

Holy Week at Home:

A guide to celebrating Holy Week during the COVID-19 pandemic



**Saint Mary's Episcopal Church
Mohegan Lake, New York**

A note from Bishop Andrew Dietsche

“...In Holy Week, one of the most striking periods for me occurs in that period between the end of the Maundy Thursday service with the stripping of the altar and the darkness, and the first Eucharist of Easter, usually at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night. During this period the Eucharist is denied us, as we wait and watch through Jesus’ passion and death on the cross and his burial in the tomb. That period of the absence of Christ has always spoken as profoundly to me as the great celebrations and liturgies of Holy Week and Easter. The silent, empty vigil, speaking to us of sorrow and of longing. Of cross and death and tomb. These days feel like that too, and perhaps we should not be too quick to want to look away from the silence or the emptiness which proceed the glory to come.”

How to use this guide...

We are in uncharted territory right now, but we are doing our best to work through it and find ways to continue to come together spiritually. We’ve pulled together multiple sources to make a more comprehensive resource for you this Holy Week. We’ve included services for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We’ve also created a selection of videos that go along with Holy Week, which are accessible on our website at www.StMarysMoheganLake.org/HolyWeek2020 - but don’t worry if you don’t have access to a computer, the full services, reflections and sermons are included in this booklet. We’d like to especially thank the Virginia Theological Seminary and their Lifelong Learning program for supplying many of the resources found in this booklet.

Although our church doors are closed and we are physically separate, we continue to be together as one in the Body of Christ. We look forward to being together again in person soon, but until then we wish you and your families all the best.

Many blessings,
Chris & Cindy
Wardens, Saint Mary’s Mohegan Lake

Observing Lent in The Home

While the days begin to lengthen, we enter into the season of Lent. While the light is returning we unsettlingly prepare ourselves for the darkest day in the Christian calendar: Good Friday. Lent is traditionally a time of penitence, fasting and repentance as we ready ourselves to remember the darkest day in human history: the day that Christ was crucified. It is true and important that Easter is coming and that this journey will not end in death but in eternal life; the ultimate joy. But I do not think that we can fully enter into a celebration of Easter without first journeying toward and through the crucifixion.

Create A Lenten Prayer Space

In a family, how do you create the space to journey through Lent in a developmentally appropriate way? Our family has tried different practices and readings through Lent, but one thing has been constant in our Lenten practices: creating a collection of symbolic items in a central place in the home (i.e. on the family table or on a stand in a main living area).

These items are helpful as talking points with children. They serve as a guide to other disciplines you choose to take on as a family. As you explore and explain the items, children wonder in ways that also help you to journey through Lent together. A variety of items, and giving room for questions and conversation, allows for differentiation in meeting everyone's needs and understandings.

Candle: Always a symbol of God's presence with us. I often say as I light the candle, "We light the candle to remind us that God is with us in this place, at this time."

Purple cloth: For children who traveled through advent, the purple of lent will be familiar as a color for a time of waiting. Use a circle calendar of the church year to show the children that we are in Lent, waiting for the great feast of Easter.

Empty bowl: Explain that we fast so that we have more time or energy to remember to talk to God during Lent. We are getting ready for the great mystery of Easter. Older children can be encouraged to write down something they want to fast from and place the paper in the bowl.

Scripture, poem, or prayer: This can be written on cards that can be read liturgically (we've found every night at dinner works well for our rhythm). The Good Shepherd of Psalm 23 is a wonderful image to meditate on with young children.

Cross: Take time to look at the cross together and talk about the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Adapted from "Creating A Lenten Prayer Space at Home" by Emily Watkins. Part of a series from Building Faith, a ministry of Virginia Theological Seminary.

Palm Sunday

The Sunday before Easter at which Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and Jesus' Passion on the cross are recalled. It is also known as the Sunday of the Passion. Palm Sunday is the first day of Holy Week. Red is the liturgical color for the day. The observance of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem was witnessed by the pilgrim Egeria in about 381-384. During this observance there was a procession of people down the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. The people waved branches of palms or olive trees as they walked. They sang psalms, including Ps 118, and shouted the antiphon, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" The Palm Sunday observance was generally accepted throughout the church by the twelfth century. However, the day was identified in the 1549 BCP as simply "The Sunday next before Easter." The blessing of branches and the procession were not included. The 1928 BCP added the phrase "commonly called Palm Sunday" to the title of the day. A form for blessing palms was provided by the Book of Offices (1960). The 1979 BCP presents the full title for the day, "The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday".

*Definition from "An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church"
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The Liturgy of the Palms

*The following liturgy may either be read by all present,
or may be read by an appointed leader with responses by all present.*

Leader Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

People Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.

Leader Let us pray.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Leader The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People Glory to you, Lord Christ.

