prefect

✠Arthur Roche  
Archbishop Secretary