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To,  
All the Priests, Religious  
& the Faithful  
Diocese of Aurangabad

**Sub: Holy Week Liturgy 2020**

Dearly Beloved in Lord Jesus,

“Unfortunately, at this time of a complete lockdown in our country, due to the fear of the spread of the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, almost everything and everyone is affected and normal life has come nearly to a standstill. Our social, economic and religious lives are painfully hit by what is now known as ‘social distancing,’ which is indispensable to curtail the transmission of the virus.”

In the present context of the extraordinary situation created by Covid-19, the Holy See has offered directives to the Universal Church for the celebration of the Holy Week. (cf. Prot. N. 153/20, dated 19.03.2020 and Prot N. 154/20, dated 25.03.2020 of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments). The CCBI also has sent some recommendation for the Holy Week liturgy, following the directives of the Holy See (Ref: CCBI/I-F-5/2020-88, dated 27 March 2020).

I am sending you the guidelines for the celebration of the Holy Week in our diocese in accordance with the directives of the Holy See and the recommendations of the CCBI.



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The directives/guidelines given in the circulars DOA/COR/2020/I, III & V are in effect till April 15, 2020 inclusive. Please wait for the next circular for further directives/guidelines for liturgical celebrations from on April 16, 2020.

Liturgical celebrations in the Cathedral, during the Holy Week, will be led by me and will be available live on the youtube –diocese of Aurangabad. (Palm Sunday 07.00am, Maundy Thursday 06.00pm. Good Friday 05.00pm. Easter Vigil 08.00pm and Easter Sunday 08.00am).

I wish to assure my prayers to all the health care workers (doctors, nurses and other personnel working in the hospitals and nursing homes), policemen and security personnel and their family members, in our diocese, for their selfless services in these days of uncertainty and alertness. While we are quarantined in our houses safely, they are exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, so that we may not be infected by the virus and our lives may be saved. May God bless them and protect them.

May Mary, the Health of the Sick and Saint Joseph obtain for us abundant graces of reconciliation and salvation, in attentive listening to the Word of the Lord, which he repeats to humanity today: "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps 46:10), "Do not be afraid (Mt.14:27), "I am with you always" (Mt. 28:20).

May Jesus grant eternal rest to all those who died due to covid19 and console the people who lost their beloved ones. May He heal all those who are suffering from covid19. May He free all from the scourge of covid19 and fill the humanity with joy and peace.

Yours in Lord Jesus

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## **GUIDELINES/DIRECTIVES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY WEEK 2020 IN THE DIOCESE OF AURANGABAD**

The annual celebration of the Paschal Triduum, beginning with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday and ending with Vespers of Easter Sunday is the heart and apex of the whole liturgical year. During it, is celebrated the Paschal Mystery, that is, the passing of the Lord from this world to his Father. The Church, by the celebration of this mystery through liturgical signs and sacramentals, is united to Christ, her Spouse, in intimate communion (Paschale Solemnitatis, no. 38). This is greatly manifested in the way we celebrate the Holy Week in our parishes as a people full of faith, life and zeal for the Gospel.

1. As per the above-mentioned Decrees of the Holy See, the Easter Triduum is celebrated over the arc of three days, which is preceded by Lent and crowned by Pentecost and, therefore, cannot be transferred to another time. We will continue to celebrate the mysteries of our salvation during the Holy Week, even in the absence of a liturgical assembly.
2. The manner in which these celebrations will be held will be simpler this year. The faithful will not be present. However, every effort must be made to keep the dignity of these celebrations, by following the liturgical forms the Church has prescribed with regard to them.
3. Given the prevailing critical situation, I would like to reiterate that the prescribed social distancing, hygiene protocols and sanitation of the spaces for the liturgical celebrations should be strictly adhered to.
4. Every Parish is encouraged to make sincere efforts to live-stream their celebrations. Our families should be exhorted to come together to celebrate the great mysteries of our faith, uniting themselves with the local Church through the celebrations transmitted online. While participating in the



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5. liturgical celebrations and other devotional acts online, it is highly desirable that the faithful come together as a family in their proper home, dress appropriately, switch off other gadgets that could disturb them, put a white cloth on a table, place the crucifix and the Holy Bible, recite the prayers / responses and join in the singing of hymns.
6. Chrism Mass:  
Since the Chrism Mass is not formally part of the Triduum, it is postponed and the date and place will be informed to you later.
7. Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion:  
The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated devotedly in each parish, even though the faithful are not present. The second form given in the Roman Missal is to be adopted in Cathedral, while the third form is to be used in parish churches and in other places.
8. Holy Thursday - Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper:
  - a) The washing of the feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted.
  - b) At the end of the Mass, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of Repose is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. The priest and the religious are recommended to spend sufficient time in adoring the Lord in the tabernacle and to pray for the wellbeing entire humanity.
  - c) On this day priests are granted the exceptional faculty to celebrate Mass in a suitable place, without the presence of the people (Need not to concelebrate).
  - d) Given the prevailing critical situation, the concelebrating priests (if any) should strictly adhere to the prescribed social distancing, hygiene protocols and sanitation. (in order to main the social distancing the concelebrating priests need not to be in the sanctuary and may pace themselves at the side of the sanctuary or in the front).





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e) Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers of the day (cf. Liturgia Horarum).

**9. Good Friday -- The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord:**

- a) In the liturgical celebration of the Passion of the Lord, during the Universal Prayer, please ensure that a special intention is made for those who find themselves in distress; the sick and the dead (cf. Missale Romanum).
- b) Procession of The Way of the Cross on Good Friday and the pious devotions of Our Lady of Sorrows are transferred to 14th and 15th of September.
- c) Priests and religious will conduct way of the cross in the churches and chapels privately, without the faithful.
- d) The Adoration of the Holy Cross, by kissing it, shall be limited solely to the Celebrant. The Holy Cross could then be held elevated higher for a brief time for adoration by others.
- e) Reflections on the entire celebration could be offered to help the faithful to participate prayerfully through the means of communication.

