



Office for Divine Worship Newsletter

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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.

2025 Rite of Election of Catechumens and The Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates

Sunday, February 22, 2026 St. Peter Cathedral, Erie 3:00 pm

Sunday, March 1, 2026, St. Tobias Parish, Brockway 3:00 pm

Registration of catechumens and candidates is due to the Office of Parish Support by January 31, 2026.

For questions or more information, please contact Aaron Kerr at akerr@eriercd.org.

Parishes are encouraged to observe the *Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election* (cf. OCIA, nos. 106-117) or the *Rite of Sending the Candidates for the Calling to Continuing Conversion* (cf. OCIA, nos. 434-445) or the *Rite of Sending Catechumens for Election and Candidates for Calling to Continuing Conversion* (cf. OCIA, nos. 530-546), depending on the local circumstances, the week or so before the Celebration of the Rite of Election of Catechumens and of the Call to Continuing Conversion of Candidates.

Pastors of Parishes Hosting Confirmation this year:

Please watch your email for the *Confirmation Liturgy Questionnaire*, which will be sent approximately 4–6 weeks prior to your scheduled celebration. It is important that all questions are completed and returned promptly to ensure proper preparation for the Liturgy.

Ritual Editions of Anointing of the Sick were Released January 1, 2026

Five publishers are producing a total of eleven ritual editions of the *Order of the Anointing of the Sick and of their Pastoral Care and Ritual de la Unción de los enfermos y de su atención* for liturgical use in the United States. Seven of the books are in English, one is in Spanish, and three are bilingual editions. Three pocket size editions are softcover, while the others are hardcover.

Presales for all editions are currently underway, and books may be distributed and sold as of January 1, 2026. As a reminder, first-use of the new Anointing rite begins on February 11, 2026, the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes and annual World Day of the Sick, with mandatory use as of Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026.

Information on the available ritual editions is summarized on the following page for the benefit of our readers.

Catholic Book Publishing Corp. (CatholicBookPublishing.com, 877-228-2665)

English, regular size: 7¼" × 10¼", 240 pgs., \$34

English, pocket size: 4" × 6¼", 336 pgs., \$25

Bilingual, pocket size: 4" × 6¼", 656 pgs., \$29

Liturgical Press (LitPress.org, 800-858-5450)

English: 6" × 9", 304 pgs., \$59.95

Spanish: 6" × 9", 288 pgs., \$59.95

Liturgy Training Publications (LTP.org, 800-933-1800)

English: 5¼" × 8", 336 pgs., \$48

Bilingual: 5¼" × 8", 672 pgs., \$68

Magnificat (bookstore.Magnificat.net, 970-416-6670)

English, regular size: 5" × 7¾", 280 pgs., \$29.95

English, pocket size: 4¼" × 5½", 280 pgs., \$24.95

Midwest Theological Forum (TheologicalForum.org, 630-541-8519)

English: 7.18" × 10¼", 206 pgs., \$49.95

February 2026 Liturgical Calendar

February is the month dedicated to the Holy Family

February 1: Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 2: Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (white)

- Mass Proper is taken from the Proper of Saints (February 2)
- Mass may begin with the Blessing of Candles.
- Two (2) forms of the procession may be used:
 - ◊ First Form: The Procession
 - * Invite the faithful to gather outside the regular worship space.
 - * Candles should be lit before the procession.
 - * Opening Hymn is played while the candles are being lit, followed by the Sign of the Cross, Greeting, and special introduction.
 - * Candles are blessed and procession into the church takes place.
 - ◊ Second Form: The Solemn Entrance
 - * People gather in the church and candles are blessed.
 - * No processions takes place.
- Penitential Act is NOT used today
- Gloria is sung or said
- Creed is not recited today since this Feast falls on a Monday
- For more information on the Liturgy for the Presentation, please see: [Adoremus: Feast-Presentation](#)

World Day of Consecrated Life

- Pastoral Suggestion: If there are religious sisters or brothers present at Mass, they may bring up the gifts (bread and wine) during the Offertory.
- A special blessing may be given to them after the homily or after the Prayer after Communion.
- Prayer of the Faithful or Mass Intention to include sisters and brothers

February 2026 Liturgical Calendar cont'd.

February 3: Saint Blaise, Bishop and Martyr - *optional memorial* (white)

- It is customary to celebrate Saint Blaise Feast with a blessing of throats. The blessing may be found in the *Book of Blessings*, "Order for the Blessing of Throats on the Feast of Saint Blaise", Chapter 51.
 - ◊ "Through the intercession of Saint Blaise, bishop and martyr, may God deliver you from every disease of the throat and from every other illness: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit."
- The blessing of throats may be given today by a priest, deacon, or lay minister who follows the rites and prayers designated for a lay minister.
 - ◊ Ordained Ministers say the prayer WITH the Sign of the Cross.
 - ◊ Lay Ministers say the prayer WITHOUT the Sign of the Cross.
- The blessing usually follows the homily and general intercessions, or it may take the place of the final blessing of the Mass.
- The candles to be used for the blessing of throats are blessed during Mass at the Presentation of the Lord, February 2.

February 5: Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr - Memorial (red)

February 6: St. Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs in Japan, Memorial (red)

February 8: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 10: St. Scholastica, Virgin - Memorial (white)

February 11: Our Lady of Lourdes - *optional memorial*

February 14: St. Cyril, Monk, and St. Methodius, Bishop - Memorial (white)

February 15: Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Communication Suggestion:

Please make sure your Ash Wednesday schedule is posted on your parish homepage website and all your social media platforms.

February 18: Ash Wednesday - Lent Begins

A Day of Fasting and Abstinence

- Ritual Masses (e.g., Celebration of Matrimony) are not permitted.
- Funeral Masses *are* permitted.
- Begins with the Sign of the Cross & Greeting (The Lord be with you, Let us pray, and the Collect).
- Penitential Rite is omitted. (NO "I Confess..., Lord, have mercy...")
- Alleluia is omitted. Use proper Lenten Gospel Acclamation.
- Blessing and Distribution of Ashes takes place after homily.
- Gloria and Creed are omitted.
- Universal Prayer is said after the distribution of ashes.
- The Mass is proper.
- Preface III or IV of Lent is appropriate for use today.
- *Book of Blessings* provides instructions for blessing of ashes, Ch. 52. nos. 1656-1678
- Ordinary minister for the blessing of the ashes is a priest or deacon.

February 22: First Sunday of Lent

February 23-28: Lenten Weekdays

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.