

Easter Triduum

CHECKLIST

THE THREE DAYS

Sacristans hardly need to be told of the Triduum's importance—or of its complexity! It is a privileged time for celebrating the primal event of salvation that is still present in our midst, still shaping us as a Church. It is the centre of our year; its preparation should never wait for late Lent. From the Evening Mass of Thursday of Holy Week through Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday, we will need to make changes in the physical environment of our buildings, utilise many implements seen but once a year, and serve more worshippers than at any other point in the year. Our responsibilities begin weeks or months ahead, making lists of requisites needed from careful reviews of the rites, and then finding or commissioning the most dignified materials possible. These artifacts are noted in the checklists that follow.

DECORATIONS

The church building is mostly stripped or barren for the first two days, then transformed with paradisaical decorations at the Easter Vigil. There are some sub-plots:

Thursday evening at the end of Mass

The place for the transfer of the Eucharist is the tabernacle used all year, presuming that this is correctly separated from the celebration space. Its decoration this night should be simple, unlike many repositories of Tridentine and Baroque times.

A few flowers (that are not explicitly 'Easter') or something like small olive trees or branches can be combined with a few candles.

Away from the chapel of reservation, everything is to be stripped or veiled: no crosses visible, no holy water in stoups or font, no covers or cloths on altar, no auxiliary furnishings like credence tables and kneelers. Only permanent furniture like the altar and the ambo should be visible, and they should be barren.

Thursday midnight

All candles, except for one candle near the tabernacle, are extinguished, and all decorations are taken from the eucharistic chapel.

Friday's celebration of the Lord's Passion

Only those items of furniture needed are set out, then removed after the rite. All else is bare. Any remaining Eucharist is brought to a private place to be kept for viaticum. The cross (which was carried in during the celebration) is placed with lighted candles in a place conducive both to quiet prayer and to reverencing the cross with a touch or kiss—perhaps in the now-empty chapel of reservation.

Saturday

The many artifacts and furnishings of the Vigil need to be placed as early as possible, but decorations should be delayed—so that the space is bare for the liturgy of the hours or for preparatory rites. Better yet, it should not be decorated during the day at all! *The Ceremonial of Bishops* (#48) reminds many older sacristans of hectic vigils long ago: the rubrics ban the use of flowers from 'Ash Wednesday until the Gloria at the Easter Vigil.' For centuries, a reverent procession of flower-bearers and veil removers took place at the Gloria. Thus, the decorative tasks of Holy Saturday include the delivery of decorations, temporary placement to see how they will look, and then an immediate removal of them to some place where a procession of flower-bearers will form during the Vigil. For this procession, the flowers can be placed in clusters or zones so that the right pots end up in the planned positions. A rehearsal of procession leaders can take place as the flowers are delivered and set. Meanwhile the enshrined cross remains in its place of honour. One other image can be introduced into the still-stripped environment: an image of Christ in the tomb, of the descent into hell, or of the sorrowful Virgin Mary.

Holy Thursday

MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Place for eucharistic action

Seating:

- hymnals or books

Open Space:

- chairs for those whose feet will be washed
- pedestals for the holy oils (after opening procession)
- containers for gifts for the poor (unless at entrance)

Altar:

- covered with one cloth, unless this comes at preparation rite
- gospel book with text marked, if used and not carried in procession
- nearby: any candles, candlestands not carried in procession
- nearby: stand for processional cross

Credence table(s), in order of usage:

- robe stand or place for resting chasuble during foot washing
- linen apron (gremial), if used
- large pitcher of warm water, basin, towels for drying feet
- basin with soap, pitcher of water, towel for hand washing
- corporal
- large cup (can be covered by pall and /or white veil)
- purificator
- book stand, if needed
- water in small cruet, if not in procession of gifts
- additional cups and purificators for the assembly (on tray)
- additional patens for the assembly
- pyxes for hosts consecrated for the sick, unless these are held by the ministers who will leave from Mass for this ministry
- humeral veils
- candles and holders for all ministers to carry in procession at end

Presider's chair:

- sacramentary (after review in vesting room)
- hymnal or booklet, if not carried in procession

Ministers' seats:

- texts for concelebrants, if any
- hymnals or booklets, if not carried in procession

Ambo:

- Lectionary with texts marked, if not carried in procession
- psalm setting for cantor (unless carried there for this action)
- general intercessions, if done here

Music stand (or secondary podium):

- general intercessions, if done here

Sacristy

- charcoal lit in thurible, then put in vesting room
- extra charcoal (and tongs, matches) for adding during Mass
- second thurible with charcoal to be lit later in Mass
- controls set for air, sound, lights
- microphones put in place and turned on