**10. Easter Sunday:**

- a) The liturgy of the Easter Vigil is to be celebrated only in the Cathedral and in parish churches.
- b) For the Lucernarium, the Paschal Candle is lit without the blessing of the fire and the procession, after which the Exsultet (Easter Proclamation) is sung.
- c) The number of readings may be reduced, as prescribed in the Missale Romanum.
- d) For the Baptismal Liturgy, only the "Renewal of Baptismal Promises" is done (cf. Missale Romanum).
- e) The liturgy of the Eucharist then follows.
- f) Although, in the present circumstances, the Easter Vigil will be celebrated without a congregation, efforts should be made to help our



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faithful, through the means of social communication, to celebrate this Vigil as the Mother of all Vigils, leading them to have greater hope in the victory of the Risen Lord, who conquered sin and death. In the midst of this pandemic we should experience the Resurrection of the Lord as the certainty of our victory.

11. The Holy Week services except the Easter Vigil may be conducted in the Religious Communities.

12. Blessing of the houses during the Easter Season is to be done only if the lockdown is discontinued and if the civil law permits. Otherwise it is to be suspended.

13. Plenary Indulgence:

Here below are excerpts from the Decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary given to the faithful in the current pandemic and issued on 19th March, 2020:

“a) Plenary Indulgence is granted to the faithful suffering from Coronavirus, who are subject to quarantine by order of the health authority in hospitals or in their own homes if, with a spirit detached from any sin, they unite spiritually through the media to the celebration of Holy Mass, the recitation of the Holy Rosary, to the pious practice of the Way of the Cross or other forms of devotion, or if at least they will recite the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and a pious invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, offering this trial in a spirit of faith in God and charity towards their brothers and sisters, with the will to fulfill the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer according to the Holy Father's intentions), as soon as possible.

b) Health care workers, family members and all those who, following the example of the Good Samaritan, exposing themselves to the risk of contagion, care for the sick of Coronavirus according to the words of the divine Redeemer: “Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life





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for one's friends" (Jn. 15: 13), will obtain the same gift of the Plenary Indulgence under the same conditions.

c) This Apostolic Penitentiary also willingly grants a Plenary Indulgence under the same conditions on the occasion of the current world epidemic, also to those faithful who offer a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or Eucharistic adoration, or reading the Holy Scriptures for at least half an hour, or the recitation of the Holy Rosary, or the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross, or the recitation of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, to implore from Almighty God the end of the epidemic, relief for those who are afflicted and eternal salvation for those whom the Lord has called to Himself.

d) The Church prays for those who find themselves unable to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick and of the Viaticum, entrusting each and every one to divine Mercy by virtue of the communion of saints and granting the faithful a Plenary Indulgence on the point of death, provided that they are duly disposed and have recited a few prayers during their lifetime (in this case the Church makes up for the three usual conditions required). For the attainment of this indulgence the use of the crucifix or the cross is recommended (cf. Enchiridion indulgentiarum, no.12)

#### **14. Sacrament of Reconciliation:**

Given the prevailing critical situation, I would like to reiterate that the prescribed social distancing, hygiene protocols, use of protective masks and sanitation should be strictly adhered to. The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be celebrated in an appropriate space, outside the confessional, which is not closed, but a ventilated place and which will facilitate the keeping of distance not less than one meter between the priest and the penitent, without prejudice to absolute attention to the safeguarding of the sacramental seal and the necessary discretion.





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**15. Spiritual Communion:**

For a long time it has been a tradition in the Catholic Church that, when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, one makes an Act of Spiritual Communion, which is a source of grace. Spiritual Communion is an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and lovingly embrace him at a time or in circumstances when one cannot receive Him in Sacramental Communion. The most common reason for making an Act of Spiritual Communion is when a person cannot attend Mass. Acts of Spiritual Communion increase our desire to receive Sacramental Communion and help us avoid the sins which would make us unable to receive Holy Communion worthily.

**16. Time of Prayer:**

Prayer is an essential tool for healing and an excellent source of comfort, courage and strength for those who are suffering. In this period of uncertainty, prayer is the one pillar we can hold on to. I encourage you to pray fervently and ask our Lord to bring healing to those who are afflicted with this illness as well as to provide strength and protection to the medical personnel who are struggling in the frontline and to bless the hordes of officials and volunteers worldwide who are involved in various forms of selfless service.

We could urge our faithful to show their solidarity with the suffering through prayer and charity. The faithful could pray the Rosary and intercede through the mediation of our Blessed Mother for the speedy recovery of the people affected and for an end to this pandemic.

**17. Care of those affected by COVID-19, especially of the Poor:**

The observance of the Lent should result into effective and lasting action in favour of the poor and the marginalized. The journey of Lent that culminates with Easter forms in us a new person in the Risen Lord. He strengthens us to live like Him, giving ourselves in loving service to others, especially the





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poor and the needy. There are many brothers and sisters of ours, especially in the urban area, who are affected financially by the long quarantine. They all, without any discrimination, need our generous help.

I have directed the Vicar General to initiate charitable outreach activities on behalf of the diocese. I am aware that some priests have taken some initiatives, on their own, to reach out to the needy. I appreciate their efforts. I request all the priests, religious and faithful to help the poor in all the possible way you can. Let us make the people feel that the Church is always with them, caring for them as a provident mother.

+ *Ambrose*

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