



DIOCESE OF
SHREWSBURY

OFFICE FOR LITURGY

Curial Offices
2 Park Road South
Birkenhead
CH43 4UX

0151 652 5767
liturgy@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

Briefing Note for Holy Thursday 2020

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments have issued two Decrees In time of Covid-19. The Bishop's Conference of England and Wales have also issued A Vade Mecum. This briefing note brings together all three sets of advice.

Decree In time of Covid-19 states:

Holy Thursday. In Cathedral and parish churches, where and in the measure that there is a real possibility of doing so, established by the one responsible, the priest(s) of the parish can celebrate the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. The faculty to celebrate Mass on this day in a suitable place, without the people, is granted in an exceptional manner to all priests. The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper 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. Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers of the day (cf. *Liturgia Horarum*).

Decree In time of Covid-19 (II) states:

Holy Thursday. The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass of the Lord's Supper the procession is also omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. On this day the faculty to celebrate Mass in a suitable place, without the presence of the people, is exceptionally granted to all priests.

The Bishop's Conference A Vade Mecum states:

Mass of the Lord's Supper: The faculty to celebrate this Mass without the people is granted to all priests on this day. The Washing of the Feet is to be omitted and there is to be no procession to the Altar of Repose. The reserved Sacrament is to be kept

in the Tabernacle. Those who are not able to celebrate this Mass should pray *Vespers* from the *Liturgy of the Hours*.

It is likely that the priest may wish to spend some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. The Archbishops have asked that priests make a *Renewal of Priestly Commitment* at this time using the formula in Appendix 1. If live-streaming facilities permit, a camera focused on the Tabernacle would allow those at home a sense of watching and praying with the Lord. St Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham will be the focus of national coverage of Watching on Holy Thursday: www.stchadscathedral.org.uk

Therefore, this year:

- Every priest may celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper in a suitable place
 - No more than two people (including the presider) must be present and should be from the same household (i.e. living in the Presbytery)
 - Deacons should not be present unless they are of the same household as the priest (i.e. living in the Presbytery)
 - The Entrance Antiphon is said
 - The Washing of the feet is omitted
 - After the Homily the Personal Renewal of Priestly Commitment is made (see text below)
 - There is no procession with the Blessed Sacrament – after Communion the Blessed Sacrament is simply reserved in the main tabernacle, not in an altar of repose
 - You may wish to have a time of watching before the main tabernacle
 - Saint Chad's Cathedral in Birmingham is the focus of national coverage of Watching. This can be viewed at www.stchadscathedral.org.uk
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- There will be a short order of celebration available on the Diocesan website for people to download and use to follow the liturgy, especially if they are watching a live streamed Mass.

If you have any questions or need advice, please don't hesitate to contact me frchris.matthews@dioceseofshrewsbury.org or 07813020730

Reverend Father Christopher Matthews
Diocesan Office for Liturgy

PERSONAL RENEWAL OF PRIESTLY COMMITMENT

In the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, the priest makes the following personal renewal of priestly commitment.

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Lord Jesus Christ, as the Church approaches the anniversary of that day when you conferred your priesthood on the Apostles and on us, I renew now, in the strength of the Holy Spirit, the promises I made on the day of my priestly ordination.

With humility and faith, I (*the priest inserts his name*) resolve to be more united with you and more closely conformed to you, denying myself and confirming those promises about sacred duties towards your Church which, prompted by love of you, I willingly and joyfully pledged on the day I was ordained a priest.

I resolve to be a faithful steward of the divine mysteries in the Holy Eucharist and the other liturgical rites, and to discharge faithfully the sacred office of teaching, following you the Head and Shepherd, not seeking any gain, but moved only by zeal for souls.

Humbly, I ask for an outpouring of the gifts and graces I need for my priestly service, so that, supported by the prayers of the people entrusted to my care, and working with my brother priests, I might remain faithful in my ministry to you, the High Priest, and lead your people in the way of salvation.

I pray for my bishop (*insert the Bishop's name*) that he may be faithful to the apostolic office entrusted to him, so that, in our midst, he may be made, day by day, a living and more perfect image of you, the Priest, the Good Shepherd, the Teacher and Servant of all.

Lord Jesus, graciously keep us all in your love and lead all of us, shepherds and flock, to eternal life. Amen.

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen