

**PREPARING "THE THREE" OF THE TRIDUUM**  
**REVISED VERSION, February 2004**  
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All three days of the Easter Triduum celebrate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord. These days are not historical re-enactments of these events in the life of Jesus. The three days are a unit, one celebration of the Paschal Mystery by which we are brought to new life. This article highlights the three principal liturgies of the Triduum, namely, the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Celebration of the Lord's Passion, and the Easter Vigil. It provides those responsible with preparing these liturgies with helpful material, reminders, and suggestions. The article draws upon pastoral experience as well as material found in the present *Sacramentary*, the *Ceremonial of Bishops*, the *Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts* issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship in 1988, the *Rite of Baptism of Children*, and the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. This article, originally published in 1996, has been revised to reflect material found in the 2002 *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and also material that Bishops Committee on the Liturgy has published concerning what will be found in the yet unpublished revised *Missale Romanum*. Material from these last two sources appears in *italic print*.

**Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper**

-According to the current *Sacramentary*, there should only be one celebration of the liturgy on this day, namely, the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. The practice of celebrating Masses earlier in the day confuses the start of the Triduum. Such Masses imply the Triduum has already begun, yet it is "with the celebration of Mass on the evening of Holy Thursday (emphasis added) the Church begins the Easter Triduum." (*Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts*, #44) Such morning Masses also lessen attendance at the main celebration. According to the *Sacramentary*, if another Mass is celebrated on Holy Thursday, this may only take place with the permission of the local Ordinary. The three days of the Easter Triduum are unique in the Church's calendar, and this uniqueness should be reflected in the liturgical schedule of the parish.

*-The rubrics, by way of exception allow for the local Ordinary to permit another Mass in churches and oratories to be celebrated in the evening, and in the case of genuine necessity, even in the morning. Such Masses are provided for those who are in no way able to participate in the evening Mass and not for the advantage of individuals or special small groups. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #4, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003*

-According to the *Sacramentary* the tabernacle is to be completely empty before the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. "Hosts for the communion of the faithful should be consecrated during that celebration. A sufficient amount of bread should be consecrated to provide also for communion on the following day." (*Circular Letter*, #48) During the days before the Triduum, priests and others who prepare the bread and wine for Mass should see that only the elements necessary for the communion of the faithful are consecrated. Only a few hosts need remain to provide for the possible need of the sick or dying on Wednesday or Thursday of Holy Week. This, should, in fact be the practice throughout the year. The eucharist is reserved in the tabernacle for

the communion of the sick and the dying, and for adoration, not to provide for the distribution of communion at Mass.

*“The altar may be decorated with flowers with a moderation that reflects the character of the day.”* (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #5 as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)

-A fine way to begin the celebration of the Triduum is to make use of the entrance antiphon of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This antiphon sums up what we are about to celebrate: "We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life, and our resurrection; through him we are saved and made free." (Gal. 6:14) If not used during the entrance procession, this antiphon could be sung by the cantor or proclaimed by a minister as an introduction before the procession enters the church.

*-The Church bells are run during the singing of the Gloria and then remain silent unless the diocesan Bishop, as circumstances suggest, decides otherwise. The decision about this matter no longer involves the conference of bishops. A further musical specification is provided: “the organ and other musical instruments may be used only to support the singing.”* (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #7 as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)

-The washing of the feet that follows the homily need not include twelve people. The Sacramentary gives no specific number. It would be better not to use twelve people. The washing of the feet is not a dramatization of the action of the Last Supper, but rather a homily in action. The washing of feet makes clear the Lord's command that we are to be of service to one another. Perhaps the presider could wash the feet of a representative group of parishioners; old and young, men, women, and children. The presider should wash both feet of the selected individuals. He should use soap and water. The washing should be genuine.

-A good musical piece should be chosen which can involve the assembly during the washing of feet. This selection should not require the assembly's use of a worship aid. The people should be free to witness the action as they sing.

-Holy Thursday is a good occasion to recall that the Eucharist we celebrate is a call to service as is the washing of the feet. As the Lord gives his body and blood for us, we are to give our lives in service to him and to one another.

-The elect and catechumens are dismissed following the washing of feet.

