

A Guide to Holy Week & Easter

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

Scripture Readings: Luke 19:28-40; Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 22; Philippians 2:6-11; Luke 22:14-23:56

Highlights of the Liturgy:

- The liturgical color for this celebration is red.
- The liturgy is divided into three parts:
 1. The Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem
 2. The Liturgy of the Word
 3. The Liturgy of the Eucharist
- This is the only time during the year when two Gospel readings are proclaimed in the same liturgy.
- The Liturgy of the Word includes the proclamation of Scriptures from Isaiah, Psalms, and Philippians. Then the assembly proclaims the Passion of the Lord according to the Gospel of Luke (Year C).
- After the proclamation of the Lord's Passion, the Mass continues as usual.

At home, pray the following prayer as you place your palms near a cross, crucifix, or a Bible.

All make the Sign of the Cross.

Parent: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

All: Hosanna in the highest!

Parent: We have come to the last days of Lent. Today we heard the reading of the Passion. That story will remain with us as we leave Lent behind on Holy Thursday and enter into the Three Days when we celebrate the mystery of Christ passing through suffering and death to life at God's right hand.

A child may read the Scripture:

Listen to the words of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians:

We are always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being given up to death for the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Family members place the palms near a cross, crucifix or Bible.

Parent: Let us pray

Blessed are you, God of Israel, so rich in love and mercy. Let these branches ever remind us of Christ's triumph. May we who bear them rejoice in his cross and sing your praise forever and ever.

All: Amen.

Parent: Let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

As your family prepares for the holies three days of our Church year, the Paschal Triduum, prepare your minds, hearts and home for the celebrations of Jesus passion, death and resurrection.

- Do some spring cleaning. Rid the nooks and crannies of your home of the dust bunnies and webs that have collected over the winter.
- Go through closets and drawers. Bag up clothes that are no longer worn to give to a local charity.
- Read and reflect on the daily Scriptures.
 - Monday, March 29, 2010: Isaiah 42:1-7; Psalm 27:1-14; John 12:1-11
 - Tuesday, March 30, 2010: Isaiah 49:1-6; Psalm 72:1-17; John 13:21-33,36-38
 - Wednesday, March 31, 2010: Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 69:8-10,21-22,31-34; Matthew 26:14-25
- If you traditionally decorate for Easter, get out and put up the decorations.
- Color Easter eggs.
- Go for walks as a family and enjoy God's creation. Notice the signs of new life all around you.

PASCHAL TRIDUUM

- The word *Triduum* means "three days": Sunset on Holy Thursday to Good Friday, sunset on Good Friday to Holy Saturday, and sunset on Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday.
- In the liturgies of the Triduum, the Church remembers the Passion, death, and Resurrection of the Lord.
- In the early Church, there was only Easter. In a vigil of prayer which lasted through the night on Holy Saturday until dawn on Easter morning, the early Christians celebrated as one great feast the mystery of death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- By the fourth century, an increasing historical awareness led to the development of the Paschal Triduum, Holy Week, and Lent (in that order), as Christians began to commemorate the Lord's Passion in "real time," as it were, following him day by day from his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, to his arrest and Crucifixion, and to his Resurrection, in a commemoration that closely followed the Gospel narratives, day by day and hour by hour.
- Also by the fourth century and the time of St. Augustine, the Baptism of adults was a central feature of the Triduum.
- As Christianity spread and infant Baptism became the norm in the Church, there was a sharp decline in the number of adults being baptized. Partly as a result of this decline, the Paschal Triduum also declined in importance, with evening liturgies celebrated in the morning. The Council of Trent, with its prohibition on evening Masses, made this a requirement. The Vigil, with the blessing of the Paschal candle and the solemn blessing of the baptismal water, still took place, but it took place in the light of a spring morning.
- Between 1951 and 1955, Pope Pius XII restored the Triduum, permitting the celebration of the Holy Thursday liturgy and the Vigil in the evening, and encouraging the Baptism of adults in the context of the Vigil. The reforms emphasized the participation of the people and a return to the practice of the early Church—two themes that would dominate the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

Day One: HOLY THURSDAY

"Do this in memory of me..." Luke 22:19b

Scripture Readings: Exodus 12:1-8,11-14; Psalm 116; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15

This evening Lent ends and the Church enters the Paschal Triduum. The celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper commemorates the institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood, as well as Jesus' command of love and service.

Highlights of the Liturgy:

- The liturgical color for this celebration is white.
- We sing the Gloria while the church bells ring.
- The Washing of the Feet
- Procession with Gifts
- The Blessed Sacrament is transferred in procession.
- Adoration . Throughout the night, we quietly pray in adoration of the Lord.

