

The Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday): Family Practices to Celebrate

A note about these resources:

Families of all shapes and sizes are places of encounter with Christ. Each member of the family has a role to play to reflect Jesus' posture of prayer, forgiveness and love. This is the mission of the domestic church. Perhaps your domestic church includes mom, dad and children...perhaps you are a single parent family or a foster



family...perhaps you are empty nesters or seniors with grandchildren...perhaps you are single or widowed...perhaps you are engaged with hope for the future. All families are called to live daily life as a Christian family or as Saint John Paul II said, “*Families, become what you are.*” Christ is present and active in our families at every moment today. Pope Francis writes, “the Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes” (*Amoris Laetitia*, #315).

Holy Week 2020 will be much different from any we have experienced in previous years. The specter of COVID-19 and the onslaught of grim news often makes us anxious and fearful. Yet in the midst of this darkness there is Jesus, who as we discovered in the 5th Sunday of Lent, weeps for us and gives us courage in the midst of our vulnerability to move the stone that traps us in the tomb.

These resources were prepared to help you and your family celebrate Holy Week 2020 as best you can. Some ideas may be exactly what you were looking for. Other ideas may be something new you might want to try. Other ideas may not be your cup of tea. Trust in your own discernment as to what is best for you and your family. If you need any additional assistance or have questions, please contact your pastor or the parish staff member who sent this to you. You can also contact John Gaffney, Diocesan Director for Evangelization & Catechesis, at jgaffney@dmdiocese.org with any questions. Please know of our prayers for you as we journey together into Holy Week 2020.

Pastoral Note on the 2020 Holy Land Annual Collection:

The current COVID-19 pandemic concerns many countries and in many of them preventive measures preclude the normal community celebration of Holy Week.

The Christian communities in the Holy Land, also exposed to the risk of contagion and living in contexts already full of serious sufferings, benefit every year from the generosity of the faithful from all over the world. This solidarity enables them to continue their evangelical presence, in addition to maintaining schools and social structures that assist all citizens with healthcare, education and peaceful coexistence, attending above all to the weakest and poorest.

For this reason, Pope Francis has approved the proposal that the Collection for the Holy Land, for the year 2020, take place on Sunday, 13 September, near the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross.

The celebration that commemorates the discovery of the Relics of the Cross by Saint Helen also marks a new beginning of public worship in Jerusalem, with the construction of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. May it be a sign of hope and salvation after the Passion to which many peoples are now associated, as well as solidarity with those who continue to live the Gospel of Jesus on the Land where “it all began”.

Please hold onto your Holy Land collection envelopes until this fall. Thank you for your thoughtful attention to the sacred sites in the Holy Land.

Holy Thursday – We Prepare:

- Celebrate the Liturgy of the Word:
 - *“There is no doubt that the most evident dimension of the Eucharist is that it is a*



meal. The Eucharist was born, on the evening of Holy Thursday, in the setting of the Passover meal. Being a meal is part of its very structure. “Take, eat... Then he took a cup and... gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you” (Mt 26:26, 27). As such, it expresses the fellowship which God wishes to establish with us and which we ourselves must build with one another.” (Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II for the Year of the Eucharist, 2004-2005.)