-The general intercessions follow the washing of feet and dismissal of catechumens. It would be appropriate to sing the intercessions on this solemn occasion. *“After the washing of feet, the priest washes and dries his hands, puts the chasuble back on, and returns to the chair, and from there he directs the General Intercessions. The Creed is not said.”* (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #13 as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)

-A collection may be taken during this liturgy. According to the Sacramentary this collection should be used for the poor. "Gifts for the poor, especially those collected during Lent as the fruit

of penance, may be presented in the offertory (sic) procession while the people sing, "Ubi caritas." (*Circular Letter*, #52) By presenting gifts for the poor the faithful respond to the Lord's command to be of service to those in need.

-This is a day to use the most beautiful vessels available for the bread and wine.

-The holy oils blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass may be received in the parish "at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday or on another suitable day after the celebration of the Chrism Mass." (Sacramentary Supplement). Members of the assembly carry the oils during the procession with the gifts, before the bread and wine. These oils should be in suitable vessels which highlight the dignity and importance of the holy oils. The oils are received by the presider and then placed on a table in the sanctuary or in the repository where they will be reserved. As each oil is presented the significance of the oil may be explained. See the text in the Sacramentary Supplement.

*-A rubric is provided in the revised Missale Romanum that indicates "a reception of the Holy Oils may take place in every parish either before the celebration of the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper or at another time that seems appropriate...this can be a means of catechizing the faithful about the use and effects of the Holy Oils and Chrism in Christian life. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for The Chrism Mass, #15 as found in the BCL Newsletter March/April 2003)*

-It is most appropriate that communion be distributed under both forms at this Mass.

-After the distribution of communion, ministers may leave the assembly to bring communion to the sick. "It is more appropriate that the Eucharist be borne directly from the altar by the deacons or acolytes, or extraordinary ministers, at the moment of communion... so that, in this way, they (the sick) may be more closely united to the celebrating Church." (*Circular Letter*, #53) *This is also in the new rubrics of the revised Missal. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #33 as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)*

-After the distribution of communion the remaining consecrated wine is consumed, the remaining hosts, as well as those consecrated for the reception of communion on Good Friday are left on the altar, ideally in one vessel large enough to contain all the consecrated breads.

-Following the prayer after communion, *which the Missale Romanum explicitly states is said by the priest "standing at the chair."* (*Missale Romanum, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #35, as found in the BCL, March/April 2003*) the consecrated hosts are solemnly carried to the place of reposition where they remain until they are brought to the altar on Good Friday during the communion rite of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion.

-During the procession with the Blessed Sacrament the ministers of the Mass, as well as others, could be invited to join the procession. Those in the procession carry lighted candles. (*Ceremonial of Bishops, #307*)

-The place of reposition is the usual chapel of reservation. If a church does not have such a separate chapel, one should be prepared for the occasion. "The place of reposition on Holy

Thursday evening is a 'chapel.' It is either the chapel of reservation, if the church has one, or a chapel set up apart from the church."(Newsletter of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, March 1993) This chapel is for the "custody of the Eucharistic bread that will be distributed in communion on Good Friday." (*Circular Letter*, #55)

-The chapel of reservation should "be prepared and adorned in such a way as to be conducive to prayer and meditation; that sobriety appropriate to the liturgy of these days is enjoined..." (*Circular Letter*, #49)

-After the placement of eucharist in the chapel of reservation the liturgy ends without any formal dismissal.

*A totally new rubric is found at the end of Holy Thursday, "If in the same church the celebration of the Lord's Passion on the following Friday does not take place, the Mass is concluded in the usual way and the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the tabernacle."* (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #4, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)

- "After Mass, the altar should be stripped. It is fitting that any crosses in the church be covered...Lamps should not be lit before images of saints." (*Circular Letter*, #57)

*The current Sacramentary seems to indicate that the stripping of the altar follows immediately whereas the revised Missale Romanum notes that "at an appropriate time" the altar is stripped.* (see *Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #41 as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)

-Solemn adoration before the tabernacle containing the Blessed Sacrament continues until midnight. A monstrance is NOT to be used, nor is the consecrated wine to be reserved. "The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in closed tabernacle or pyx. Under no circumstances may it be exposed in a monstrance." (*Circular Letter*, #55)

*The faithful are invited in the revised Missale Romanum to spend time in adoration. It was formerly indicated that the faithful "should be encouraged"* (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for The Evening Mass, #43, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)

-The Blessed Sacrament remains in the place of reposition until the liturgy of the following day. "From midnight onward, however, adoration should be made without external solemnity, for the day of the Lord's passion has begun." (*Circular Letter*, #56) After midnight the decorations and candles should be removed from the place of reposition. There remains only the single lighted candle before the tabernacle.

