



Office for Divine Worship Newsletter

Website for the Office for Divine Worship: www.eriercd.org/bishop/worship.html

Contact information:

Phone: 814-824-1270
Email: worship@eriercd.org

Rev. Matthew Kujawinski, Director
mjkujawinski@eriercd.org

Maripat Grant, Coordinator
mgrant@eriercd.org

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Holy Oils/Return of Bottles</i> | 2 |
| <i>Holy Week Reminders</i> | 2 |
| <i>Pastoral Note on Passion Narratives</i> | 2 |
| <i>March Liturgical Calendar</i> | 2-5 |
| <i>Prayer for a New Bishop</i> | 5 |
| <i>Catechetical Sunday 2026</i> | 6 |
| <i>Eucharistic Congress 2029</i> | 6 |
| <i>Colds and Flu</i> | 6 |
| <i>Workshops for Liturgical Ministers</i> | 6 |
| <i>Copyrights</i> | 6 |

Lenten Practices 2026

The season of Lent begins this year on Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026, and concludes when the Paschal Triduum of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord begins at the start of the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, April 2, 2026.

The following practices and regulations are promulgated and binding for all Latin Rite Catholics in the Diocese of Erie for Lent and the Paschal Triduum, 2026. Eastern Rite Catholics who may be attending Latin Rite parishes have their own proper regulations and should consult their own eparchy or parish.

1. Traditional Lenten practices of PRAYER, FASTING, and ALMSGIVING, and other forms of self-denial, are recommended most warmly by the Church. Daily Mass is particularly encouraged.
2. ASH WEDNESDAY, ALL FRIDAYS IN LENT, and GOOD FRIDAY are days of abstinence from eating meat for those 14 years of age and older.
3. ASH WEDNESDAY AND GOOD FRIDAY are also days of fasting for those ages 18 to 58 inclusive. (On these days, those bound by the law of fasting may take one full meal. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength according to one’s needs, are also permitted. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids including milk and fruit juices are allowed. When health or work is seriously affected, the law does not oblige.)
4. On HOLY THURSDAY, no celebration of the Mass is to begin anywhere in the diocese earlier than 4:30 pm without the explicit approval of Bishop Persico.
5. Although it does not include the Liturgy of the Eucharist, by its very nature the GOOD FRIDAY service is celebrated by a priest only.
6. All celebrations of the EASTER VIGIL are to begin after nightfall (which is defined as approximately one hour after local sunset.) Nightfall is about 9:00 pm this year. To balance pastoral need and liturgical prescriptions, Bishop Persico has decreed that the Easter Vigil in the Diocese of Erie is to begin at 8:30 pm or any later time. Any start time earlier than 8:30 pm must receive explicit approval from the Bishop.

Celebrations of the Scrutinies and Presentation of The Creed and the Lord’s Prayer

The Rites belonging to the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, OCLIA nos. 138-205, found in the ritual book, Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, are to be carefully observed for the Elect. Any questions regarding these rites may be directed to the Office for Divine Worship.

The Gloria is Sung at All Wedding Masses During Lent

According to the third and current edition of the Roman Missal, the Gloria is sung, even during Advent and Lent, when the Ritual Mass for the Celebration of Marriage is used. The Penitential Act is always omitted during a Wedding Mass.

Proper Disposal of the Paschal Candle

Old paschal candles, as blessed objects (a sacramental) must be appropriately disposed. This could involve burning the candle in a devotional manner (privately as opposed to publicly and liturgically) or even burying the candle in blessed ground. Candles are made to be burned, however, and it is better to find a way to either recycle or burn the wax.

Holy Oils and Return of Oil Bottles

Each year, in preparation for the Chrism Mass, the pastor should ensure that all old oils are collected from the ambry or repository, including all vessels containing oil for the sick, and disposed of.

What is to be done with the oils that may be left over from the previous years?

They are to be disposed of either by burning or pouring into the ground. They can be burnt by soaking cotton or paper with them and lighting that – some parishes place the soaked cotton in the Easter fire on Holy Saturday night. They can be buried by digging a hole in the ground near the church and pouring the oils in.

