

HOLY WEEK AT HOME

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Nobody should say that we are not going to celebrate Holy Week or the Easter Triduum this year.

Christ is risen and the celebration of our Lord's Passover is our greatest joy. Holy Week and Easter 2020 offers us a golden opportunity to rediscover the family as a "domestic Church". I have put some suggestions together for a celebration of the foundation of our faith. They are not prescriptive, but only a suggestion. Avail of them if you find them useful, adapt them to meet your needs but above all, celebrate the mystery of God's love for us. *Such is the wonder of God's love: he gathers to the Easter feast those who are far apart, and brings together in unity of faith those who may be physically separated from each other (St Athanasius, "Easter letter")*.

Until we are allowed back in Church, create a special place in your home which can become your chapel at this time. Place a table with a nice cloth and flowers and on the table place some items which recall you to faith (i.e. a Bible, an icon or holy picture, a candle, a crucifix, a rosary...). Make this the holy place in your house where you gather during the day at fixed times; where you speak to God in prayer and come together as a family to raise prayers to God, interceding for your needs, those suffering because of the current situation and others in the parish.

As Pope Francis said recently: *The Lord awakens so as to revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love... Let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.*

We will find in this document the texts for the celebrations. You can also find them on www.universalis.com. Another useful resource is <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/holy-week>. Our plan is to broadcast the Maundy Thursday Mass, Good Friday service and Easter Sunday Mass.

Be assured that you will be present in my prayers at St John Fisher. Please do pray for me.

Fr Agustin

Palm Sunday

Readings: Procession: Matthew 21: 1-11;

Mass: Isaiah 50: 4-7; Psalms 22: 8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24; Philippians 2:6-11; Matthew 26: 14 – 27: 66 (Matthew chapter 27, verses 11-54.)

<https://catholicreadings.org/palm-sunday-lords-passion/>

On Palm Sunday, we remember how Jesus entered Jerusalem, greeted by the crowds waving branches, and then listen to the Gospel of his Passion and Death.

Depending on where you live, you could hold a little procession with your family to relive Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. This could be around your garden and into your house, or maybe walking up and down your street (as your daily "exercise") or even around the rooms of your house or flat.

You can sing a hymn as you process along (i.e. "Sing Hosanna". We would usually carry palms, but you could carry branches of any other plant you have).

You can begin by reading the gospel we would normally read at the beginning of the Palm Sunday procession at Church. You could do your procession just before 11am, and then watch a televised or an online Mass.

Or if you can't get online, you could read the readings for today's Mass together.

Maundy Thursday

First Reading: Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Gospel: John 13:1-15

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/holy-week/holy-thursday/holy-thursday-readings>

On this day, the Church celebrates three gifts: 1. The institution of the Eucharist; 2. The Institution of priesthood and the great commandment: “love one another” (mandatum). This is also the day Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, showing them the humble way Christians should love each other.

We usually celebrate in the early evening on Maundy Thursday. If you cannot watch an online or televised Mass, read the readings.

On Maundy Thursday, Jesus said “If I, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other’s feet.” So in your family or household, you could also wash each other’s feet as part of your prayers this evening. This is a sign of our desire to be like Jesus, serving others in humility (Of course, don’t do this if someone is ill or self-isolating).

We would usually be asked to “watch and pray” with Jesus at the “Altar of Repose”. Try to find some quiet time this evening, put yourself in the presence of Jesus and accompany him as he prepares for his passion, that passion which so many are experiencing in their flesh at this time.

Good Friday

First Reading: Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Second Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; Gospel: John 18:1-19:42

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/holy-week/good-friday/good-friday-readings>

Good Friday is the day when Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. It is a day of fasting and abstinence. This means that we should not eat meat today and should only have one full meal (and two snacks). There is an exemption from this rule for pregnant or feeding mothers, children, the sick or elderly if they don't feel they can do it.

There are two parts to this celebration, the Liturgy of the Word with the reading of the passion according to John and the Universal Prayers and the Veneration of the Cross.

We have our commemoration of Christ's Passion at 3pm on Good Friday, the time at which Christ died.