## **Good Friday, Celebration of the Lord's Passion**

*The very first rubric for Good Friday indicates that only the sacraments of Anointing of the Sick and Penance are celebrated on Good Friday and Holy Saturday (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Good Friday, #1, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)*

Funerals are celebrated according to rite found in Part I, #4 of the Order of Christian Funerals, "Funeral Liturgy Outside of Mass." At such funerals during the Triduum, the organ and other instruments may be played only to sustain the singing. (*Ceremonial of Bishops, #41*)

- "The order for the celebration of the Lord's passion (the liturgy of the word, the adoration of the cross, and Holy Communion) that stems from an ancient tradition of the Church should be observed faithfully and religiously and may not be changed by anyone on his own initiative." (*Circular Letter, #64*)

- The appearance of the church should speak of this day. All decorations, statues, and unnecessary furniture should be removed. All crosses that cannot be taken out of the church should be covered. The vestibule area and the place for the assembly should also reflect the starkness of the worship space. "The altar should be completely bare, without cloths, candles, or cross." (*Sacramentary, Good Friday, #2*)

- The Celebration of the Lord's Passion takes place in the afternoon, about three o'clock unless pastoral reasons suggest a later hour." (*Sacramentary, Good Friday, #3*)

- The priest or bishop presides at the Celebration of the Lord's Passion. Red Mass vestments are worn. This liturgy is not concelebrated.

- The priest and deacons enter in silence. (*Ceremonial of Bishops, #316*)

- During this liturgy "the organ and other musical instruments may only be used to sustain the singing." (*Ceremonial of Bishops, #300*)

- Though the people may take part in reading the passion narrative, it is probably more effective to use the best readers of the parish and let the people listen.

- The homily should not be omitted. (*Circular Letter, #66*) By its very nature this liturgy is longer, and those who come are aware of the fact. To rush the liturgies of the Triduum or to remove elements of those liturgies in order to shorten them is not only forbidden, but also shows a lack of understanding of these central liturgies of the Church.

- The catechumens and elect are dismissed after the homily before the general intercessions.

- The assembly may remain standing or kneeling throughout the general intercessions. The people may sing an acclamation before the prayer of the priest. This would add to their participation.

*The previous rubrics spoke of the deacon giving the introductions to the General Intercessions. The revised Missale Romanum indicates that a lay minister may do this in the absence of a deacon. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Good Friday, #13, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)*

-Only one cross should be used for the veneration; multiplying crosses weakens the symbol. A cross should be used rather than a crucifix for this liturgy since we sing, "Behold the wood of the cross on which hung the Savior of the world." The tense is past. "Let a cross be used that is of appropriate size and beauty..." (*Circular Letter*, #68)

-The cross may be carried into the church, as is done with the paschal candle at the Easter Vigil, or the cross may be unveiled in stages. The unveiling is done with the cross remaining in a fixed position. In both cases, the cross is accompanied by ministers with lighted candles. (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, #321)

-"The cross is to be presented to each of the faithful individually for their adoration, since the personal adoration of the cross is a most important feature in this celebration. Only when necessitated by the large numbers of faithful present should the rite of veneration be made simultaneously by all present." (*Circular Letter*, #69) A full church should not necessitate such simultaneous veneration. Time should be taken with this important part of the ritual. Multiple crosses should not be used.

-If a large cross is used for the veneration more than one line of people could approach the cross at the same time.

*The personal adoration of the cross is an important feature in this celebration and every effort should be made to achieve it. The rubrics remind us that ONLY ONE CROSS should be used for adoration. If the numbers are so great that all can not come forward, the priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored the cross, can take the cross and stand in the center before the altar. In a few words he invites the people to adore the Cross. He then elevates the cross higher for a brief period of time while the faithful adore it in silence. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Good Friday, #19, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)*

-During the veneration of the cross the assembly should be engaged in appropriate song. The song should not require the people to use a worship aid, in this way the people may continue to sing as they come forward to venerate the cross.

