

# Information, Advice & Reminders

LENT - EASTER 2024

13 November 2023

Dear Parish Priests, Parish Leaders, Office staff and Leadership Teams, Liturgy, Sacraments of Initiation and RCIA Teams,

With a relatively early celebration of both the Season of Lent and the Solemnity of Easter in 2024, the Office of Worship and Prayer, together with the Diocesan Liturgy Council (DLC), would like to provide the following information, advice, and reminders to assist you in planning for the various liturgical celebrations that belong to both Lent and Easter.

## 1. Ash Wednesday

The distribution of ashes normally takes place during Mass. In circumstances where Mass is not possible, ashes may be distributed during a Liturgy of the Word. See the Book of Blessings Ch 52 p 703 ff. [The Book of Blessings is available on LiturgyHelp.]

## 2. Rite of Election

The Rite of Election for Catechumens will be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent (18 February 2024) in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton, commencing at 2.30pm. Bishop Michael will be presiding.

As mentioned in previous years, this is an important celebration in the life of our Church of Maitland-Newcastle and not just for those seeking Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil. All members of the faithful are encouraged to attend to support our catechumens. It would be wonderful for them to experience a Cathedral full of people praying with and for them.

Additional information will be made available well in advance of the beginning of Lent to assist parishes who have catechumens to prepare for the Rite of Election.

## 3. The Chrism Mass

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated as usual on the Tuesday night of Holy Week (26 March 2024) in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Hamilton, commencing at 7pm.

Further information will be provided and sort well in advance of the Chrism Mass. Please note, given that parish oil quantity requirements do not change from year to year, the oil for parishes will be prepared as usual. If your requirements have changed, please contact [Sharon Murphy](#).

## 4. Paschal Candles

Those parishes who purchase their Paschal Candle from Jamberoo Abbey are encouraged to do so as early as possible. The usual diocesan collection will be around 15 February which is the very beginning of Lent. If you get your order in early,

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please mark is 'Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle - to be collected.' This does save you a lot in postage. Candles will be available as usual at the Chrism Mass.

## 5. The Easter Triduum

Over previous years the DLC has offered extensive formation on the preparation and celebration of the Easter Triduum. Many of the resources from this formation are on the [diocesan website](#), including the [foundational presentation](#). This may provide a good resource for parish liturgy teams preparing the celebration of the Triduum.

Key points to for consideration include:

- The Triduum is one liturgy with three key moments: Holy Thursday, The Passion of the Lord on Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. One Liturgy, with one presider celebrated by one community. That does not preclude multi-church parishes celebrating each moment in a different church building.
- The Triduum is celebrated as a whole. Good Friday is never celebrated separate to Holy Thursday and the Easter Vigil.
- If small parishes are unable to celebrate the Easter Triduum worthily due to small numbers and insufficient ministers, then they mark Easter with Easter Sunday Mass. If possible, they may also celebrate the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. This question arose in a number of small country parishes last year, particularly where people traditionally go away for Easter.

## 6. Public Devotions on Good Friday

It is customary and indeed beneficial for public devotions, especially the Stations of the Cross, to take place on Good Friday. There are also other options available that parishes may wish to consider. None of these opportunities require the presence or leadership of an ordained minister.

Such devotions are geared towards participation in the liturgical celebration of the Paschal Triduum and are not a substitute for such participation. Accordingly, great care must be taken to ensure that any public devotions do not take place at the customary time for the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord (3pm).

The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord is the **only** event that takes place at 3pm on Good Friday.

## 7. The Beginning of the Easter Vigil

The timing of the Easter Vigil will be problematic in 2024 because Easter is so early, and we will thus still be operating with daylight saving in place. The *Roman Missal* reminds us that "The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the

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night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on the Sunday”  
(*Roman Missal, The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night*, n.3).

The website of Geoscience Australia indicates that 'Nautical Twilight' ('nightfall') will take place at **7.44pm AEDT**. This is the earliest time the Easter Vigil can begin.

The Circular Letter *Paschales Solemnitatis* On Preparing and Celebrating the Paschal Feasts, issued by the then Congregation for Divine Worship in 1988, makes it clear that there is no option about when the celebration of the Easter Vigil may commence:

This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. Reprehensible are those abuses and practices which have crept in many places in violation of this ruling, whereby the Easter Vigil is celebrated at the time of day that it is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses. (*Paschales Solemnitatis*, n.78)

## 8. Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil

It is good to remember that Baptism belongs to the Easter Vigil. Catechumens who are ready (the Elect) should be baptised, confirmed and admitted to Communion during the Easter Vigil.

Candidate ready for reception into the Church would ideally be received and Confirmed during the Mass on Easter Sunday or at some other suitable time during the Easter Season.

Indeed, Candidates for reception into the Church can be received at any time during the year; it is not limited to either the Easter Vigil or the Easter Season.

## 9. The Importance of Easter Sunday

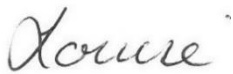
Given the significance applied to the celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday, it is understandable that sometimes the celebration of the Mass on Easter Sunday is seen as the poor cousin of the Easter Triduum. Indeed, the celebration of the Easter Vigil does *not* mark the end of the Paschal Triduum.

It must be recognized that Easter Sunday Mass is a celebration that attracts a large number of people, and it thus requires an appropriate amount of "great solemnity" during its celebration (q.v. *Paschales Solemnitatis*, n.97). This call for "great solemnity" recognises that we are still celebrating the Day of the Lord's Resurrection, and so this Mass during the Day has its own importance.

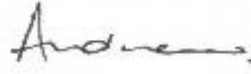
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If you require any assistance or support in relation to any of the information outlined here or any other questions you would like to explore, please contact the Office Worship and Prayer or Fr Andrew Doohan (Master of Ceremonies).



Louise Gannon rsj  
Manager, Worship and Prayer



Fr Andrew Doohan  
Chair, Diocesan Liturgy Council