Throughout the year, the Office for Divine Worship receives old Holy Oil bottles, many of which still contain oil, some dating back decades. This often occurs when a new pastor is assigned to a parish. As a reminder, the bottles containing oils given to parishes after the Chrism Mass are not intended for display or liturgical use. These containers are used for transporting the oils or for non-public storage. If the oils are to be displayed, they should be placed in dignified vessels. “Vessels and implements used in the liturgical celebration should be of such quality and design that they speak of the importance of the ritual action...vessels for holy oils...are presented to the assembly in one way or another and speak well or ill of the deed in which the assembly is engaged.” (Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, 97) “The vessels used to hold the holy oils should be worthy of their function and be closed in such a way as to prevent the oils from being spilled and to ensure that they remain fresh.” (Book of Blessings, 1126)

You can also bring your old bottles to the Chrism Mass; however, the empty bottles are to be dropped off in Synod Hall before the Mass, not in the Cathedral basement.

Holy Week Reminders

1. On HOLY THURSDAY, no celebration of the Mass is to begin anywhere in the diocese earlier than 4:30 pm without the explicit approval of Bishop Persico.
2. GOOD FRIDAY is a day of abstinence from eating meat for those 14 years of age and older. It is also a day of fasting for those ages 18 to 58 inclusive. (Those bound by the law of fasting may take one full meal. Two smaller meals, sufficient to maintain strength according to one’s needs, are also permitted. Eating between meals is not permitted, but liquids including milk and fruit juices are allowed. When health or work is seriously affected, the law does not oblige.)
3. Although it does not include the Liturgy of the Eucharist, by its very nature the GOOD FRIDAY service is celebrated by a priest only.
4. All celebrations of the EASTER VIGIL are to begin after nightfall (which is defined as approximately one hour after local sunset.) Nightfall is about 9:00 pm this year. To balance pastoral need and liturgical prescriptions, Bishop Persico has decreed that the Easter Vigil in the Diocese of Erie is to begin at 8:30 pm or any later time. Any start time earlier than 8:30 pm must receive explicit approval from the Bishop.

Pastoral Note on the Passion Narratives

From the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship Newsletter, January 2024

The Chairmen of the Committees on Divine Worship and Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs issued a memo to the publishers of worship aids, hymnals, and missals on February 1, 2023. The memo requires the following statement to be printed before the text of the Passion narrative on Good Friday in all future publications beginning in 2024. In the 1990s and again in the 2000s the Committees provided guidance on the preparation of homilies and created a similar statement to be included in worship aids alongside the proclamation of the Passion during Holy Week to help ensure that the proclamation of the Lord’s Passion is not misused to promote anti-Jewish sentiment.

The Passion narratives are proclaimed in full so that all see vividly the love of Christ for each person. In light of this, the crimes during the Passion of Christ cannot be attributed, in either preaching or catechesis, indiscriminately to all Jews of that time, nor to Jews today. The Jewish people should not be referred to as though rejected or cursed, as if this view followed from Scripture. The Church ever keeps in mind that Jesus, his mother Mary, and the apostles all were Jewish. As the Church has always held, Christ freely suffered his passion and death because of the sins of all, that all might be saved.

March 2026 Liturgical Calendar

March is the month dedicated to Saint Joseph

March 1: Second Sunday of Lent

- The *Gloria* is not sung or said.
- The *Alleluia* is not sung or said.
- The Creed is said.
- The *Roman Missal* (3rd edition, 2011) provides proper Prefaces for each of the Sundays in Lent in Year A.

March 2026 Liturgical Calendar cont'd.

March 2-7: Lenten Weekdays

March 8: Third Sunday of Lent

For the Mass:

- The *Gloria* is not sung or said.
- The *Alleluia* is not sung or said.
- The Creed is said.
- The *Roman Missal* (3rd edition, 2011) provides proper Prefaces for each of the Sundays in Lent in Year A.

For the Scrutiny:

- On this Sunday, the First Scrutiny of the Elect may be celebrated in preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil (see OCIA, nos. 150-156).
- The Mass proper is found in the section of the Ritual Masses in the Roman Missal: "The Samaritan Woman" (OCIA, 146).
- The Rite of Handing On of the Creed takes place in the presence of the community of the faithful after the Liturgy of the Word during the Third week of Lent (weekday Mass, Saturday morning Mass, or in a Liturgy of the Word) following the First Scrutiny (OCIA, 157-163).
- In this Mass or ritual, those preparing for baptism (or those already baptized who have little catechetical formation) receive the Creed.

March 9-14: Lenten Weekdays

March 15: Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday)

Laetare means "rejoice!" It is a joyful anticipation of Easter.