Vesting room

- vesture; chasuble, dalmatic of white
- lavalier microphones, if any
- lectionary or gospel book with texts marked, if carried in procession

- local texts (reception of the holy oils, dismissal of catechumens and elect, intercessions) inserted and other texts marked in sacramentary, for review prior to placement by chair
- thurible, with lit charcoal
- vessel of incense
- processional cross
- two or more candlesticks with lighted candles
- holy oils, in their vessels (for opening procession)

Entrance

Exterior:

- bells ready for ringing during Gloria

Table with gifts:

- bread for all at this Mass on one paten, more if needed.
- bread for all on Good Friday in large pyx, ciborium
- wine for all in one vessel, more if needed
- water in small cruet, if in procession
- container for gifts for the poor, unless all in assembly bring their gifts up

Other:

- collection baskets ready
- booklets, bulletins or other handouts
- candles and holders for all, if used for procession at end

Baptistry (or where repository of oils is located)

- repository open for reception of oils during introductory rites

Catechumeneon

- open and prepared, if catechumens are present

Chapel or Eucharist reservation

- lamp removed
- tabernacle empty, unveiled, with doors open (and key at hand)
- a few decorations, unlit candles in place

Good Friday

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Place for assembly

Seating:

- hymnals or booklets

Open space:

- space set for prostration of presider and others
- place set for later placement of two candles and cross (for example, processional cross base or simple stand for larger cross)

Altar:

- completely bare
- processional cross and stand put away

Credence table:

- altar cloth
- corporal
- plates for the communion of all

Presider's chair:

- sacramentary (after review in vesting room)
- hymnal or booklet
- nearby: robe stand for chasuble (if removed for veneration); shoe horn (if needed) for replacing shoes (if removed for veneration)

Ministers' seats:

- hymnals or booklets

Ambo:

- lectionary with texts marked, if not carried in procession
- psalm setting for cantor (unless carried there for this action)
- books for singing the passion or reading in parts, if used (secondary lecterns for those taking parts in proclamation of passion, or reading desks added to large ambo area)
- text for the introduction or announcement of each intercession (unless announced from chair or music stand)

Sacristy

- controls set for air, sound, lights
- microphones put in place and turned on

Vesting room

- vesture; chasuble, dalmatic of red
- lavalier microphones, if any
- lectionary with texts marked, if carried in procession
- local texts (dismissal of catechumens and elect?) inserted and other texts marked in sacramentary, for review prior to placement by chair

Entrance

- cross (veiled or not, depending on ritual option selected)
- two candles, candlesticks (able to stand on floor by cross)
- matches
- collection baskets ready
- booklets, bulletins or other handouts

Catechumeneon

- opened and prepared, if catechumens and elect are present

Chapel of eucharistic reservation

- one candle lit by tabernacle
- key at tabernacle
- humeral veil (white or red)
- two candles, candlesticks, able to stand to side of altar
- matches

Good Friday & Holy Saturday

TENEBRAE

Office of Readings Combined with Morning Prayer

Over the centuries preceding Vatican II, Tenebrae was the paschal title for the Office of Readings ("Vigils" or "Matins") combined with Morning Prayer ("Lauds") during which candles were extinguished as morning came. In recent centuries, despite the early-morning images, this was sometimes moved to Wednesday night, a sort of prelude to the Triduum. The reformed rites call for a return of the original Tenebrae. The combined office calls for these requisites.

Place for assembly

Seating:

- hymnals or booklets

Open space:

- large candelabrum for Tenebrae can be positioned and lit, if used (old customs called for the extinguishing of candles at each psalm, until only one was left)

Altar, if hours celebrated in eucharistic space:

- bare, nothing on it or near it

Presider's chair:

- ritual book (after review in vesting room)
- hymnal or booklet

Ministers' seats:

- hymnals or booklets
- candle snuffer (if used)

Ambo:

- copies of the Liturgy of the Hours with texts marked, or passages marked in Bible (with passage from early Christian literature in separate book)
- text of intercessions, if done here

Sacristy

- controls set for air, sound, lights
- microphones put in place and turned on

Vesting room

- albs, stole for deacon/priest (red on Friday, violet Saturday)
- lavalier microphones, if any
- texts marked in Liturgy of the Hours book or in special
- volume prepared with proper texts in correct order,
- for review before placement at chair

Entrance

- FF booklets, bulletins or other handouts

Holy Saturday

PREPARATION RITES FOR THE ELECT

The *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (#18ff) calls for preparation rites this day: song and greeting, reading the word of God and homily, and celebrating certain rites ('giving back' the creed and/or the rite of ephphetha). Another preparatory service might take place this day, if infant baptism will be part of Vigil—the reception of infants with exorcism and anointing with the oils of catechumens (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, #28.1). A service combining these two preparations is possible, uniting in one assembly the prayers and intense expectation of many elect and parents, sponsors and catechists.