If you cannot participate in televised/online service, read the readings (or at least part of the Passion) and then pray (some of) the intercessions (see text below). After this comes the veneration of the Cross. You can do this at home by placing your crucifix on a cushion or on a table with a white cloth and a candle. Each member of the family can then approach to venerate the cross one by one.

As an extra, sometime during the day you may pray (some of) the Stations of the Cross.

Solemn intercessions

(after the introduction and a moment of silence, please say the prayer)

For Holy Church

Let us pray, dearly beloved, for the holy Church of God,
that our God and Lord be pleased to give her peace, to guard her and to unite her throughout the whole world and grant that, leading our life in tranquillity and quiet,
we may glorify God the Father almighty.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
who in Christ revealed your glory to all the nations, watch over the works of your mercy,
that your Church, spread throughout all the world, may persevere with steadfast faith in confessing your name.
Through Christ our Lord.

II. For the Pope

Let us pray also for our most Holy Father Pope Francis.,

that our God and Lord, who chose him for the Order of Bishops, may keep him safe and unharmed for the Lord's holy Church, to govern the holy People of God.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
by whose decree all things are founded, look with favour on our prayers and in your kindness protect the Pope chosen for us, that, under him, the Christian people, governed by you their maker, may grow in merit by reason of their faith. Through Christ our Lord.

III. For all orders and degrees of the faithful

Let us pray also for our Bishop Vincent, for all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Church and for the whole of the faithful people.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, hear our humble prayer for your ministers, that, by the gift of your grace, all may serve you faithfully.

Through Christ our Lord.

IV. For catechumens

Let us pray also for our catechumens,

that our God and Lord may open wide the ears of their inmost hearts and unlock the gates of his mercy, that, having received forgiveness of all their sins through the waters of rebirth, they, too, may be one with Christ Jesus our Lord.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
who make your Church ever fruitful with new offspring, increase the faith and understanding of our catechumens, that, reborn in the font of Baptism, they may be added to the number of your adopted children.

Through Christ our Lord.

V. For the unity of Christians

Let us pray also for all our brothers and sisters who believe in Christ, that our God and Lord may be pleased, as they live the truth,

to gather them together and keep them in his one Church.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
who gather what is scattered and keep together what you have gathered, look kindly on the flock of your Son, that those whom one Baptism has consecrated may be

joined together by integrity of faith and united in the bond of charity.

Through Christ our Lord.

VI. For the Jewish people

Let us pray also for the Jewish people, to whom the Lord our God spoke first, that he may grant them to advance in love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, who bestowed your promises on Abraham and his descendants, graciously hear the prayers of your Church, that the people you first made your own may attain the fullness of redemption.

Through Christ our Lord.

VII. For those who do not believe in Christ

Let us pray also for those who do not believe in Christ, that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they, too, may enter on the way of salvation.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, grant to those who do not confess Christ, that, by walking before you with a sincere heart, they may find the truth and that we ourselves, being constant in mutual love and striving to understand more fully the

mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world.

Through Christ our Lord.

VIII. For those who do not believe in God

Let us pray also for those who do not acknowledge God, that, following what is right in sincerity of heart, they may find the way to God himself.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, who created all people to seek you always by desiring you and, by finding you, come to rest, grant, we pray, that, despite every harmful obstacle, all may recognize the signs of your fatherly love and the witness of the good works done by those who believe in you, and so in gladness confess you, the one true God and Father of our human race.

Through Christ our Lord.

IX. For those in public office

Let us pray also for those in public office, that our God and Lord may direct their minds and hearts according to his will for the true peace and freedom of all.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, in whose hand lies every human heart and

the rights of peoples, look with favour, we pray, on those who govern with authority over us, that throughout the whole world, the prosperity of peoples, the assurance of peace, and freedom of religion may through your gift be made secure.
Through Christ our Lord.

X. For those in tribulation

Let us pray, dearly beloved, to God the Father almighty, that he may cleanse the world of all errors, banish disease, drive out hunger, unlock prisons, loosen fetters, granting to travellers safety, to pilgrims return, health to the sick, and salvation to the dying.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, comfort of mourners, strength of all who toil, may the prayers of those who cry out in any tribulation come before you, that all may rejoice, because in their hour of need your mercy was at hand.

Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Holy Saturday & The Easter Vigil

Holy Saturday is a day of waiting. We remember how Jesus was dead and in the tomb, and while his disciples were afraid and grief-stricken, he descended into Hell, in bring the dead with him to Heaven.

1st Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:2 Or Genesis 1:1, 26-31A; 2nd Reading: Genesis 22:1-18; 3rd Reading Exodus 14:15-15:1; Responsorial Psalm Exodus 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18; 4th Reading Isaiah 54:5-14; 5th Reading Isaiah 55:1-11; 6th Reading Baruch 3:9-15, 32 – 4:4; 7th Reading: Ezekiel 36:16-17A, 18-28; Epistle: Romans 6:3-11; Gospel Matthew 28:1-10

<https://catholicreadings.org/holy-saturday-night-easter-vigil-readings/>

During the day, if you have children they could prepare an Easter garden or decorate an Easter card.

If the blessing of the Easter food is part of your tradition, you could do it by gathering the family and saying the prayers

(<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Polish-Easter-Saturday-blessing.pdf>)

In the evening, once it's dark, the Easter Vigil will take place. You can celebrate your own Easter Vigil at home, in a way that hasn't been done before!

The Easter Vigil is the holiest night of the year, the night "which knew the hour at which Christ arose", as we sing in the Easter hymn, the Exsultet. It is a night of joyfully waiting for the Risen Lord who we know will always save us and never lets death and suffering have the last word.

The Vigil has a lot of beautiful symbols and readings, and you can relive some of these at home.

There are 4 parts to the Easter Vigil.

1. **"The Liturgy of Light"** we usually light a fire outside the Church, and then process inside in darkness, each with a candle, led by the main Paschal candle, and then sing the beautiful hymn the Exsultet.

If you have a garden, and you feel it's safe, you could gather around a fire and light candles from it before going inside, otherwise, you could just switch off the lights inside and hold lit candles.

You could then read the hymn, the Exsultet, by candlelight (see text below).

After this, switch on the lights but keep one candle lit for the rest of the night.

2. The next part is the Liturgy of the Word.

There are 9 readings in the Easter Vigil liturgy. Depending on your circumstances (family etc) you can read all of them or just some of them. But it's good to read as many as you can: they are all beautiful readings about the love of God for his people. Because we can't share in the Eucharist at the moment, feeding our souls on God's word is even more important.

The most important readings are the 3rd reading and the Gospel.

The 3rd reading is the story of God dividing the Red Sea and leading Israel through safely. It is so important because it is a foreshadowing of Christ leading a way through death and giving us the Sacrament of Baptism. The Gospel is the story of the disciples finding the empty tomb early in the morning when Christ is risen.

Before reading the Gospel, you can sing "Alleluia" for the first time since the beginning of Lent!

After reading the Gospel, if you have children, you can talk to them about what happened in the story, about how Christ is risen and that's why this night is so important and so different to every other night. Use a children's bible to help them understand the story.

3. Liturgy of Baptism.

Each year, we renew our own baptismal promises, and we can certainly do this.

First, get some ordinary water (if you do not have holy water at home), Then relight your candles from the beginning of the Vigil (even better if you have your baptismal candle). Next, read out the baptismal promises (see below). Once you've done this, sprinkle everyone with the water and cross yourselves.

After this, you can say the prayers of the Faithful, as we do at Sunday Mass. Some suggested prayers are below. Finish them by saying the Our Father and make the sign of the cross.

4. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

You can't celebrate this at home, of course. But we can look forward with hope to the day when we will all celebrate the Mass together again and receive Jesus in Holy Communion.

Then, it would be great to have a really good meal or some sort of celebration.

Exultet

Exult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven,
 exult, let Angel ministers of God exult,
 let the trumpet of salvation
 sound aloud our mighty King's triumph!

Be glad, let earth be glad, as glory floods
 her,
 ablaze with light from her eternal King,
 let all corners of the earth be glad,
 knowing an end to gloom and darkness.