- The color violet or rose is used.
- Instrumental music is permitted.
- The altar may be decorated with flowers.
- The *Gloria* is not sung or said.
- The *Alleluia* is not sung or said.
- The Creed is said.
- The *Roman Missal* (3rd edition, 2011) provides proper Prefaces for each of the Sundays in Lent year A.
- The Second Scrutiny is celebrated in preparation for the Sacrament of Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil.
- Proper Mass of the day (Fourth Sunday of Lent) or from the Ritual Masses: "The Scrutinies." The readings are taken from Year A (31): the Man Born Blind.

March 16-18 and 20-21: Lenten Weekdays

March 17: Saint Patrick, Bishop - Feast (white)

Saint Patrick is the Principle Patron of the Diocese of Erie.

- This feast day calls for a "Glory to God."
- Proper Collect prayer for Saint Patrick under March 17 in the Proper of Saints
- Prayer over the Gifts and the Prayer After Communion from The Common of Pastors, either "For Missionaries" or "For a Bishop"
- Preface of "Holy Pastors"
- The readings are taken from Lectionary #541, Saint Patrick, Bishop. They are: I Peter 4:7b-11; Luke 5:1-11. Readings may be chosen from the Lectionary section, The Common of Pastors, #719-724.
- The Responsorial Psalm is Psalm 96, Proclaim God's marvelous deeds.
- The verse for the Gospel Acclamation is, "Come after me says the Lord and I will make you fishers of men."
- Parishes with the title Saint Patrick celebrate this day as a Solemnity with Gloria, Creed, and three readings. Please contact the Office for Divine Worship if you have any questions.

March 2026 Liturgical Calendar cont'd.

March 19: Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

- Vestment color: White
- The Mass is proper (including the Preface: “The Mission of Saint Joseph”).
- The *Gloria* is sung or said.
- The Lenten Gospel Acclamation is still used.
- Creed is recited.
- Order for the Blessing of Saint Joseph’s Table. See *Book of Blessings*, nos. 1679-1700.

March 22: Fifth Sunday of Lent

- “In the Dioceses of the United States, the practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church from this Sunday may be observed. Crosses remain covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord’s Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil” (Roman Missal, Introduction to the Fifth Sunday of Lent).
- The proper Mass of the Day (Fifth Sunday of Lent) is used or the ritual Mass (“The Scrutinies”).
 - ◊ The *Gloria* is not sung or said.
 - ◊ The *Alleluia* is not sung or said.
 - ◊ The *Roman Missal* (3rd edition, 2011) provides proper Prefaces for each of the Sundays in Lent in Year A.
- The Third Scrutiny is celebrated in preparation for the Baptism of the catechumens who are to be admitted to the Sacraments of Christian Initiation at the Easter Vigil. The readings are taken from Year A (34): the Raising of Lazarus.
- The Handing on of the Lord’s Prayer takes place in the presence of the community of the faithful after the Liturgy of the Word during the Fifth Week of Lent (weekday evening Mass, Saturday morning Mass, or in a Liturgy of the Word) following the First Scrutiny (OCIA, 178-184). In this Mass or ritual, those preparing for baptism (or those already baptized who have little catechetical formation) receive the “Our Father.”

March 23-24: Lenten Weekdays

March 25: Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

- Vestment color: White
- Prayer texts are proper and taken from March 25.
- *The Lenten readings are NOT used today, but the proper readings for this solemnity.*
- Sprinkling Rite may be used instead of the Penitential Act.
- The *Gloria* is sung.
- Creed is recited. **Today, all genuflect at the words “and was incarnate.” Inform the congregation to genuflect at this time.**
- Solemn Blessing # 15 may be used.
- A Marian image of the Annunciation may be decorated and revered with incense.

March 26-28: Lenten Weekdays

HOLY WEEK 2026

March 29: Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

March 30-April 1

- Ritual Masses are prohibited this week and weddings outside Mass are discouraged.
- On Good Friday and Holy Saturday, the sacraments are not celebrated.
Funeral masses are permitted on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week.

March 30: Monday of Holy Week

Chrism Mass: Saint Peter Cathedral, 1:00 pm

- The Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Monday of Holy Week at 1:00 pm.

March 31: Tuesday of Holy Week

April 1: Wednesday of Holy Week “Spy Wednesday”

March 2026 Liturgical Calendar cont'd.

HOLY WEEK 2026, cont'd.