Catechumeneon or other place for assembly

Seating:

- hymnals or booklets

Open space:

- stand with oil of catechumens, if infants received

Altar, if rites celebrated in eucharistic space:

- bare, nothing on it or near it

Credence table, if infants received:

- basin with lemon, pitcher of water, towel

Presider's chair:

- ritual book (after review in vesting room)
- hymnal or booklet

Ministers' seats:

- hymnals or booklets

Ambo:

- Bible or lectionary with texts marked
- psalm setting for cantor, if psalm used

Sacristy

- controls set for air, sound, lights
- microphones—if necessary—put in place and turned on

Vesting room

- albs, violet stole for deacon, presbyter
- lavalier microphones, if any
- texts marked or inserted in ritual book in correct order, for review before placing at chair

Entrance

- space set for reception of infants, if this rite scheduled
- booklets, bulletins or other handouts

Easter Vigil

Place for eucharistic action

Open space:

- dedication candles, pew candles in place; lit in service

Altar:

- covered with one cloth, unless this comes at preparation rite
- gospel book with text marked, if used (not carried in tonight)
- nearby: two or more candles, candlestands in place; lit in service
- nearby: processional cross in stand

Credence table:

- large cup (can be covered by pall and /or white veil)
- purificator
- corporal
- book stand, if used
- water in small cruet, if not in procession of gifts
- basin, pitcher of water, towel
- additional cups and purifications for the assembly (on tray)
- additional patens for the assembly
- pyx or ciborium, if extra bread consecrated for the sick

Presider's chair:

- hymnal or booklet, if not carried in procession

Ministers' seats:

- texts for concelebrants, if any
- hymnals or booklets

Ambo:

- lectionary with texts marked (not carried in tonight)
- stand for the Easter candle
- text of *Exsultet* (in special book)
- psalm setting for cantor (unless carried there each time)
- general intercessions, if done here

Music stand (or secondary podium):

- general intercessions, if done here

Sacristy

- unlit charcoal placed in thurible and taken to gathering place
- extra charcoal (and tongs, matches) for adding during Mass
- controls set for air, sound

- lights off (panel marked for times and numbers of changes)
- microphones put in place and turned on

Vesting Room

- vesture; cope or chasuble, dalmatic of white or gold
- lavalier microphones, if any
- local texts—intercessions, introductions, dismissal of catechumens not being baptised tonight and ritual texts (initiation) inserted in sacramentary, or all texts placed in correct order in special presider's book, for review prior to placement by fire or carrying by assistant
- robes for neophytes; areas set for their drying and vesting
- towels, clothes and a change of vesture for presider if entering the font to baptise by immersion. (If cope is used for procession and the liturgy of the word, it is taken off before presider enters the font. Chasuble is then used after presider dries.)

Entrance

Exterior:

- bells ready for ringing during Gloria
- signs directing assembly to special gathering place (see also "Other gathering place" below)

Table(s) with gifts:

- flowers and other decorations to be brought in during the Gloria, set up in correct order
- bread for all on one paten, more if needed
- wine for all in one vessel, more if needed
- water in small cruet, if in procession

Other:

- collection baskets ready
- booklets, bulletins or other handouts
- fire extinguishers near ushers

Baptistry

- font full and warm
- chrism in vessel
- baptismal candles
- towels for neophytes
- basin with pieces of lemon, pitcher of water, towel, if needed, vessel(s) to be filled from font, and sprinkler(s)

Catechumeneon

- opened and prepared, if catechumens not being baptised are present

Chapel or eucharist reservation

- lamp in place, lit after communion if Communion for Sick added
- key at tabernacle if eucharist for the sick will be added

Other Gathering Place

- large fire (receptacle, fuel, matches); other lights out
- candles, bobeche, hymnals or booklets for all
- places set for assembly, presider and ministers
- fire extinguishers nearby

On table near place for presider and ministers:

- Easter candle (unless carried from vesting room)
- thurible with unlit charcoal
- vessel of incense, Easter scent
- material for decoration of candle: incense grains, stylus
- wooden taper or other means of lighting Easter candle from fire

