Liturgical Memos

March 25: 
Solemnity of the Annunciation
In 2022, this solemnity falls on a Friday in Lent and is not a day of abstinence from meat (cf. CIC, 1251).

April 3: 
Veiling of Crosses and Images
Crosses may be covered until the end of the Good Friday Liturgy. Images may be covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

April 11: 
Reconciliation Monday
Parishes are asked to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 2-4pm and 6-9pm on Holy Monday.

April 17-June 5: 
Easter Season
The Paschal candle should be placed near the altar or ambo from the Easter Vigil through Evening Prayer of Pentecost Sunday. This candle need be lit only in “the more solemn liturgical celebrations” of the Easter season (Roman Missal, “Easter Vigil”, 70).

Days of Prayer and Special Observances

Throughout its history, the Church has celebrated special days of prayer for the needs of the local community and the world. These observances are meant to encourage the Church to continually “entreat the Lord for the various needs of humanity” (Universal Norms on the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, 45).

For centuries, days of prayer took the form of the Ember and Rogation Days. The origins of the Ember Days are enshrouded in mystery, but, suffice it to say, scholars agree that these observances are very ancient. The Ember Days were regularly celebrated four times a year, on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday within the same week. Their name derives from the Anglo-Saxon word ymbren,
which refers to the circuit or revolution of the annual cycle of the year.

Pope Leo the Great (440-461) is the first pontiff to have written extensively on the celebration and meaning of the Ember Days. In one of his winter Ember Day sermons, he noted that these days had long been marked by Christian fasting, “so that we may learn from the constant recurrent annual cycle that we are in constant need of purification.” He also commented that the Ember Days were a time to thank God for the fruits of the earth that were harvested throughout the year. This expression of gratitude was most properly directed through almsgiving, by which the harvest was offered back to God by means of the divine image present in those who are less fortunate. Finally, Leo stated that the harvest yields were indicative of the blessings of the eternal life to come, for which Christians must prepare themselves by means of fervent prayer. In summary, Leo’s commentary indicates that the Ember Days were regularly scheduled times throughout the year when Christians would engage in special ascetical activities in thanksgiving for the gifts of the earth and in preparation for the gift of heaven that awaited them.

The Rogation Days, with which the Ember Days are often grouped, sprang from a different pastoral focus. There was, in the ancient Roman culture, a popular celebration observed on April 25 called Robigalia. This feast was held in honor of the Roman god Robigus, who was associated with mildew and other kinds of agricultural threats. On April 25, Robigus was invoked by the pagan populace to ward off mildew from grain during the growing season. Farmers would even process around the perimeter of their fields, praying to Robigus and asking him to protect their crops. As was often the case in the early centuries of the Church, followers of Jesus sought to suppress this pagan observance by instituting a Christian counterpart. In place of Robigalia, the Roman Church chose to sing a lengthy litany invoking God’s protection on Rome and its inhabitants while processing around the outer limits of the city.

In Gaul, a similar practice was observed on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Thursday; on these days, a procession around diocesan or parish boundaries was accompanied by what
were known as the “lesser litanies,” which were inspired by the “greater litany” sung in Rome on April 25. Altogether, these four days of procession during the year (April 25 and the three days before the Ascension) came to be referred to as “Rogation Days,” whose title stems from the Latin word *rogare*, or “to ask.” On the Sunday before Ascension Thursday, the Gospel was taken from John 16, where Jesus tells his disciples, “Ask, and you shall receive.” This focus on asking God for His assistance was linked to the petitionary litanies that took place in the days to follow, and it was this connection that led to referring to these days, along with April 25, as “Rogation Days.”

Closer to our own time, the current *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar* instituted the following reforms of these ancient observances:

> On Rogation and Ember Days, the practice of the Church is to offer prayers to the Lord for the needs of all people, especially for the productivity of the earth and for human labor, and to give him public thanks. In order to adapt the Rogation and Ember Days to various regions and the different needs of the people, the conferences of bishops should arrange the time and plan for their celebration. Consequently, the competent authority should lay down norms, in view of local conditions, on extending such celebrations over one or several days and on repeating them during the year. On each day of these celebrations the Mass should be one of the votive Masses for various needs and occasions that is best suited for the intentions of the petitioners (45-47).

Here, the *General Norms* emphasize the importance of regularly observing days of prayer for the needs of the local community and offering thanks for blessings received throughout the year. In many ways, this focus corresponds with the motivation behind the Ember and Rogations Days as they had always been celebrated, albeit allowing for greater variation as to how these themes will find expression during the year in light of local needs and circumstances.