April 2: Thursday of Holy Week (Morning)

- Last day of Lent - Lent concludes with the celebration of the Lord's Supper
- Morning Prayer: Pss II Season weekday

April 3: Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)

Day of Fasting and Abstinence

April 4: Holy Saturday (Morning)

Easter Vigil beginning 8:30 pm or after

April 5: Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

April 21-27: Octave of Easter

- The first eight days of the Easter Season make up the octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord (Ceremonial of Bishops, 373).
- The *Gloria* is to be sung or recited during the octave of Easter.
- The Sequence is optional during the days of the octave (GIRM, 64).
- The double *Alleluia* is added to the dismissal formulary during the octave of Easter (Easter Vigil, 69).
- Paschal Candle should be lit and remains by the ambo until Pentecost.
- Consider using the Sprinkling Rite instead of the Penitential Act.
- Creed is not said.
- Preface I of Easter is used.
- Solemn Blessing #6 for Easter Time may be used during the Octave.

Bishop Persico Publishes Prayer for a New Bishop

With the celebration of his 75th birthday, Bishop Persico published a prayer for a new bishop for the Diocese of Erie and directs its use beginning the First Sunday of Advent, November 30, 2025.

O Almighty God,
 Pour forth the Holy Spirit upon the Holy Father
 and those who assist him
 in the discernment of our new bishop.
 May the one chosen have the strength
 to be a compassionate leader,
 who models humility and joy.
 Grant him the wisdom of Solomon,
 the courage of the apostles,
 and the tenderness of your Son, the Good Shepherd.
 We also pray for the Diocese of Erie
 that he is called to serve.
 May we welcome him with open hearts
 and work with him in a spirit of synodality,
 called to listen, collaborate, and build unity.
 Through the intercession of the
 Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church,
 St. Joseph, the protector of the Church,
 and St. Patrick, the patron of our diocese,
 may we journey the path of life
 with an unwavering focus
 on the hope we have in Christ.
 For he lives and reigns forever and ever.
 Amen.

Catechetical Sunday 2026 Theme Announced

At its November meeting, the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis chose the theme as: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to bring good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18). In his homily for the Jubilee of Migrants on October 5, Pope Leo XIV reminded us that our salvation provided by God “is fulfilled when we take responsibility and, with the compassion of the Gospel, care for the suffering of others.”

Eucharistic Congress 2029

Courtesy of Catholic News Service:

The National Eucharistic Congress, Inc. is thrilled to share that initial steps preparing for the 11th National Eucharistic Congress in 2029 have begun. The location for the event has not been shared but organizers of the event will provide more details in the near future.

Recurring Information:

Colds and Flu

People feeling ill should avoid receiving Communion from the chalice. Priests are encouraged to use good pastoral common sense to calm the fears of the faithful during cold and flu season. An example of this might include reminding the faithful not to receive the Precious Blood, if they are ill.

Workshops for Liturgical Ministers

If any parish or institution would like a workshop for liturgical ministers, especially Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion or lectors, please contact the Office for Divine Worship. If a parish or institution conducts its own workshop for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, please remember to present candidates for this ministry to the Bishop when they are deemed prepared by the pastor or chaplain of said institution.

Time for Vigil Masses and Anticipated Masses

The time for Vigil Masses and Anticipated Masses in the Diocese of Erie is no earlier than 4:00 pm. This applies to Holy Days of Obligation as well, including Christmas.

Copyrights

According to the United States Copyright Office, if you reproduce, distribute, publicly display, or derive a new piece from a copyrighted work without the permission of the copyright owner, you may have infringed on copyright. That could include putting a poem or song on your website, printing an essay or column in your bulletin, or even streaming a service on your website, Facebook or YouTube that includes the performance of hymns from a hymnal you have purchased. The safest thing a church can do is only to use copyrighted materials when you have the express written permission of the copyright owner. This is generally accomplished by purchasing the appropriate license. The majority of parishes use OneLicense.net.

In worship aids:

- To license the readings for a worship aid, parishes can contact: Mary Elizabeth Sperry at msperry@uscgb.org. If you need any other clarification, please call the Office for Divine Worship at 814-824-1271.
- For reprinting excerpts of the Roman Missal in a worship aid, credit is given to the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL).

On screens:

- The Committee on Divine Worship does not permit projecting readings and liturgical texts on screens during the liturgy. The bishops believe that since people spend much time on screens, the Sacred Liturgy should be a prayerful break from that. They also think screens distract from the liturgy itself.