

NOTES ON THE LITURGY

Office of Divine Worship - Archdiocese of Newark

The Easter Triduum and the Eucharist

The Eucharist During the Easter Triduum

On Holy Thursday, the tabernacle should be empty prior to the start of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. During the Mass, enough hosts should be consecrated for distribution both Thursday night and at the Good Friday celebration of the Lord's Passion. Good Friday is the only time that the Church endorses distributing communion to the assembly from the tabernacle. Consecrated wine is never to be reserved for distribution on Good Friday. Holy Communion may be brought to the sick on Holy Thursday.

At the end of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist is processed to the place of reservation. This may be the tabernacle proper or another place that has been prepared to reserve the Eucharist, but it is never reposed on the main altar (See GIRM, 315). The Eucharist is reposed inside a locked tabernacle immediately after the procession, but normally the place of reservation is available for visits by the faithful until midnight. Note that "The Blessed Sacrament should be reserved in a closed tabernacle or pyx. **Under no circumstances may it be exposed in a monstrance.**" (*Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Paschal Feasts*, 55) **The Eucharist remains in the place of reservation until it is retrieved at the appropriate time during the Good Friday celebration of the Lord's Passion.**

Good Friday

On Good Friday, "in accordance with ancient tradition, the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist: Holy Communion is distributed to the faithful during the celebration of the Lord's Passion alone, though it may be brought at any time of the day to the sick who cannot take part in the celebration." (*Circular Letter*, 59)

After communion at the celebration of the Lord's Passion, the remaining hosts are consumed. Some may be kept in a safe place for the sick, but the tabernacle (and the place of reservation) is to remain empty from the end of the Good Friday service until after Communion at the Easter Vigil.

Holy Saturday

On Holy Saturday, "the church abstains strictly from celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass. Holy Communion may only be given in the form of viaticum. The celebration of marriages is forbidden, as also the celebration of other sacraments, except those of penance and the anointing of the sick." (*Circular Letter*, 75)

At the beginning of the Easter Vigil, the tabernacle should be empty. Enough hosts should be consecrated for all those present at the Vigil. At the end of the Easter Vigil Mass, any remaining hosts may be reserved in the tabernacle.

Ministers of Communion & First Communion

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should **not** be installed at any of the liturgies of the Easter Triduum, including the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. Neither should first Communion be celebrated on Holy Thursday. "It is not particularly appropriate for first Communion to be celebrated on Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper. Another day should be chosen instead, such as a Sunday between the Second and the Sixth Sunday of Easter, or the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, or the Sundays of Ordinary Time, since Sunday is rightly regarded as the day of the Eucharist." (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 87)

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is prohibited during the Easter Triduum, even in places where "perpetual adoration" is held. "Under no circumstances may perpetual exposition take place during the Easter Triduum" (*Thirty-One Questions on Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*, 26) Therefore, the Eucharist is not to be exposed at any time on Holy Thursday through evening prayer of Easter Sunday.