

Vatican releases pope's Holy Week and Easter schedule

written by Special to Arkansas Catholic |



VATICAN CITY — The Vatican published Pope Francis' calendar for Holy Week and Easter, which due to coronavirus restrictions, will be celebrated primarily in St. Peter Basilica with a very small congregation.

While the pope is expected to preside over most of the liturgical celebrations, he is not expected to preside over the Mass of the Lord's Supper April 1. According to Vatican News, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, dean of the College of Cardinals, will celebrate the Mass at the Altar of the Chair in St. Peter Basilica.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the pope had made it a tradition to celebrate the Mass and foot-washing ritual at a prison or detention center, refugee center or rehabilitation facility.

The Vatican did not give a reason for the pope's absence, which — if he does not celebrate the liturgy elsewhere — would mark the first time he does not preside over the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

The Vatican also announced that the pope asked two troops of Italian scouts from Rome and Umbria to prepare the meditations for the Way of the Cross. Youngsters from two group homes for disadvantaged young people in Rome — "Mater Divini Amoris" and "Tetto Casal Fattoria" — have drawn the illustrations to accompany the prayer.

The young people's "words and colors convey the complexity of a world made up of small and large crosses, but also of trust and hope for the future," the Vatican said.

Here is the schedule of papal liturgical ceremonies for Holy Week according to Vatican News (times listed are local and Central time):

- April 1, Chrism Mass, 10 a.m. (4 a.m. Central) in St. Peter Basilica.
- April 2, Good Friday, 6 p.m. (noon Central) liturgy of the Lord's passion in St. Peter Basilica.
- April 2, Way of the Cross, 9 p.m. (3 p.m. Central), in front of St. Peter Basilica.
- April 3, Easter vigil Mass, 7:30 p.m. (1:30 p.m. Central), St. Peter Basilica.
- April 4, Easter morning Mass, 10 a.m. (4 a.m. Central), St. Peter Basilica, followed at noon by the pope's blessing "urbi et orbi" (the city and the world).