

INSTRUCTION ON THE CORRECT USE OF THE RESTORED ORDO OF HOLY WEEK

Since it is the intention of the restored Ordo of Holy Week that, with the venerable liturgical services of these days restored to the hours that are proper and opportune, these liturgical services can be attended more easily, more devoutly, and more fruitfully by the faithful, it is highly important that this salutary intention be realized.

Hence, it has seemed opportune to this Sacred Congregation of Rites to add to the general decree on the restoration of the Ordo of Holy Week and Instruction, by which the change to the new order may be made easier and the faithful may be led more securely to derive richer fruits from a living participation in the sacred ceremonies.

The knowledge and the observance of this Instruction are obligatory for all of those whom it concerns.

I. On the Pastoral and Ritual Preparation.

1. Local Ordinaries should carefully see to it that priests, especially those who have the care of souls, should be well instructed not only about the ritual observance of the restored Ordo of Holy Week but also about its liturgical meaning and its pastoral purpose.

They should likewise take care that the faithful also during the holy season of Lent should be effectively taught properly to understand the restored Ordo of Holy Week so that they mentally and spiritually, may take a devout part in the services.

2. The following are the main points of the Instruction that should be given the Christian people:

For the Second Sunday of Passiontide, which is called Palm Sunday.

The faithful are to be urged to assist in greater numbers at the solemn procession of the palms to give public testimony of their love and gratitude to Christ the King.

Moreover, the faithful should be admonished to approach the Sacrament of Penance in time during Holy Week. This admonition must be stressed especially in those places where it has been customary for the faithful to troop to Confession on Holy Saturday evening and Easter Sunday morning. Let those who have the responsibility for souls zealously see to it that the faithful have ready access to the sacrament of Penance during the whole of Holy Week and especially on the last three days of that week.

The Thursday of the Lord's Supper.

The faithful should be taught about the love by which Christ the Lord "on the day before He suffered," instituted the Eucharist, a Sacrifice and Sacrament, and an everlasting memorial of His Passion to be renewed unceasingly through the hands of priests.

The faithful should be asked duly to adore the Blessed Sacrament, after the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

Where the washing of the feet, to show the Lord's commandment about fraternal charity, is performed in a church according to the rubrics of the restored Ordo of Holy Week, the faithful should be instructed on the profound meaning of this sacred rite and should be taught that it is only proper that they should abound in charitable works of Christian charity on this day.

The Friday of the Lord's Passion and Death.

The faithful should be trained to gain a right understanding of the unique liturgical services of this day. In these services, after the sacred readings and prayers, the Passion of Our Lord is sung solemnly, prayers are offered for the needs of the entire Church and of the human race, and the Holy Cross, the memorial of our redemption, is most devoutly adored by the Christian Family, the clergy and the people. Finally, according to the rubrics of the restored Ordo, and as was the custom for many centuries, all who wish to do so and who are properly prepared can go to Holy Communion, so that, devoutly receiving the Lord's Body which was given for all on this day, they may receive richer fruits of the redemption.

The priests must emphasize the fact that on this most holy day the faithful should keep their minds piously recollected and should not forget the laws of abstinence and fasting.

For Holy Saturday and the Easter Vigil.

First of all it is imperative that the faithful should be instructed about the unique liturgical character of Holy Saturday. This is the day of the most intense sorrow, the day on which the Church tarries at the Lord's tomb, meditating about His Passion and death. While the altar remains stripped, the Church abstains from the sacrifice of the Mass until, after the solemn vigil or the nocturnal wait for the Resurrection, there come the Easter joys, the abundance of which carries over to the days that follow.

The intention and the purpose of this vigil is to point out and to recall in the liturgical service how our life and grace have flowed from the Lord's death. And so, Our Lord Himself is shown under the sign of the paschal candle as "the Light of the world" (John 8:12), who has put the darkness of our sins to flight by the grace of His light. The "Exultet" is sung in which the splendor of the holy night of the Resurrection is glorified. The wonderful works done by God under the old alliance, pale imaginings of the marvels done under the new covenant, are recalled. There is the blessing of the baptismal water, in which "buried together with Christ" unto the death of sin, we rise again with the same Christ so that "we may walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Then we promise, by the renewal of our baptismal vows, to bear witness before all by our lives and our conduct to this grace which Christ has merited for us and which He confers upon us in Baptism. Finally, after we implore the intercession of the Church triumphant, the sacred vigil ends with the solemn Mass of the Resurrection.

II. Annotations to some rubrics of the Ordo of Holy Week.

(Paragraphs 3-9 and 11-25 are here omitted. ed.)

10. Parish priests and rectors of churches should warn the faithful in time about the public adoration of the Holy Eucharist. This is to be started once the Mass of the Lord's Supper has ended and is to be continued at least until midnight, when the memory of the Lord's Passion and death takes the place of the liturgical recalling of the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

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