During the twentieth century, the Holy See instituted several special annual observances. The World Day of Migrants and Refugees, for example, was first celebrated in 1914, during a time when many Italians were emigrating to other countries and regions following World War I. The World Day of Peace was inaugurated by Pope Saint Paul VI in 1967 and has since become a day when popes frequently issue magisterial declarations on the Church’s social teaching. In the United States, there is a special observance on January 22 which marks the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children. This day is somewhat unique amongst the special days of prayer, in that proper liturgical texts have been composed for this observance; these may be found in the US edition of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. 
The Liturgy Office frequently receives requests for a listing of the days of prayer that are observed locally and throughout the Universal Church. These may be found listed below:

- **World Day of Peace** .......................................................... January 1
- **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** .................................. January 18–25
- (USA) **Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children** .................. January 22
- **Sunday of the Word of God** ............................................. Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
- **World Day for Consecrated Life** .......................... Sunday following February 2 [USA]
- **World Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking** .......... February 8
- **World Day of the Sick** ....................................................... February 11
- **World Day of Prayer for the Church in China** ........................ May 24
- **World Communications Day** ........................................... Seventh Sunday of Easter
- **World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests/Solemnity of the Sacred Heart**
- **World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation** .......................... September 1
- **Catechetical Sunday** ...................................................... Third Sunday of September [USA]
- **World Day of Migrants and Refugees** ............................. Last Sunday of September
- **World Mission Sunday** .................................................... Penultimate Sunday of October
- **World Youth Day** ......................................................... Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time [USA]
- **World Day of the Poor** .................................................... Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

**Liturgical Q and A: Tabernacles with Glass Windows**

In recent years, many parishes throughout the Archdiocese have instituted regularly scheduled periods of extended or perpetual adoration of the exposed Blessed Sacrament. Many pastors have noted that it can sometimes be difficult to maintain an adequate number of committed adorers throughout the year. This can present a challenge, as liturgical law states that the exposed Blessed Sacrament must never be left alone, both out of reverence for the Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and for reasons of safety and security. It can also happen that, from time to time, an adorer may not be able to be present for his or her scheduled time due to illness or some other emergency. When a substitute cannot be found at the last minute, it may become necessary to repose the Blessed Sacrament during scheduled times of adoration.

Recently, some parishes have contacted the Liturgy Office to ask about the possibility of installing a glass window in the tabernacle so that the Blessed Sacrament can be more easily exposed and reposed by opening and closing a tabernacle’s window. Some liturgical goods suppliers, in fact, carry tabernacles already manufactured with this feature.

Although these kinds of tabernacles are indeed available for purchase, they are not approved for liturgical use. In its 2004 document, “31 Questions on Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,” the USCCB’s Committee on Divine Liturgy addressed this question in the following...
way:

Couldn’t the Eucharist be exposed always by building tabernacles of glass or tabernacles with small windows to see inside? Answer: No. The holy Eucharist is to be reserved in a solid tabernacle. It must be opaque and unbreakable.

The USCCB’s response follows the rule established in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal that a tabernacle must always be “irremovable, be made of solid and inviolable material that is not transparent, and be locked in such a way that the danger of profanation is prevented to the greatest extent possible” (314).

In 2006, the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments answered a related question concerning the use of doors or drapes to separate the exposed Blessed Sacrament from a chapel for short periods of time when no one will be present. The Congregation indicated that this practice also does not satisfy the requirement to repose the Blessed Sacrament in a tabernacle under lock and key.

Bearing these principles in mind, parishes that wish to institute extended or perpetual Eucharistic adoration should first ensure that there is sufficient interest in the community to maintain the necessary number of volunteers needed for lengthier periods of adoration. Parishes may wish to bring this question up for discussion at parish council meetings or even take a survey of the parish as part of its planning process.

**Archdiocesan Distribution of Holy Oils**

In the Archdiocese of New York, the distribution of holy oils during Holy Week will take place according to the following schedule:

*At Saint Patrick’s Cathedral*

Six-ounce bottles of holy oils will be prepared and distributed by the seminarians to clergy at the conclusion of the Chrism Mass. Old oils will not be accepted at the Cathedral; these may be buried at the parish or burned in the new fire at the Easter Vigil. Parishes may wish to celebrate the “Order for the Reception of the Holy Oils” following the Chrism Mass at the Cathedral. This rite is available from the USCCB at the enclosed link.

