

**Homily**  
**Pentecost Sunday - C**

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski  
June 08-09, 2019

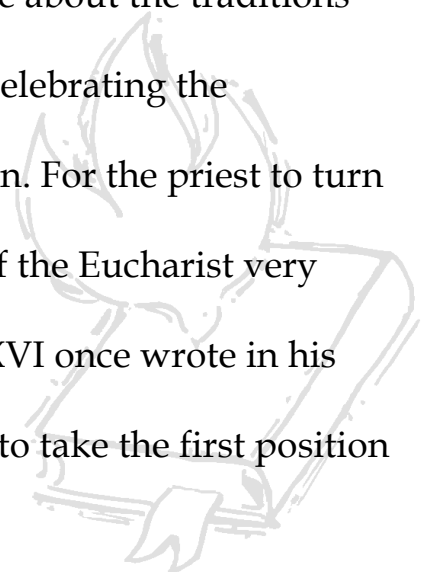
Acts 2: 1-11  
Ps 104: 1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34  
1 Cor 12: 3-7, 12-13  
Jn 20: 19-23

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After living with the Poor Clare Sisters of the Annunciation Monastery this year, I have come to realize that I am in the presence of nine extraordinary women in my life, very much filled with the grace of God and choosing to pursue a Christian lifestyle unique from the rest of us, in so many ways.

I also have come to realize that the sisters sometimes prefer the customs of the extraordinary form of the liturgy over the ones I am accustomed to celebrating.

To be honest, what the sisters follow in the extraordinary form of the Mass has given me an opportunity to learn more about the traditions and customs of this particularly sacred way of celebrating the sacraments than I have been conditioned to learn. For the priest to turn his back to his congregation at the celebration of the Eucharist very much follows that about which Pope Benedict XVI once wrote in his book, The Spirit of the Liturgy, allowing Christ to take the first position



at the liturgy from which all of us follow. To celebrate the Mass in Latin (the official language of the Church) is offered in the same way, no matter in which part of the world we happen to live. Fr. Michael Magiera from St. Joseph's Church in Rockdale has been teaching this extraordinary form to the priests of this diocese and, unfortunately, has been unsuccessful teaching it to me, due to the other responsibilities put upon me in recent months.

There is one custom of the extraordinary form about which I have been able to learn this month and that is in regard to the lighting and extinguishing of the Paschal Candle during the Easter Season. As a priest who celebrates Mass in the vernacular and in the ordinary form, I try to follow the guidelines of the Church instructions for celebrating the liturgy, which teach us to leave the Paschal Candle lit for the entire fifty-day period of the Easter Season. According to the rubrics in the ordinary rite (or form), at the last Mass of the Easter Season on Pentecost Sunday, the Paschal Candle is processed out of the sanctuary at the conclusion of Mass and placed at the baptismal font, where it is to be used for the celebrations related to baptism throughout the rest of the liturgical year.

Obviously here at the Annunciation Monastery, the sisters do not have a traditional baptismal font for the celebration of sacraments, since the conferral of this sacrament would only take place here under extraordinary, specific circumstances. Since there is no traditional baptismal font in this chapel, at the conclusion of the Mass of the Ascension, the sisters simply extinguished and removed the candle and placed it in the sacristy, which I assumed it will remain unless a funeral liturgy takes place before the next Easter Vigil.

Because of what the sisters did after the Mass of the Ascension, I took this as a learning experience for me, trying to understand the symbolism behind their action. Towards that cause, I went to what is called the ZENIT website on the internet (a place to find answers to Catholic questions) and found a response to the Paschal Candle inquiry from Legionary of Christ priest, Father Edward McNamara (professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum University). Here I offer you a truncated question and answer towards this Pentecost question...

Q: Some years back, a quaint enthusiast instructed that the paschal candle should be extinguished at the Ascension but left in the

sanctuary unlit for the novena of Pentecost. This directive was never repeated but has permanently confused people. Is it correct, is it optional, or is it a piece of ill-devised symbolism for the absence of the Lord, who is always present? We would be so grateful for your advice. – S.M., Hawarden, Wales

A: It is quite probable that this suggestion was inspired in part by the custom of the extraordinary form in which the Easter candle is extinguished after the Gospel during the principal Mass of Ascension Thursday.

In this ritual context the candle symbolizes the presence of the glorified risen Christ. It is therefore logical, in the extraordinary form, to extinguish the candle at the Ascension.

The rubrics of the extraordinary form, unlike the indication of the aforementioned calendar, foresee the removal of the candle from the sanctuary after this Mass. The indication of leaving it unlit until Pentecost would appear to be an attempt to reconcile the earlier custom with the clear indication in the present rubrics that the candle remain until Pentecost Sunday.