*The revised Missale Romanum gives specific directions as to the music used during the adoration. (example, We Worship You, Lord; the reproaches; the hymns, Faithful Cross, or other suitable songs.) Totally new is the indication "According to local circumstances or traditions of the people and pastoral appropriateness, the STABAT MATER may be sung...or another appropriate chant in memory of the compassion of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Good Friday, #20, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)*

-After the veneration the cross is placed in the sanctuary. The cross is honored by two lighted candles. (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, #315, 324)

*-In the communion rite that follows, there is a specific rubric that indicates that either the deacon or priest bringing the Blessed Sacrament to the altar puts on a humeral veil. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Good Friday, #21, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003)*

-The invitation to, as well as the Lord's Prayer itself are sung. (*Circular Letter*, #70)

-There is no sign of peace.

*After Communion either deacon or another suitable minister takes the ciborium to a place prepared outside the church, or if circumstances require, may place it in the tabernacle. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Good Friday, #29, as found in the BCL Newsletter, March/April 2003) A similar instruction appears in the Circular Letter, #70*

-There is no dismissal to this liturgy.

-After the celebration the altar is stripped and the cross is placed in a place for veneration and meditation. It might be positioned in the now empty chapel of reservation. There should be four lit candles near it. (*Circular Letter*, #71)

*-"A genuflection...is reserved for the Most Blessed Sacrament, as well as for the Holy Cross from the solemn adoration during the liturgical celebration on Good Friday until the beginning of the Easter Vigil." (GIRM 2002, #274)*

-It should be noted that dramatic presentations of the passion or living Stations of the Cross are not part of the liturgy of Good Friday, nor are they legitimate substitutes for, or additions to, the Church's liturgy.

## **Holy Saturday, The Easter Vigil**

-The Easter Vigil, since it is the night watch of the celebration of the Lord's Resurrection should be held after sunset. The Sacramentary makes it clear that "The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil takes place at night. It should not begin before nightfall; it should end before daybreak on Sunday." "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 day that is customary to celebrate anticipated Sunday Masses." (*Circular Letter*, #78) *The Easter Vigil does NOT correspond to the usual Saturday evening Mass and its character is unique in the cycle of the liturgical year. It ought to take place at night. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #3, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)*

To light a fire and candles and speak of this "holy night," while sunlight streams through the church windows makes no sense. The Circular Letter observes that the objections raised to holding the Vigil at night are not raised when it comes to nighttime Masses at Christmas or other gatherings of various kinds. "The Easter Vigil liturgy should be celebrated in such a way as to offer to the Christian people the riches of the prayers and rites. It is, therefore, important that authenticity be respected..." (*Circular Letter*, #93)

-"...it is never permitted to celebrate the entire Easter Vigil more than once in a given church." (Sacramentary, The Easter Vigil, #3)

-"The celebration of the Easter Vigil for special groups is not to be encouraged since, above all in this Vigil, the faithful should come together as one and should experience a sense of ecclesial community." (*Circular Letter*, #94)

### **Service of Light**

-The liturgy envisions the new fire prepared outside the church and already burning as people arrive. The fire should be large enough to "genuinely dispel the darkness and light up the night." (*Circular Letter*, #82)

-The people are to gather outside the church near the new fire. They should receive candles upon arriving. It would not be appropriate for the elect to receive candles at this time. They are presented with a candle after their baptism, not before. (RCIA, #230)

*In a suitable place outside the Church a blazing fire is to be prepared so that the people may gather around it and experience the flames dispelling the darkness and lighting up the night. Thus do the beauty of fire, its warmth and light, draw the liturgical assembly together. The rubrics, however, acknowledge that when this cannot be done adaptations may be made. The Missale also states that cross and candles are not to be carried in this procession. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #8, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)*

-If the fire cannot be prepared outside the church, the priest and ministers go to the door of the church where a suitable fire has been prepared and all continues as usual. (Sacramentary, The



Easter Vigil, #13) Every effort should be made to follow the preferred pattern set forth in the instructions. Doing so will take extra effort, but it will make the liturgy even more wonderful!

