



# Prairie Praise

A newsletter from the  
Office of Worship  
Diocese of New Ulm  
Lent 2008

## Lent and Triduum Preparations

*Dear Friends, for five weeks of Lent we have been preparing, by works of charity and self-sacrifice, for the celebration of our Lord's paschal mystery. Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the whole church throughout the world.*  
(*Sacramentary, Introduction to Passion Sunday*)

Lent begins on February 6. The season of prayer, penance, and almsgiving (works of charity) is an opportunity for the faithful to seek conversion in preparation for the Easter sacraments and personal spiritual growth. While every detail of worship preparation can not be dealt with here, the following presents some clarifications of certain issues regarding Lent and Holy Week liturgies.

### ***Ash Wednesday***

The Blessing and distribution of ashes takes place on Ash Wednesday. Weeks before Ash Wednesday, it is customary and appropriate to invite parishioners to bring their blessed



palms from the previous Palm Sunday to be burned for the ashes that will be used on Ash Wednesday. If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the ashes may be blessed and distributed within the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word. The minister of blessing is a bishop, priest or deacon. If pastoral need requires it, others such as extraordinary ministers or deacons may distribute the blessed ashes. Blessed ashes may be brought to the sick and homebound. The Penitential Rite is omitted at Mass.

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### ***Lenten Characteristics***

Apart from the fourth Sunday of Lent and on solemnities and feasts the altar should not be decorated with flowers. Musical instruments should be played in a manner that only gives necessary support to the singing. This is to bring out the penitential character of Lent, helping to create added festivity during the Easter season. More silence in the liturgy is appropriate during the season. The Alleluia is suppressed in all hymnody and in the Gospel Acclamation. It is appropriate to sing or chant the penitential rite during Lent to give emphasis to the penitential nature of the season. The Gloria is not sung during the Lenten liturgies, except for on feasts.

This year, the feast of the Chair of Peter will be celebrated on February 22 and St. Joseph on March 15. White vestments, flowers, and the singing of the Gloria make these celebrations more festive.

In some parishes the practice of dry water fonts and baptismal fonts has become popular. However there is no provision for this in the liturgical books. We sign ourselves with water as a reminder of our baptism, but it can also serve as an act of ritual cleansing which is in harmony with the spirit of Lent. The Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome has addressed this issue in a letter (Prot.569/00/L- March 14, 2000) that prohibits the practice of emptying water fonts during Lent.

### ***R.C.I.A.***

The Rite of Sending is done on the first weekend of Lent in anticipation of the Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion which is held at the Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults includes the celebration of the scrutinies on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent. The scrutinies uncover and heal the weaknesses in the Elect (those to be baptized at the Easter Vigil) and give them strength to continue with the final steps of the process of conversion. The scrutinies are not for the baptized candidates.

### ***Holy Thursday***

Holy water is removed from all fonts on Holy Thursday, which remain empty until filled with the new holy water blessed at the Easter Vigil.

The sacred oils blessed at the Chrism Mass are received at the Holy Thursday Mass. Oils can be reserved in Oratories that will use them for the sacraments.

The washing of the feet, or Mandatum, is a central feature of the Holy Thursday liturgy. It is not an optional rite and should not be substituted with the washing of hands. There is nothing in the rubrics that indicate the number of twelve in this ritual. The washing of the feet is not a dramatization but is a powerful symbol of our identity as a servant and humble people.



The Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy issued a statement in 1987 regarding the custom of inviting both men and women to participate in this ritual: While this variation may differ from the rubric of the Sacramentary which mentions only men (*veri selecti*) it may nevertheless be said that the intention to emphasize service along with charity in the celebration of the rite is an understandable way of accentuating the evangelical command of the Lord, "who came to serve and not to be served," that all members of the Church must serve one another in love. (Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, February 16, 1987. See BCL Newsletter 1987, Volume XXIII February)

The Blessed Sacrament is transferred to the altar of reposition. It is preferred that the tabernacles from all the parishes of the Area Faith Community be emptied prior to the Holy Thursday Mass with the appropriate provisions made for Communion of the sick and homebound on Good Friday.

