

HOLY WEEK AT HOME

Celebrating the death, burial,
& resurrection of Christ
during quarantine

Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)

Introduction

As we celebrate the Passion of Jesus Christ and hear John's Gospel account of his suffering and death, we are reminded of the injustices that pervade our world. Often times these systems of oppression, hate, and fear are so commonplace in our world that perhaps we do not even notice them. Good Friday serves as a good reminder of this reality. It is easy to become discouraged, to see the work that has to be done and look away. Today we pray that we may have the conscience to see and the courage to act, remembering that death never wins. Life and love always prevail in Christ.

The traditional Good Friday liturgy contains three unique components: the reading of John's Passion, the praying of The Solemn Intercessions, and the Adoration of the Holy Cross. Each of these helps us enter more fully into our relationship with Christ and recommits us to pray and work for the good of the church and world.

Ritual at Home

The Adoration of the Holy Cross begins with a Showing of the Holy Cross. While there are two options for this ritual, unveiling the cross or processing the cross through church, both forms include a sung proclamation: Behold, the wood of the Cross. The rubrics for the Adoration of the Cross call for a cross rather than a crucifix, as it highlights the major symbol of the crucified and risen Christ. Rather than an act of idolatry, the Adoration of the Cross points us to the Risen Christ.

While the Good Friday liturgy calls for a cross sans *corpus*, your home adaptation might use a crucifix, if that is what you have.

Opening Prayer: Lord of Glory,
we proclaim your death and look ever forward to your Resurrection.
As we contemplate your Cross,
the tree on which you hung so that we may have life,
may we be ever aware of the life that springs from death,
the light that rises from darkness,
and the hope that banishes fear.
Draw us close to you,
so that we may know the glory
your Cross points to.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reading: John 18:1–19:42 (*Celebrating the Eucharist*, page 175)

Adoration of the Cross:

Place a cross on a table or some other place of honor, adding candles if you wish. Be sure to allow some time in silent reflection as you gaze upon the cross and grow in relationship with Jesus.

Part of the beauty of the Adoration of the Cross is the time for personal prayer and reflection, as well as performing individual acts of reverence. You may wish to touch the cross, or show another suitable sign, such as genuflection or a kiss. Do not let this time be cluttered by words but bask in the power of the cross as a symbol of not only death but ultimately of Resurrection.

To begin and end the time of reflection, simply proclaim and respond: Behold, the word of the Cross.

*At some point during the period of reflection, you may wish to pray the following Litany for Forgiveness. Additional prayers can be found in *Celebrating the Eucharist*, pages 188–191)*

Litany for Forgiveness:

For the times we have not loved as we are called to love . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times we have cultivated doubt instead of hope . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times that selfishness, greed, and lust influence our decisions . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times we nurture isolation instead of community . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times we hear the needs of others but refuse to act . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times we pass judgment on ourselves
and those whom we encounter . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times we create divisions . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times we neglect care for our common home . . . *Father, forgive.*
For the times we are not good stewards of the gifts you give us . . . *Father, forgive.*

Intercessions:

Confident that Jesus Christ hears our prayer,
let us offer our petitions with open hearts.

For the church, for the Pope, and for all women and men who live their lives in service of
God: May they know the intimacy of authentic relationship with Christ.

For all catechumens, and for all who are preparing to celebrate sacraments: May they respond
to their baptismal call with courage, opening their hearts to the invitation of God.

For all who are sick or suffering in body, mind, or spirit: May they know the great compassion
of God through those who care for them.

For peace in our families, communities, nation, and world: May all seek resolution to
disagreement and difference in ways that protect the life and dignity of all people.

For all who are unemployed or underemployed: May they find opportunities to use their gifts
for the service of others in ways that are sustaining and life-giving.

For all who grieve: May they know the consolation of hope found in Christ.

The Lord's Prayer: Gathering these prayers together,
as well as those we hold in the silence of our hearts,
we pray in the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father . . .

Prayer:

Loving God,
We praise you in a special way today as we celebrate Good Friday.
Be with us as we continue our journey through Holy Week,
that we may more closely align our lives with yours,
knowing that death never wins,
and that life and love always prevail.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

All are invited to share a sign of Christ's peace.

Conversation Starters

1. What images, words, or phrases do you associate with Good Friday?
2. What are your own experiences of death and resurrection?
3. How might you explain the significance of the cross to someone?

Continuing the Conversation

Take some time to pray the prescribed psalm from today's liturgy (*Celebrating Eucharist*, page 174). Psalm 31, with the antiphon from Luke's Gospel, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit," is a beautiful testimony of trust in God.