At home, pray this Seder commemorating Jesus' Last Supper.

Begin your evening meal on Holy Thursday with this brief prayer service. You will need unleavened bread (matzos), bitter herbs (parsley), and wine (grape juice). You will also need candles and glasses suitable for a toast.

Parent: We gather tonight to remember Jesus' Last Supper, which he shared with his friends. It was Passover, the night when Jews recall the wonderful events that led them out of slavery in Egypt. Jesus and his friends ate the food that all Jews eat at this meal. Then Jesus did something more: he gave us the gift of himself in the Eucharist.

Mother (*as she lights the candles*): Blessed are you, O God, creator of the universe. You give us light to bring our days to life, and you give us Jesus, the Light of the World.

All: Blessed are you, O God of light.

Youngest Child: Why are this night and this meal different from all others?

Father: Once the Hebrew people, our ancestors in faith, were slaves in Egypt. They worked hard to build cities for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. But our God delivered them on this night.

Youngest Child: How did God do this mighty deed?

Father: The Hebrew people marked their doors with the blood of a lamb, and the angel of death passed over their dwellings. But he stopped at the houses and palaces of the Egyptians and killed the firstborn of their families.

Another Child: Why did the angel of death do that?

Father: Because God told Moses to tell Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go free or something terrible would happen to the Egyptians.

Child: Did Pharaoh let the Hebrews go free?

Father: Yes, he did. But the very next day he sent his chariots after the Hebrews to bring them back.

Child: What happened then?

Father: God parted the waters of the sea to make a dry path for Moses and the Hebrews to cross over. But when the Egyptians and their chariots tried to follow, the waters flowed back over the dry path and the Egyptians drowned.

All: Praise to you, O God, for your mighty deeds.

(Mother breaks the matzos and passes a piece to everyone.)

Child: Why do we eat unleavened bread?

Mother: It reminds us of the bread the Hebrews, our ancestors in faith, took with them when they fled from Egypt. They had no time to let their bread rise, so they had to make it without yeast and bake it quickly into dry flat cakes.

(Mother passes a piece of parsley to all who are present.)

Child: Why do we eat this bitter herb?

Mother: To remind us of the bitter life our ancestors in faith led when they were slaves in Egypt.

(At this point the family eats its evening meal, continuing the prayer service after the meal.)

Parent or Older Child: When they had eaten, Jesus took bread and gave it to his friends. He said, "Take this and eat. This is my body which will be given for you."

All: Thank you, Jesus, for this gift of yourself, which you gave us on this holy night.

Parent or Older Child: And then he took the cup and said, "This is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you. Do this in memory of me."

All: Thank you, Jesus for this gift of yourself, which you gave us on this holy night.

Parent or Older Child: On this same night, Jesus gave us a new commandment. He told his friends, "Love one another as I have loved you. Everyone will know you are my disciples if you love one another."

All: Thank you, Jesus, for this new commandment of love. Help us to live it always.

Parent or Older Child *(lifting glass)*: We close our meal with this toast. Remember the stories that have been told this holy night. Remember them as we celebrate the events of this Triduum. We thank Jesus for the freedom and salvation he won for us through his death and resurrection.

(All drink.)

All: Thank you, Jesus, for all you have given us. Amen.

Day Two: GOOD FRIDAY

"The Son of Man must suffer greatly...and be killed..."

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 52:13- 53:12; Psalm 31:10-25; Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1- 19:42

The death of Christ on the cross was real. We gather together today to prayerfully recall Jesus' death with the sure hope of the resurrection (Prayer over the People, Good Friday). Because his Resurrection is inseparable from his death, the Lord's Passion is truly celebrated. We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life, and our resurrection, through him we are saved and made free.

Highlights of the Liturgy:

- The color of this celebration is red.
- We begin in silence.
- Liturgy of the Word including the proclamation of the Passion of the Lord according to the gospel of John
- The Solemn Intercessions are chanted.
- Veneration of the Cross
 - Come forward to gently touch, kiss, or genuflect before the Cross.
- Holy Communion
- We depart in silence

At home, pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and say the Apostles' Creed.
2. Say the Our Father.
3. Say three Hail Marys.
4. Say the Glory be to the Father.
5. Announce the First Mystery: The First Sorrowful Mystery, The Agony in the Garden.
6. Say the Our Father.
7. Say ten Hail Marys while meditating on the Mystery.
8. Say the Glory be to the Father.
9. Announce the Second Mystery: The Second Sorrowful Mystery, The Scourging at the Pillar
10. Say the Our Father.
11. Repeat 6 and 7 and continue with Third, Fourth and Fifth Mysteries in the same manner.