-The paschal candle is to be made of wax. This candle is not to be made of plastic, with oil or wax inserts. The candle is to be renewed each year, and must be of sufficient size to carry its important symbolism in the liturgy of the Easter Vigil and to be of use throughout the coming year. (*Circular Letter*, #82) The wax composition of the paschal candle is also emphasized in the revised *Missale Romanum*.

-*Having reached the fire, the celebrant and faithful sign themselves with the sign of the cross while the priest says, IN THE NAME... After this beginning, he greets the people and then gives the instruction. As the celebrant blesses the fire he says the prayer with hands outstretched.* (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #10, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003, also see the Ceremonial of Bishops, #338, 339)

-*The paschal candle is then prepared with rites which are no longer optional. The celebrant cuts a cross into the candle with a stylus. Then he makes the Greek letter, ALPHA above the cross, and the Greek letter OMEGA below it, and then the four numerals of the current year between the arms of the cross saying the words indicated. After these rites, the priest lights the candle from the new fire and says, MAY THE LIGHT OF CHRIST, RISING IN GLORY, DISPEL THE DARKNESS OF OUR HEARTS AND MINDS.* -*The paschal candle is to be made of wax. This candle is not to be made of plastic, with oil or wax inserts. The candle is to be renewed each year, and must be of sufficient size to carry its important symbolism in the liturgy of the Easter Vigil and to be of use throughout the coming year.* (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #14, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)

-After the paschal candle has been lighted, it leads the procession of the people into the church. Remember to provide a wind guard for the candle. (A hurricane lamp glass can be used for this purpose.)

-The order of procession into the church is as follows: censerbearer, deacon with paschal candle, presider, concelebrants, other ministers, the rest of the assembly. (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, #343)

-*The places at which the proclamation, Light of Christ, is sung differ slightly in the revised Missale Romanum from what was in the current Sacramentary. The new places are the doors of the Church (after which the priest lights his candle), in the middle of the church (after which all light their candles) and before the altar facing the people. The candle is then placed in a stand next to the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary. The lights in the church are then lit with the exception of the altar candles that are lit just before the intonation of the Gloria.* (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #17 & 31, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003).

-*The acclamation is apparently now "Light of Christ", not "Christ our Light."* (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #1, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003).

-The Easter Proclamation may be sung by a deacon, priest, cantor, or another minister. The most important criteria is the ability to sing well with faith, love, devotion, and understanding. Acclamations for the people may be inserted into the Easter Proclamation. (Circular Letter, #84)

-The Easter Proclamation is sung at the pulpit. (Sacramentary, The Easter Vigil, #17)

-While the Sacramentary says that the lights in the church are turned on after the deacon sings Christ our light for the third time, it may be better to turn only some of the lights so that the burning candles of the assembly may be better seen during the singing of the Easter Proclamation.

### **Liturgy of the Word**

-The nine readings which comprise the Liturgy of the Word for this night are, in the words of the Sacramentary, "the fundamental element of the Easter Vigil." With this in mind, it is clear that every effort should be made to proclaim all the readings.

*-The revised Missale Romanum adds a sentence about the nine readings proposed, saying that ALL OF THESE MUST BE READ WHENEVER IT CAN BE DONE, SO THAT THE CHARACTER OF A VIGIL WHICH TAKES PLACE OVER SOME DURATION OF TIME CAN BE OBSERVED.... Where grave pastoral circumstances demand it, the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced. At least THREE readings from the Old Testament should be read always including Exodus 14. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #20, 21 as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)*

-The Gloria is sung following the last reading from the Old Testament with its response and prayer. The bells of the church, which have remained silent since the Gloria of Holy Thursday, are now rung. The altar candles are also lighted at this time. (Sacramentary, The Easter Vigil, #31)

-This liturgy demands a beautiful gospel proclamation, and a prolonged singing of the Alleluia. Candles are not carried in this night's gospel procession. (Sacramentary, The Easter Vigil, #35)

-The homily is NOT to be omitted. (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #36, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)