In fact, the present rubrics foresee a much wider use of the paschal candle during the year than the extraordinary form. With respect to the ordinary form the Circular Letter on the Easter Feasts states the following:

**“99. 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 the Easter season, the candle should be kept with honor in the baptistry, so that in the celebration of baptism, the candles of the baptized may be lit from them. In the celebration of funerals the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate that the**

**death of a Christian is his own Passover. The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit nor placed in the sanctuary outside the Easter season."**

P: Hace algunos años, un entusiasta pintoresco ordenó que la vela pascual se apagara en la Ascensión, pero se dejara en el santuario sin encender para la novena de Pentecostés. Esta directiva nunca se repitió pero ha confundido permanentemente a la gente. ¿Es correcto, es opcional, o es una pieza de simbolismo mal diseñado por la ausencia del Señor, que siempre está presente? Estaríamos muy agradecidos por su consejo. - S.M., Hawarden, Gales

R: Es bastante probable que esta sugerencia se haya inspirado en parte en la costumbre de la forma extraordinaria en que se apaga la vela de Pascua después del Evangelio durante la Misa principal de la Ascensión del jueves.

En este contexto ritual, la vela simboliza la presencia de Cristo glorificado resucitado. Por lo tanto, es lógico, en la forma extraordinaria, apagar la vela en la Ascensión.

Las rúbricas de la forma extraordinaria, a diferencia de la indicación del calendario mencionado anteriormente, prevén la remoción de la vela del santuario después de esta misa. La indicación de dejarla sin encender hasta Pentecostés parece ser un intento de reconciliar la costumbre anterior con la clara Indicación en las rúbricas actuales que la vela permanece hasta el domingo de Pentecostés.

De hecho, las rúbricas actuales prevén un uso mucho más amplio de la vela pascual durante el año que la forma extraordinaria. Con respecto a la forma ordinaria, la Carta Circular sobre las Fiestas de Pascua dice lo siguiente: **"99. El cirio pascual, que tiene su lugar junto al ambón o junto al altar, enciéndase al menos en todas las celebraciones litúrgicas de una cierta solemnidad de este tiempo,**

**tanto en la Misa como en Laudes y Vísperas hasta el domingo de Pentecostés. Después, ha de trasladarse al baptisterio y mantenerlo con todo honor para encender en él el cirio de los nuevos bautizados. En las exequias, el cirio pascual se ha de colocar junto al féretro, para indicar que la muerte del cristiano es su propia Pascua. El cirio pascual, fuera del tiempo pascual, no ha de encenderse ni permanecer en el presbiterio (104).**

I address this question today not because I wish to pick on the sisters of the Annunciation Monastery – on the contrary, if the rest of us could model any form of the spirituality that the Poor Clares offer, we would be better off for it. The purpose for me addressing this issue today is because, symbolically, many in our society extinguished the candle the moment our Easter Liturgy concluded some eight weeks ago, some may have extinguished it long before then and even those of us in the pews who attend Masses after Easter Sunday sometimes live as if the light is flickering or burning out altogether.

Let's face the reality of our faith lives – in this generation, about twenty-five percent of our millennial generation do not believe in God at all. According to parish records, about twenty-five percent of those registered at any given parish attend Sunday Mass with any kind of

frequency. For those who *do* attend Mass, many of us who attend Mass may do so in a more casual way, especially in the summer when the clothing or even the attendance at times is lacking. This is not my critique or my judgment – this is just an observation that many of you in the pews have shared with me, an observation that opened my eyes and made me aware of this attitude myself.

How brightly do we let this light shine, if we allow to shine it at all? In the ordinary form of the Mass, that candle will be extinguished and placed by the baptismal font at the conclusion of the last Pentecost liturgy at the parish. Metaphorically, how do we continue to allow that light to shine in our lives?

I use the example of funeral liturgies to illustrate this point. How often do families and friends tell me how infrequently they come together to meet, often doing so at the time of someone's baptism, wedding or funeral? Families and friends often lament that often they do not acknowledge or recognize how important a person's life impacts their own lives and that these friends and family members wish they were able to turn back the clock to tell that someone how important as

role that they play in this world. Sometimes our lives are so fleeting and the things we consider so important are really unimportant compared to what happens to the rest of our existence after the time of death. We often neglect the manner in which we should prepare for our next life, we often neglect the “light” that tries to shine in our lives right now until we come to the realization at the end of our lives as to how that metaphorical light represents the presence of God that has been wanting to build a relationship with us from the moment of our creation.

The question we constantly must ask ourselves is whether we extinguish the light at Ascension, at Pentecost, or if that light has been extinguished far sooner than that. The question to ask is how to remove the metaphorical basket off that light (alluding to Mt 5: 15; Mk 4: 21 and Lk 8: 16 and 11:33) so that the light of God, this presence of the Holy Spirit may shine forth for the rest of our existence, everlastingly long after the Easter Season has come to an end.

As far as I am concerned, the Poor Clare sisters can extinguish the Paschal Candle any time they want because in their hearts, they continually show me that the candle has not been extinguished at all.