After the Rosary, pray:

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O GOD, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The Sorrowful Mysteries

- **The Agony in the Garden**

Meditation: Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane ... He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer. "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass me by." Matthew 26:36-39

- **The Scourging at the Pillar**

Meditation: The people said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children." At that, he released Barabbas to them. Jesus, however, he first had scourged. Matthew 27:25-26

- **The Crowning with Thorns**

Meditation: They stripped off his clothes and wrapped him in a scarlet cloak. Weaving a crown out of thorns, they fixed it on his head ... and began to mock him. Matthew 27:28-29

- **The Carrying of the Cross**

Meditation: Jesus was led away, and carrying the cross by himself, went out to what is called the Place of the Skull. There they crucified him. John 19:16-18

- **The Crucifixion and Death**

Meditation: The curtain in the sanctuary was torn in two, Jesus uttered a loud cry and said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." After this, he expired. Luke 23:45-46



Day Three: HOLY SATURDAY

“...and on the third day be raised” Luke 9:22

Scripture Readings: Genesis 1:1- 2:2; Genesis 22:1-18; Exodus 14:15- 15:1; Isaiah 54:5-14; Isaiah 55:1-11; Baruch 3:9-15,32- 4:4; Ezekiel 36:16-28; Romans 6:3-11; Matthew 28:1-10

Finally, the Resurrection of the Lord is celebrated as the high point of the liturgical year and the pattern for Sunday Mass throughout the year. The Renewal of our Baptismal Promises on Easter reminds us that in dying with Christ through Baptism, so also do we share in His Resurrection.

Highlights of the Liturgy:

- The color of this celebration is white.
- The Service of Light
 - The Easter Candle is lit
 - The peoples candles are lit from the Easter Candle
- The Liturgy of the Word
 - Listen to the stories of God's plan of salvation.
- We sing the *Gloria* while the church bells ring.
 - We sing the *Alleluia* for the first time since Lent began.
- Liturgy of Baptism
- The Celebration of Confirmation
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Concluding Rite

At home, pray this Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

Presider: Dear friends, through the Paschal Mystery we have been buried with Christ in Baptism, so that we may rise with him to a new life. Now that we have completed our Lenten observance, let us renew the promises we made in Baptism when we rejected Satan and his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church. And so: Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

All: I do.

Presider: Do you reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin?

All: I do.

Presider: Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

All: I do.

Presider: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

All: I do.

Presider: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

All: I do.

Presider: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

All: I do.

Presider: God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May He also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever.

All: Amen.

EASTER SUNDAY

Scripture Readings:

Easter Morning: Acts of the Apostles 10:34,37-43; Psalm 118:1-2,16-17,22-23; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; John 20:1-9

Easter Evening Prayer: Psalm 110:1-5,7; Psalm 114; Revelation 19:1-7; Hebrews 10:12-14; Luke 1:46-55

At home, pray the Table Liturgy for the Feast of Easter Sunday (from *Prayers for the Domestic Church* by Edward Hays, 1979)

The family stands in prayerful silence around their table upon which there are two unlit candles. After a few moments, the father of the family begins.

Father: Blessed are You, Lord our God, who raised up Jesus from the tomb and has gathered all of us around this table.

Mother: As the light of God overcame the darkness of death, may these candles we now light be for us a sign of the flame of life that burns within our hearts.

Candles are lit.

Mother: As these Easter candles call us to the feast of this our table, may the light of Christ call us to Your eternal Easter feast. May these candles delight our eyes and add splendor to our meal.

Father: With great joy, we come to our Easter dinner as we continue our celebration of the ever-newness of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We rejoice in the resurrection of spring, as birds, flowers and fields come alive after the long sleep of winter. May we, in this Easter Sunday meal, share with them the great joy of life. Let us pause and, in silence, lift up our hearts to God in gratitude for this holy Easter meal.

Pause for silent prayer.

If guests are present, include this section:

As our Risen Lord came as a guest and ate with His disciples, may we be grateful for the presence at our table of our guests, (NAMES), who bring to our table the holy presence of God and add to our celebration of this great and joyful feast. May God bless them, for together with the food of this feast, they give us reason for joy.

Mother: May the taste of goodness in this food be a promise of the eternal Easter meal we shall all share together with our Risen Lord. May this Easter dinner be a sacrament of springtime, peace and eternal happiness. Alleluia! Alleluia! May God's blessing rest upon this table and each of us. Amen.

ALL TOAST: Happy Easter or A Blessed Easter!