I. **Ash Wednesday.**
Since our experts now understand that COVID is transmitted mostly via respiration, ministers this year need not use a cotton ball, swab, or gloved hand to distribute ashes (though they still may); ashes may be applied by the thumb directly to the forehead. Distributors are asked to wear a facemask during distribution and sanitize hands before and afterwards.

II. **Lenten Solemnities.**
Saturday March 19 is the Solemnity of Saint Joseph. Evening Prayer I of the Solemnity is to be prayed Friday March 18, and Masses celebrated that evening should observe the Solemnity. The obligation to abstain from meat on Fridays in Lent generally extends from midnight to midnight, and remains in force on March 18. In Thanksgiving, however, for the graces that were received in the Year of St. Joseph, Archbishop Hebda will be granting a dispensation from that obligation to any individuals who have begun their St. Joseph celebration by either praying Evening Prayer I of the Solemnity or attending evening Mass. More information on that dispensation will be forthcoming. Given that Friday March 25 is the Solemnity of the Annunciation, there is no obligation to abstain from meat that day.

III. **Chrism Mass.**
The Chrism Mass will be celebrated at the Cathedral 10:00 a.m. Holy Thursday, April 14, and all priests are encouraged to attend for the renewal of priestly promises. There will be an opportunity to pick up oils immediately after Mass.

IV. **Future Liturgies and COVID.**
Since the pandemic is a continually-changing phenomenon, adjustments to the liturgies of Holy Week, the Triduum, and the Easter Season have not yet been determined. Stay tuned for further updates. Meanwhile, we continue to strongly encourage all liturgical ministers to wear masks when not proclaiming texts, especially when distributing Holy Communion; in some municipalities, masks remain mandatory.

V. **Spring Confirmations.**
The previously-granted faculty to pastors and parochial administrators to confirm their own Catholic students was revoked September 6, 2021. Archdiocesan confirmations for spring 2022 will be celebrated as already scheduled. Pastors or parochial administrators desiring the faculty to confirm their own students due to COVID or other legitimate reasons must request from the Archbishop to grant them that faculty.