

Roman Missal, 3rd edition

Easter Sunday — The Easter Vigil

O God, who by the pages of both Testaments instruct and prepare us to celebrate the Paschal Mystery, grant that we may comprehend your mercy, so that the gifts we receive from you this night may confirm our hope of the gifts to come.

What's New

General

- At the beginning of the liturgy the processional cross and candles are not carried outside —only the paschal candle. [8]
- Procession — The Deacon leads the procession with the paschal candle followed by Priest and people with unlit candles. The Deacon stops and sings *The Light of Christ* three times: at the door of the Church when the Priest lights his candle, in the middle of the church where all light their candles, and at the altar, facing the people. At this point the Church is lit except the altar candles. (The altar candles are lit during the singing of the Gloria.) [15–17, 31]
- Liturgy of the Word — the number of readings from the Old Testament may only be reduced when there are serious pastoral circumstances. When this is the case there should be readings from both the Law (1-3) and the Prophets (4-7). [20-21]
- Baptismal Liturgy — The Missal does not include the texts for the Sacraments of Initiation from either the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* or the *Rite of Baptism of Children*. There is a separate document outlining the various options or pathways at this point.
- Preparation of Gifts — where there has been the Baptism of Infants the gifts may be brought up by their parents or godparents (or the gifts may be brought up by newly baptised). [60]

For the Presider

- The priest begins the liturgy with the sign of the cross and the greeting. [9]
- The preparation of the candle (*Christ yesterday and today*) is no longer optional. [11] The insertion of grains of incense remains optional. [12]
- The (brief) Homily may not be omitted.

Structure

The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

First Part: The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil
or Lucernarium

The Blessing of the Fire and Preparation of the Candle
Procession

The Easter Proclamation (Exsultet)

Second Part: The Liturgy of the Word

Instruction

Readings

Psalms

Prayers

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Gloria

Collect

Reading

Alleluia

Gospel

Homily

Third Part: Baptismal Liturgy

Introduction

Litany of the Saints

Blessing of Baptismal Water

Sacraments of Initiation

The Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Sprinkling

Prayer of the Faithful

Fourth Part: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of Gifts

Eucharistic Prayer

Communion Rite

Solemn Blessing & Dismissal

- The Blessing of Baptismal Water is now prayed with hands extended. [44/54]
- Eucharistic Prayer — there are interpolations for the Eucharistic Prayers praying for the newly baptised and their godparents.
 - Eucharistic Prayer 1: *Communicantes and Hanc Igitur* are in place in the Eucharistic Prayer (pages 671-2)

- Eucharistic Prayers 2 & 3: the interpolations are found in the *Ritual Masses* (pages 1183-4)
- Invitation to Communion — the priest may briefly address the newly baptised about receiving their first Communion. It is desirable that Holy Communion be given under both kinds. [64-65]
- Solemn Blessing — the blessing for the Easter Vigil is in place. It may be replaced, if applicable, by the Solemn Blessing from the *Rite of Baptism of Children*. [68]

For the Deacon

- Procession — see above
- Exsultet — the incensation of the book and the candle is no longer optional. [19]

For Consideration

- This is the most important celebration of the Church's year. Make sure that the whole parish is invited.
- All ministers should be well prepared. Key ministers (Priest, Deacon, MC, Music Director) should have an understanding of the structure of the liturgy.
- When preparing the Vigil be aware of the flow of the liturgy. It is leading up to the Eucharist — 'the climax of Initiation and the centre of the whole Christian life. [64]
- The Vigil must take place during the night. It should begin after nightfall and, if it begins in the early hours, end before daybreak. It should take place in the dark. [3]
- From the above comment it should be noted that the celebration is not a normal Saturday Evening Vigil Mass. That it takes time to celebrate it well is part of the symbolism of the celebration.
- A *blazing fire* is prepared [8] — this means something substantial.
- The text of the initial part of the Vigil for use in a worthy folder is available for download from the Missal website.
- The Liturgy of the Word has a rhythm. Each of the Old Testament readings is followed by a Responsorial Psalm and then a Prayer. It is desirable that psalms are sung (and not replaced by other songs). There should be periods of silence: after the Priest says *Let us pray* before the Prayer or the Psalms may be replaced by silence (in which case *Let us pray* is omitted. [23]
- Sacraments of Initiation — details can be found in a separate document
- The celebration of the Easter Vigil and in particular the Sacraments of Initiation provide the focus for the mystagogy of the Easter Season.

Music

Music is given in the Missal for:

- Lighting of paschal candle (*May the light of Christ*) [14]
- The Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) for both longer and shorter forms of the text. [19]
- The Alleluia [34]
- Introduction to Baptismal Liturgy [40]
- Litany of the Saints [43]
- Blessing of Baptismal Water [44/54]
- Sprinkling — Latin & English [56] another baptismal chant/song may be sung.
- Dismissal [69]

Exsultet

- The longer and shorter forms of the Easter Proclamation are available for download on the Missal website.

Alleluia - Gospel Acclamation

- This may now be intoned by the psalmist instead of the Priest. [34]

Litany of the Saints

- The names of Saints may be added to the Litany, especially the Titular Saint of the church (its dedication), local Patron Saints and the names of those to be baptised. [43]
- The names should be added in the right place: biblical figures, early martyrs (men and women), early fathers of the Church, saints who founded religious communities, holy men and women — all are placed in chronological order.
- Other settings may be used providing they follow the text given in the Missal.

Acclamation after Blessing of Baptismal Water

- Springs of water —there is no longer reference to another acclamation being used here. [47]

Communion

- The Missal states after the Communion Antiphon that Psalm 117 may appropriately be sung. [66]