*Parishes of Area Deans*

Those parishes who will not be sending representatives to the Chrism Mass may pick up holy oils at the parishes of their area deans on Thursday, April 14. **Pastors who wish to receive oils locally from their area dean must reserve them ahead of time by contacting their dean. Oils will be sent to area deans only for those parishes who have reserved them beforehand.**

Please note that holy oils will not be distributed at Saint Joseph’s Seminary this year. Parishes who are in need of additional oils later in the year are asked to please contact the Liturgy Office.
Archdiocesan Policies and Procedures for Constructing, Renovating, and Restoring Places of Worship

The building, renovating, or restoration of a place of worship is a unique opportunity for the renewal of a parish’s faith and liturgical life. This important work is more than an architectural solution to a spatial need or an exercise in building maintenance; rather, it will have a direct impact on the celebration of the liturgy as the central action in the life of a Catholic community. Parishes and other institutions (e.g., schools, healthcare facilities, and retreat centers) planning the construction, renovation, or restoration of a church or chapel should consult the archdiocesan Financial Policies and Procedures Manual for guidance regarding the proposal and approval processes for these projects. This information is summarized below:

**Policies**

In the Archdiocese of New York, the following principles apply to the construction, renovation, and restoration of places of worship:

1. The Vicar General must approve the concept.
2. Both the project management firm [PMF] (ARAMARK or Zubatkin) and the archdiocesan Office of Liturgy must be contacted for all projects that involve any change, modification, or addition to a church or chapel, regardless of the cost involved.

**Procedures**

1. At the inception of the project, regardless of size or cost, the pastor/administrator should notify the PMF of his intent to modify a worship space. The PMF will assist the pastor/administrator in submitting a letter of request to the Vicar General’s Office. In the letter, the pastor/administrator should describe the proposed change(s) and the purpose of the change(s).
2. After receiving approval from the Vicar General, the pastor/administrator should meet with the PMF and the Office of Liturgy to develop the RFA and review the construction and liturgical aspects of the project.
3. Schematic designs should then be completed and presented to the Office of Liturgy for review and approval via an RFA. The Office of Liturgy is assisted by the archdiocesan Liturgical Art and Architecture Commission in this process. This submitted portfolio should include a proposed floor plan of the existing and planned space, a drawing of all relevant liturgical appointments, an elevated drawing of the sanctuary and reredos, and a description of the liturgical change(s) to the worship space and the purpose of the change(s).
4. Upon receipt of the schematic designs, the Office of Liturgy will typically arrange a site visit and complete a report with its observations and recommendations.
5. Once approval has been given, any subsequent modifications to the schematic designs should be resubmitted to the Office of Liturgy and the PMF using the same procedure.

Questions may be directed to the archdiocesan Director of Property Management or the Office of Liturgy.
Liturgical Preparation Aid for Lent

The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) has published a free resource in English and Spanish for the Lenten season. This preparation aid includes:

- the full text of the Rite of Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution;
- music suggestions;
- an Order for the Reception of the Holy Oils;
- a liturgical calendar advisory for Lent, the Triduum, and the Easter Season; and,
- preparation worksheets for the celebration of the Triduum.

This resource may be downloaded from the Liturgy Office website (English/Spanish) and distributed freely.

Upcoming Event

Pueri Cantores Music Festival for Youth. March 25-26. Saint John Nepomucene Church (Treble Choirs) and Blessed Sacrament Church (High School Choirs) in Manhattan. More information: pcchoirs.org
LENTEN DAY of PRAYER and REFLECTION for LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Walking With Christ on His Paschal Journey

SATURDAY, MARCH 12
10:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. | St. Joseph’s Seminary, Yonkers
Registration fee: $30 (includes lunch)

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors, Ushers and Parish Musicians are invited to gather to reflect on Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection and discover its meaning for their lives, their ministry, and their parish communities.

PRESENTER:
FR. SEBASTIAN WHITE, OP
Editor-in-Chief, Magnificat Magazine

Register by Sunday, March 6, at nyliturgy.org/dayofreflection
Spring 2022
ONLINE MUSIC WORKSHOPS

MONDAY, MARCH 7
7:30 PM – 9:30 PM
“Free Music! No-cost Liturgical Planning Resources Available to Parish Musicians”

MONDAY, MARCH 14
7:30 PM – 9:30 PM
“Reading Gregorian Chant 101”

Learn with us from the comfort of your home!

PRESENTER
Dr. Jennifer Donelson-Nowicka, DMA
Professor and Director of Sacred Music
St. Joseph’s Seminary

Registration fee: $20 (per workshop)
Register at springmusicworkshops.eventbrite.com