Rejoice, let Mother Church also rejoice,
 arrayed with the lightning of his glory,
 let this holy building shake with joy,
 filled with the mighty voices of the
 peoples.

(Therefore, dearest friends,
 standing in the awesome glory of this holy
 light,
 invoke with me, I ask you,
 the mercy of God almighty,
 that he, who has been pleased to number
 me,
 though unworthy, among the Levites,
 may pour into me his light unshadowed,
 that I may sing this candle's perfect
 praises.)

(V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with your spirit.)

V. Lift up your hearts.

R. We lift them up to the Lord.

V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R. It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, with ardent love of
 mind and heart

and with devoted service of our voice,
 to acclaim our God invisible, the almighty
 Father,

and Jesus Christ, our Lord, his Son, his
 Only Begotten.

Who for our sake paid Adam's debt to the
 eternal Father,

and, pouring out his own dear Blood,
 wiped clean the record of our ancient
 sinfulness.

These, then, are the feasts of Passover,
 in which is slain the Lamb, the one true
 Lamb,

whose Blood anoints the doorposts of
 believers.

This is the night,

when once you led our forebears, Israel's
 children,

from slavery in Egypt

and made them pass dry-shod through
 the Red Sea.

This is the night

that with a pillar of fire

banished the darkness of sin.

This is the night

that even now, throughout the world,

sets Christian believers apart from worldly
 vices

and from the gloom of sin,

leading them to grace

and joining them to his holy ones.

This is the night,
when Christ broke the prison-bars of
death
and rose victorious from the underworld.

Our birth would have been no gain,
had we not been redeemed.

O wonder of your humble care for us!
O love, O charity beyond all telling,
to ransom a slave you gave away your
Son!

O truly necessary sin of Adam,
destroyed completely by the Death of
Christ!

O happy fault
that earned so great, so glorious a
Redeemer!

O truly blessed night,
worthy alone to know the time and hour
when Christ rose from the underworld!

This is the night
of which it is written:
The night shall be as bright as day,
dazzling is the night for me,
and full of gladness.

The sanctifying power of this night
dispels wickedness, washes faults away,
restores innocence to the fallen, and joy
to mourners,
drives out hatred, fosters concord, and
brings down the mighty.

On this, your night of grace, O holy
Father,
accept this candle, a solemn offering,

the work of bees and of your servants'
hands,
an evening sacrifice of praise,
this gift from your most holy Church.
But now we know the praises of this pillar,
which glowing fire ignites for God's
honour,
a fire into many flames divided,
yet never dimmed by sharing of its light,
for it is fed by melting wax,
drawn out by mother bees
to build a torch so precious.

O truly blessed night,
when things of heaven are wed to those
of earth,
and divine to the human.

Therefore, O Lord,
we pray you that this candle,
hallowed to the honor of your name,
may persevere undimmed,
to overcome the darkness of this night.

Receive it as a pleasing fragrance,
and let it mingle with the lights of heaven.

May this flame be found still burning
by the Morning Star:
the one Morning Star who never sets,
Christ your Son,
who, coming back from death's domain,
has shed his peaceful light on humanity,
and lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

Renewal of the Baptismal Promises

V. Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?

R. I do.

V. Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?

R. I do.

V. Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

R. I do.

V. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

R. I do.

V. 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?

R. I do.

V. And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins, keep us by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord, for eternal life.

R. Amen.

Prayers of the Faithful

1. For the Holy Father, Pope Francis, that, like Saint Peter, he may continue to lead

the Church in witnessing to the joyful truth of the Resurrection,

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer

2. For those unjustly deprived of their freedom, that they may draw fresh hope of freedom from the mystery of the Resurrection,

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer

3. For the family of God, gathered here in Easter joy, that we may bear witness to the risen Christ and reflect him in our lives,

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer

4. For those who are suffering the consequences of the current pandemic: for those who are sick with the virus, those who look after them and other key workers, that they may receive strength and courage from the resurrection of Jesus

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer

5. For those who have died, that they may rise to eternal life in Christ,

Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer

(Please add your own intentions)

Celebrant: Almighty Father, your beloved son has risen from the dead, as he promised us. In peace and joy we present our prayers to you, through the same risen Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.