### ***Good Friday***

Good Friday is the day we reflect on the Passion, adore the cross and pray for the salvation of the entire world. The adoration of the cross is the most important action in this liturgy. Only one cross should be used for veneration (Sacramentary #19) which helps to bring out the centrality of this symbol, which is the focus of the liturgy for Good Friday. The cross for veneration should be of appropriate size and beauty (*Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*, #68).

While one could argue that this part of the Triduum is a liturgy of a word, there is no indication that a deacon or lay person should lead this. The ritual itself envisions the priest being assisted by a deacon. Furthermore, Good Friday is part of the continuous liturgy of the Triduum which requires the priest as the presider. Deacons or lay persons could lead the Stations of the Cross or some other devotional prayer that is customarily done in the parish on Good Friday.

### ***Holy Saturday***

The Easter Vigil begins when it is dark. Parishes in the Diocese of New Ulm begin the Vigil no earlier than 8:15 p.m. “This rule is to be taken according to its strictest sense. Reprehensible are those abuses and practices that have crept into many places in violation of this ruling, whereby the Easter Vigil is celebrated at the time of the day that is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses.” (Circular Letter #78)

One Easter Vigil per Area Faith Community is preferred if possible. The circular letter *Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* points out that: “It would be desirable if on occasion provisions were made for several communities to assemble in one church, wherever their proximity one to another or small numbers mean that a full and festive celebration could not otherwise take place” (no. 94).

The first thing sung during the vigil is the acclamation “Christ our Light”. There is no provision for an opening song or a prelude piece, as this liturgy is a continuation of the Triduum. (Notice that there is no dismissal on Holy Thursday or Good Friday.) With joy, the Alleluia is proclaimed after the reading of the Epistle and is now sung significantly in the hymns and songs throughout the Easter Season. Care should be taken to extend the Easter environment throughout the fifty days of the season.



In preparing for the liturgies of the Triduum, it is important that a mixture of liturgical ministers from all the parishes of the Area Faith Community be called upon the following resources will be of value. You can contact the Office of Worship for other clarifications regarding the celebrations of Lent and Holy Week.

- The Sacramentary and the Lectionary*
- The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)*
- General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)*
- General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar (GNLY)*
- Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and the Celebration of the Easter Feasts.*
- The Order of Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and Celebration of the Eucharist, 2006 (Ordo)*



## **New Music Document Approved by the United States Catholic Bishops**

The new music document, *Sing Unto the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, is a must read for anyone involved in liturgical music. Approved in November by the U.S. bishops and awaiting approval from Rome, this new document will replace the documents *Music in Catholic Worship* and *Liturgical Music Today*. You can view and download the document at <http://www.usccb.org/liturgy/> and scrolling down to the section “What’s new”.

## Future Diocesan Events

January 19-April 18, 2008

**Area Faith Community Missions**

January 20, 2008

3:30 p.m.

**Ecumenical Celebration of the Word**

Church of St. Mary, New Ulm

February 10, 2008

3:00 p.m.

**Rite of Election and Call to**

**Continuing Conversion**

Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm

March 13, 2008

7:00 p.m.

**Chrism Mass**

Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, New Ulm

June 22, 2008

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Diocesan Festival**

**“Celebrating the Present”**

Redwood Falls Community Center

### Mission Prayer

Lord God, we praise and bless your holy name for calling each of us into loving union with you through your son Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit.

For fifty years, you have blessed our Diocese with faith-filled priests, dedicated religious, and devoted laity, consisting of loving spouses, caring single men and women, as well as energetic youth eager to hear your Word and respond with loving service.

Open the hearts of us all to Jesus. Give us courage to speak his name and to share his love. Through the grace of our Area Faith Community's mission, may we all be renewed in our baptismal commitment.

Grant us more priestly and religious vocations so that all people continue to be invited to know and love Jesus as their Redeemer.

We ask this through Him who is our Great High priest, and who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Mary, Patroness of our Diocese, pray for us.

