

A BRIEF COMPARISON OF THE Traditional Roman & Pian HOLY WEEK CEREMONIES



“The beginning of this renewal was the work of Our predecessor ... Pius XII, in the restoration of the Paschal Vigil and of the Holy Week Rite, which formed the first stage of updating the Roman Missal for the present-day mentality.”

(Pope Paul VI, *Missale Romanum*, April 3rd 1969)

PALM SUNDAY

Traditional Holy Week

1. Violet vestments for Procession.
2. Folded chasuble and broad stole used.
3. An Epistle, Gradual, Gospel, Preface and Sanctus are sung. Palms are blessed on the Epistle side of the altar. This rite is commonly called the "*Missa sicca*".
4. Blessing of palms speaks of the power of sacramentals against the demonic.
5. Processional Cross is veiled.
6. Two cantors go into the Church & sing the chorus of *Gloria Laus*, facing closed doors, repeated by those outside. The cantors then sing each verse, those outside sing the chorus. The Subdeacon then bangs the door thrice with the foot of the Processional Cross and all enter.
7. Procession ends as normal, Mass commences with the prayers at the foot of the altar.
8. Passion is distinct from the Gospel, which is sung by the deacon of the Mass.
9. Passion begins with the Institution of the Eucharist (Matt 26:1-35).

Pian Reform

1. Red vestments for Procession.
2. Both are suppressed.
3. The Epistle, Gradual, Preface and Sanctus are no longer sung. Blessing of palms takes place on a table, facing the people.
4. These prayers are suppressed.
5. Processional Cross is unveiled.
6. Doors are left open. *Gloria Laus* is one of many processional chants.
7. Procession ends with a new prayer facing the people. The prayers at the foot of the altar are suppressed.
8. No proper Gospel.
9. Matt 26:1-35 is suppressed.



HOLY MONDAY

Traditional Holy Week

The prayers “Against the Church’s persecutors” and “for the Pope” are said.

Pian Reform

Both prayers are suppressed.

HOLY TUESDAY

Traditional Holy Week

Passion begins with the Institution of the Eucharist (Mark 14: 1-31).

Pian Reform

Mark 14: 1-31 is suppressed.

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Traditional Holy Week

Passion begins with the Institution of the Eucharist (Luke 22: 1-39).

Pian Reform

Luke 22: 1-39 is suppressed.



HOLY THURSDAY

Traditional Holy Week

1. Priests and deacons in choir wear the usual choir dress and put on a stole for Communion.
2. Communion is given with hosts consecrated at any Mass.
3. The washing of feet is a separate ceremony outside of Mass and not done in the sanctuary.
4. A second host is consecrated, to be consumed by the priest on Good Friday. This host is placed in the chalice and brought to the altar of Repose.



5. The *Confiteor* is recited before Holy Communion.
6. The veiled cross remains on the altar, accompanied by two candlesticks.
7. Vespers is sung after Mass.

Pian Reform

1. Introduction of the stole as part of the choir dress of priests.
2. Communion is given with hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday.
3. The washing of feet is allowed to be inserted into Mass after the homily.
4. There is no second host. The priest and laity receive from the *ciborium* on Good Friday.

5. *Confiteor* is suppressed.
6. The cross and candlesticks are removed during the stripping of the altar.
7. Those who attend the liturgy today are dispensed from Vespers.

GOOD FRIDAY

Traditional Holy Week

1. Name: “Mass of the Presanctified” or “Feria Sexta in Parasceve”.
2. Crucifix and candlesticks are on the altar.
3. The priest, wearing a black chasuble, prostrates. The servers spread a single cloth on the bare altar.
4. The Gospel is distinct from the Passion.
5. Seventh Solemn Oration titled: “For Heretics and Schismatics”.
6. No kneeling at the prayer for the Jews.
7. The crucifix is taken down from the altar and laid on a purple cloth between the bottom step of the altar and the ground to be venerated by the ministers and clergy.



8. The Blessed Sacrament returns in a procession of equal solemnity to that of Holy Thursday. The celebrant brings It back whilst the *Vexilla Regis* is sung.
9. The Host is incensed.

Pian Reform

1. Name: “Solemn Liturgical Action”.
2. The altar is completely bare.
3. The priest, wearing only the alb and stole, prostrates. The altar is not dressed until Communion time.
4. The distinct Gospel is suppressed.
5. Seventh Solemn Oration changed to: “For the Unity of the Church”.
6. Kneeling at the prayer for the Jews.
7. A procession of the crucifix from the sacristy is created. It is then held by two acolytes on the top step of the altar to be venerated by the ministers and clergy.
8. The importance of the Eucharistic procession is downplayed (along with references to Mass). The *Vexilla Regis* is suppressed.
9. Incensing the Host is suppressed.

GOOD FRIDAY Cont.

Traditional Holy Week

10. The *Orate Fratres* is recited without the usual response.
11. The Our Father is recited by the priest alone.
12. A fraction of the Host is placed in the wine. The prayer for consuming the Precious Blood is omitted.
13. Holy Communion is not given.
14. Vespers is sung after Mass.

Pian Reform

10. Prayers that make reference to sacrifice are suppressed.
11. The Our Father is recited by the priest and people.
12. Placing a fraction of the Host into the wine is suppressed.
13. Holy Communion is given.
14. Those who attend the liturgy today are dispensed from Vespers.

HOLY SATURDAY

Traditional Holy Week

1. The fire is started using flint.
2. The fire and the grains of incense are blessed outside the church. The fire is passed to the *tricereo* (three candles).
3. The Candle remains unlit on its stand, always on the Gospel side.

Pian Reform

1. The fire is lit before the ceremony starts.
2. A blessing of the Candle is introduced. The Candle is held and carried by the deacon for the first part of the ceremony.
3. At each *Lumen Christi* all genuflect toward the Candle. It is then placed in the center of the sanctuary.

HOLY SATURDAY Cont.

Traditional Holy Week

4. The *Exsultet* begins whilst the Candle is unlit, grains of incense are fixed into the Candle, it is then lit by the deacon.

5. Twelve Lessons are sung.

6. The Litany is sung after the blessing of the baptismal water, before Mass.

7. The baptismal water is blessed at the font in the Baptistry. Catechumens are received at the entrance of the church, baptised and then enter into the nave.

8. Does not exist.

9. Does not exist.

10. Mass begins with the prayers at the foot of the altar.

11. Mass ends with a contracted form of Vespers.

Pian Reform

4. The symbolism of the *Exsultet* is stripped away and its fundamental nature as a diaconal blessing is distorted.

5. Four Lessons are sung.

6. The Litany is divided into two parts, the baptismal water is blessed in the middle of the Litany.

7. Introduction of placing the baptismal water in a basin in the middle of the sanctuary, the celebrant faces the people throughout the blessing.

8. Creation of the 'Renewal of Baptismal Promises'.

9. Introduction of the Our Father recited by everyone present, often recited in the vernacular.

10. Prayers at the foot of the altar are suppressed.

11. Mass ends with a contracted form of Lauds.

NB. The reform changed the Vigil from one wrong time to another. The Vigil starts with a fire lighting ceremony, this is done when the fire is *going* down, not when it has been down for several hours.