- Holy Thursday celebrates the institution of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The Eucharist was established within the Passover meal by Jesus with His Apostles.
- **Liturgy of the Word** – When we meditate of Scripture we hear the Living Word of God, a message that is spoken to us personally this very day.
- Consider having a different member of the family read the different scripture passages. (Activity for the entire family)
 - Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14;
 - Responsorial Psalm, 116:12-13, 15-16BC, 17-18;
 - 1st Corinthians 11:23-26;
 - Gospel Acclamation (Glory & Praise, be to you or Lord Jesus Christ) John 13:34;
 - Gospel John 13:1-15;
 - USCCB Link to the Readings - <http://cms.usccb.org/bible/readings/040920-lord-s-supper.cfm>
- Host a Family Washing of the Feet (text excerpts from CatholicCulture.org)
 - **Family Washing of the Feet** - The initial reaction is like Peter's, *"You shall never wash my feet!"* (John 13:8) *"Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him."* (John 13:13-16).
 - If we remember the King of Kings, the Son of God knelt before sinful men to wash their very dirty feet, how could we put ourselves up as better than the Son of God? All that is required is a bowl, a pitcher of water and a towel. The account from the **Gospel of John 13:1-15** is read and then Christ is imitated by washing the feet of the family members. It starts with the father washing the mother's feet, the mother washing the eldest child's feet and so on until the youngest child washes the father's feet. Although Christ probably had to scrub, just a little bit of water will suffice.
 - It is a gesture of service and communion. The Fathers of the Church took this gesture as John's mystical version of the Institution of Eucharist.
 - If you decide to pursue a family activity of washing of the feet, it should prompt a discussion on how this was a little act of charity with our family members, imitating Christ. He has given the commandment to love one another as He loves us. Each of us should now make resolutions to show for others in specific actions throughout the year.

Good Friday – We Enter the Tomb:

- Stations of the Cross – Ascension Press Video – *Pray the Stations of the Cross with Father Mark Toups*



- Link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uG5ayhY5IyI>
- Fr. Toups invites us to step closer to Christ and pray beside him, drawing strength from Scripture during his last moments before the crucifixion.
- Family Suggestions:
 - Good Friday church services often end in silence as they leave for home in darkness. This leaves the faithful to imagine their lives in the wake of the dark hours after Christ’s crucifixion. While functioning as a family in total darkness might not be practical, there is a way to practice living in darkness: go dark with your technology.
 - “Unplug” from your devices immediately following praying Stations of the Cross and watching Good Friday service on TV until noon on Holy Saturday.
 - Turn off (and put away) all cell phones, tablets, game consoles, televisions, radios, and computers.
 - Reflect together on how disjointed, disconnected, lost, anxious, helpless or frustrated each family member feels without their devices. On that first Good Friday, many lives were turned upside down by Christ’s death: Mary, Martha, James, John, Peter, Andrew, just to name a few...For these people and the other followers of Christ, Good Friday was more than just sad. It was a day of feeling anxious, lost, disconnected, frustrated, and helpless.
 - Ask questions: How different would our worlds be if the Story of God had stopped on Good Friday? What would life be like if grace, mercy, love, and forgiveness were not available to us?
 - Genuflect or bow (not everyone can physically genuflect) every time you and a family member passes a crucifix in our homes on Good Friday. This is an ancient practice of our faith on Good Friday until the Easter Vigil. During this solemn time of the liturgical year the cross receives special attention, and the genuflection or bowing gives honor to the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross.

Holy Saturday – We Wait:

- A Selection of Prayers to pray Saturday morning or early afternoon:
 - On the topic of Holy Saturday, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments says, “On Holy Saturday, the Church pauses at the Lord’s tomb, meditating his Passion and Death, his descent into Hell, and, with prayer and fasting, awaits his resurrection.”
 - “Popular piety should not be impervious to the peculiar character of Holy Saturday. The festive customs and practices connected with this day, on which the celebration of the Lord’s resurrection was once anticipated, should be reserved for the vigil and for Easter Sunday.”
 - **Holy Saturday Prayer to Be Joined with Christ in Death**

O Lord, Your sorrowing Mother stood by Your Cross; help us in our sorrows to share Your sufferings. Like the seed buried in the ground, You have produced the harvest of eternal life for us; make us always dead to sin and alive to God. Shepard of all, in death you remained hidden from the world; teach us to love our hidden spiritual life with You and the Father. In Your role as the new Adam, You went down among the dead to release all the just there since the beginning; grant that all who are dead in sin may hear Your voice and rise to new life. Son of the living God, You have allowed us through baptism to be buried with You; grant that we may also rise with You in baptism and walk in newness of life.
 - **Holy Saturday Prayer**

All-powerful and ever-living God, your only Son went down among the dead and rose again in glory. In your goodness raise up your faithful people, buried with him in baptism, to be one with him in the eternal life of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.
 - **A Prayer for Holy Saturday**

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