### **Liturgy of Initiation**

-Christ's Passover and ours are given full expression when baptismal water is blessed in the font and when the Christian initiation of adults, or, at least the baptism of infants, takes place at the Easter Vigil. Even if there are not candidates for baptism, the blessing of baptismal water should take place in parishes churches. At the very least, baptism should be commemorated by the blessing of water intended for sprinkling upon the people. (*Missale Romanum*, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)

*-When there are no baptisms and the font is not to be blessed, the litany is omitted and the blessing of water takes place at once. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #39-41, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)*

*The Missale reminds the celebrant that during the blessing of the water his hands are outstretched. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #44, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003)*

-Those to be baptized are led to the font by a minister carrying the paschal candle. The minister with the candle goes first in this procession, followed by the elect with their godparents, and then the presider and other ministers. The people enter after these ministers. The Litany of the Saints should accompany this procession. (Sacramentary, The Easter Vigil, #39)

-Every effort should be made to baptize by immersion, or at least by partial immersion. "Baptism by immersion is the fuller and more expressive sign of the sacrament and, therefore, is preferred. Although it is not yet a common practice in the United States, provision should be made for its more frequent use in baptism of adults. At the least, the provision of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults for partial immersion, namely, immersion of the candidate's head, should be taken into account." (*National Statues for the Catechumenate*, #17)

-Appropriate garments of sufficient size should be prepared for presentation to the adults to be baptized. The candles presented to the newly baptized should be large and beautiful.

-If infants are being baptized during the Vigil, they could be brought into the Church following the Liturgy of the Word. While adults can appreciate the number and purpose of the readings, infants will not.

-If infants are baptized, the presentation of a lighted candle is omitted at the Easter Vigil, as is the ephphetha prayer. (*Rite of Baptism of Children*, #28)

-Confirmation follows the baptism of adults or children of catechetical age. *The celebration of confirmation is to take place in the sanctuary as indicated in the Pontifical or the Roman Missale. (BCL Newsletter, January, 2003)*

- "It is preferable that the reception into full communion not take place at the Easter Vigil lest there be confusion of such baptized Christians with the candidates for baptism, possible misunderstanding of or even reflection upon the sacrament of baptism celebrated in another Church or ecclesial community, or any perceived triumphalism in the liturgical welcome into the Catholic Eucharistic community." (*National Statues for the Catechumenate*, #33) "The reception of candidates into full communion should ordinarily take place at the Sunday Eucharist of the parish community." (*National Statues for the Catechumenate*, #32)

-The candles of the assembly are lighted for the renewal of baptismal promises. (Sacramentary, The Easter Vigil, #46) The candles should be lighted with a flame from the paschal candle or from the candles of newly baptized. After their responses, the people are sprinkled with the newly blessed water. This sprinkling should be full and abundant.

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

-The liturgy of the eucharist, which follows the service of light, the liturgy of the word, and the sacraments of initiation, should be celebrated with reverence and care. This is not the time to rush

in order to shorten the length of the liturgy, or to make up time. Everything we have done leads to the liturgy of the eucharist, where those present come to the table of the Lord to share his life giving body and blood. (*Circular Letter*, #91)

-If baptisms have taken place, there are special interpolations for Eucharistic Prayers I, II, and III. See the Ritual Mass for Baptism in the Sacramentary. (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, #242)

*-The revised Missale Romanum reminds the priest that before he gives the Invitation to Communion, he may make a brief remark to the neophytes about their first Communion and about the centrality of the eucharist in the life of a Christian. The rubrics indicate that it is most desirable that all receive Communion under both kinds. (Missale Romanum, Rubrics for Easter Vigil, #44, as found in the BCL Newsletter, January 2003) This point is also made in the Circular Letter, #92.*

### **Concluding Rites**

-The deacon, or in his absence, the presider, adds a sung double Alleluia to the concluding proclamation. The people repeat this double Alleluia after their response. (Sacramentary, The Easter Vigil, page 207)

-As the assembly is leaving the church, the greeters or other ministers might present the people with a spring flower, or a decorated egg, as they wish them the joy of Easter. The newly blessed Easter water should be available for the people to take to their homes. It would also be fitting to have a reception following the liturgy to share the foods of the Easter season and to give assembly the opportunity to congratulate the neophytes.