



Diocese of
Green Bay

OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

QUESTIONS REGARDING PASCHAL CANDLES

The Office of Divine Worship has received several questions regarding Paschal Candles, especially for parishes which do not have an Easter Vigil at each worship site. Please see the following frequently asked questions and responses:

Q: What considerations should be given for the paschal candle used at the Easter Vigil?

A: This candle should be made of wax, never be artificial, be replaced each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. The paschal candle is the symbol of the light of Christ, rising in glory, scattering the darkness of our hearts and minds. Above all, the paschal candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ. Choice of size, design, and color should be made in relationship to the sanctuary in which it will be placed. [USCCB]

Q: In the case of cluster/linked parishes, can multiple paschal candles be used for the Easter Vigil?

A: The Roman Missal, not envisioning the pastoral situation of mission churches or cluster parishes, specifies that only one paschal candle is used. To accommodate the particular circumstances, the Secretariat of Divine Worship might suggest that the candles from the mission churches or other parish churches could be present at the Easter Vigil, having been prepared in advance... In keeping with the rubrics, for the lighting and procession only one candle should be lit (the principal one, or the one

which will remain in that particular church). As the other candles in the assembly are lit, the other paschal candles could be lit and held (but not high, in order to maintain the prominence of the one principal candle) by someone at their place in the assembly. Once all the candles are extinguished after the singing of the Exsultet, the other paschal candles are put aside. On Easter Sunday morning, those candles could be taken to each of the missions and carried, lit, in the entrance procession at the first Mass at each church and put in place in the sanctuary. [USCCB]

Q: Is there an alternative if there is no Easter Vigil celebrated locally?

A: If there is no Easter Vigil celebrated locally, the prepared Paschal Candle may still be carried, lit, in the Entrance Procession on Easter Sunday. Please keep in mind that at the Easter Vigil there is only a blessing of the fire, not of the candle itself. Therefore, there would be no blessing necessary for the Paschal Candle to be used at the site. [ODW]

Q: Where is the paschal candle placed during Easter Time?

A: The paschal candle has its proper place either by the ambo or by the altar and should be lit at least in all the more solemn liturgical celebrations of the season until Pentecost Sunday, whether at Mass, or at Morning and Evening Prayer. After Easter Time the candle should be kept with honor in the baptistery, so that in the celebration of Baptism the candles of the baptized may be lit from it. In the celebration of funerals the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate Christ's undying presence, his victory over sin and death, and the promise of sharing in Christ's victory by virtue of being part of the Body of Christ (see Order of Christian Funerals, no. 35). The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit nor placed in the sanctuary outside Easter Time. [USCCB]

Questions?

Please contact the Office of Divine Worship with any questions (see contact information below).

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Select responses taken from the: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (2016),
<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year/triduum/questions-and-answers.cfm>