May we learn to do the same, both for the sake of our salvation and for the sake of the people that we meet. This is our prayer.

## A ZENIT DAILY DISPATCH

### WHEN TO EXTINGUISH THE EASTER CANDLE

ROME, 17 MAY 2011 (ZENIT)

<http://www.ewtn.com/library/liturgy/zlitur361.htm>

Answered by Legionary of Christ Father Edward McNamara, professor of liturgy at the Regina Apostolorum university.

Q: Some years back, in the calendar of the diocesan yearbook, apparently for all three Welsh dioceses, a quaint enthusiast instructed that the paschal candle should be extinguished at the Ascension but left in the sanctuary unlit for the novena of Pentecost. This directive was never repeated but has permanently confused people. Is it correct, is it optional, or is it a piece of ill-devised symbolism for the absence of the Lord, who is always present? We would be so grateful for your advice.  
– S.M., Hawarden, Wales

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In fact, the present rubrics foresee a much wider use of the paschal candle during the year than the extraordinary form. In the latter the use of the candle is limited to the more solemn celebrations during the 40 days between Easter and Ascension. Even during this period it is not used for Masses for the dead and other Masses requiring violet vestments such as rogation Masses.

With respect to the ordinary form the Circular Letter on the Easter Feasts states the following: "99. 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 the Easter season, the candle should be kept with honor in the baptistry, so that in the celebration of baptism, the candles of the baptized may be lit from them. In the celebration of funerals the paschal candle should be placed near the coffin to indicate that the death of a Christian is his own Passover. The paschal candle should not otherwise be lit nor placed in the sanctuary outside the Easter season."

This expanded use also explains why, in most parishes, the norm that the Easter candle be renewed each year is also a practical necessity. The extraordinary form is less demanding on this point.

The indication that the candle should be lit "at least in all the more solemn liturgical celebrations" of Eastertide means that it is not required to light it at all Masses and community celebrations of the Divine Office. This possibility is not excluded, however, especially in communities such as seminaries and religious houses that regularly celebrate the liturgy with some solemnity but where baptisms and funerals are rarely celebrated.

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Follow-up: When to Extinguish the Easter Candle [5-31-2011]

In the wake of our May 17 column, several readers asked about the use of the Easter candle. A Welsh reader asked: “In the extraordinary form it is directed that, in Eastertide, the paschal candle must not be lit during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. I can remember that, in pre-conciliar times, if exposition and Benediction followed immediately after vespers, a server would extinguish the paschal candle at the end of vespers. I can find no mention of this in the ordinary rite. Does this mean that the paschal candle should be lit when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in Eastertide?”

The ordinary forms simply states that it is lit during solemn liturgical celebrations during the Easter season. Nothing is said regarding exposition.

As our reader says, the extraordinary form of the Roman rite does not allow the candle to be lit during exposition or Benediction. An exception to this rule is when solemn vespers are celebrated before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. If Benediction immediately follows the vespers, then the candle remains lit.

This overall criterion holds true for the ordinary form. If vespers, or some other solemn liturgical celebration, is carried out before the Blessed Sacrament exposed, then the candle could be lit. This could be done throughout the exposition even if the celebration does not take up the whole time of adoration.

However, since exposition by itself does not constitute a liturgical celebration then, as a general rule, the candle need not be lit. This would be especially true for prolonged exposition.

A California reader asked: “Is it permissible to light the paschal candle at confirmations which are celebrated outside of the Easter season? Also, would it be appropriate to sing the Litany of Saints at some point of the confirmation liturgy? In many places the widespread separation of

confirmation from its traditional place among the other sacraments of initiation has led to much theological confusion. My thought is that these two liturgical actions, alongside the sprinkling rite and the renewal of baptismal promises, would better highlight the deep connection of the sacrament of confirmation to the sacrament of baptism.”

While these are not bad ideas, and could even be pastorally useful, it is not permissible to add to the approved rites.

Only a bishops’ conference is able to propose permanent adaptations to some of the rites for its country. These proposals have to be approved by the Holy See.

The process usually takes years, since it is necessary to reflect long and hard on any proposed changes; this often requires thinking in terms of possible effects over decades and centuries.

Adjustments in rites eventually color the spiritual concepts behind them and the way they are lived and perceived.

Thus we would have to reflect whether the use of the Easter candle (probably along with other candles) might eventually put so much stress on the renewal of baptismal promises as to shift attention from the primary signs of the sacrament of confirmation. Likewise, since the Litany of Saints takes the place of the prayer of the faithful we would have to explore if the special general intercessions found in the ritual are not preferable to the litany.

Although this process is arduous, it is not impossible. For example, a few years ago the Italian bishops’ conference published a revised rite of marriage which included a Litany of Saints, especially of those who lived in holy matrimony.

This article has been selected from the ZENIT Daily Dispatch

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