WHEN Jesus and his disciples had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

"Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven! "

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Leader The Gospel of the Lord.

People Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Leader The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Leader Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Leader It is right to praise you, Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

People Hosanna in the highest.

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

The congregation may be seated for the first part of the Passion.

JESUS stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

At the verse which mentions the arrival at Golgotha, all stand.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

“Making the Common Holy”

Palm Sunday Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Ronnie T. Stout-Kopp+

Join me in proclaiming:

“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!”

The Palm Sunday Liturgy (page 270 in your Prayer Book) vividly represents one of the few times everyone gets to join in the fun and joy and reenact an event that holds great power for Christians around the world. Normally, we would gather in the fellowship hall and bless and distribute the palm branches exchanging the words above. Then, we all form a procession and process into the church to the music of Hymn 154: All glory, laud, and honor to thee, Redeemer, King! While this is all rather messy and noisy, we join as one to remember and imitate Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover with his closest friends. Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover joining with Jews who had done likewise since the exodus from slavery in Egypt. We take up common palm branches and bless them to make them holy. Then we, the common people, join the procession into Jerusalem once more joining ourselves to the long history of Christians everywhere. But we also know that we are, each and every one of us, the Body of Christ – the holy people of God moving forward as one into the future that Jesus Christ has in mind for us. The common becomes holy. We become holy by our words and actions.

Once we get into the church, the mood quickly shifts from joy to deep solemnity when the Passion Gospel is read telling us, once more, of the terrible events that took place two thousand years ago. We shift our holy palms of joy from our left shoulder to the right shoulder. We pause in silence to contemplate with shock and awe Jesus’ death on the cross for us. To be honest, every time I read the Passion Gospel my emotions shift from anger at the crowds, Pilate’s mocking words, Jesus’ face bloodied by beating and torture, to deep grief at the moment of his death. It happens all over again, right before my eyes, and I feel gutted. It is all I can do not to begin crying. It is a holy experience year after year. Holy Week will be even more difficult as we follow Jesus, step by bloody step, to his death on cross once more for our salvation. But, the Good News is that we know the end of the story: death could not hold Him who is the Son of God. By the power of God, He defeats death and is resurrected purchasing eternal life for you and me.

This year, I invite you to commemorate this Palm Sunday in your own home. We do not need to be in the church building in order to be the church. Make this a holy time in your own home with your family, until we are together again.

Please stay healthy in heart, mind, body and soul. **The Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit+**

Prayers of The People

Form IV

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Lord's Prayer

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray
Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who lives and reigns for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday in Holy Week. It is part of the Triduum, or three holy days before Easter. It comes from the Latin *mandatum novum*, "new commandment," from John 13:34. The ceremony of washing feet was also referred to as "the Maundy." Maundy Thursday celebrations also commemorate the institution of the eucharist by Jesus "on the night he was betrayed." Egeria, a fourth-century pilgrim to Jerusalem, describes elaborate celebrations and observances in that city on Maundy Thursday. Special celebration of the institution of the eucharist on Maundy Thursday is attested by the Council of Hippo in 381. The Prayer Book liturgy for Maundy Thursday provides for celebration of the eucharist and a ceremony of the washing of feet which follows the gospel and homily. Following this, the altar is stripped and all decorative furnishings are removed from the church.

*Definition from "An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church"
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We have put together a Maundy Thursday ceremony that you can take part of at home. You can include an "Agape Meal" as part of your Maundy Thursday celebration, or start at "The Word and the Prayers."

Agapé for Maundy Thursday

A meatless meal is to be preferred. The setting should be austere and the foods sparse and simple. Appropriate foods include soup, cheese, olives, dried fruit, bread, and wine.

If there are several persons present, one will preside.

The Blessings

At the time appointed, all gather around the table, standing as able.

After a time of silence, the presider offers the following blessings.

Over Wine

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You create the fruit of the vine; and you refresh us with the cup of salvation in the Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. May the time come quickly when we can share that cup again, even as you are with us now in our very thirst for you. Glory to you for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Over Bread

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You bring forth bread from the earth; and you have fed us on our way with the bread of life in the Body of your Son Jesus Christ. Let us be fed again soon with that bread of life. And as grain scattered upon the earth is gathered into one loaf, so gather your Church in every place into the kingdom of your Son. To you be glory and power for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Over the Other Foods

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, Ruler of the universe. You have blessed the earth to bring forth food to satisfy our hunger. Let this food strengthen us in the fast that is before us, that following our Savior in the way of the cross, we may come to the joy of his resurrection. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Meal

The meal is now eaten. If several are gathered, they first serve one another, then dine.

The Word and the Prayers (John 17:1-26)

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

“What Are You Hungry For?”

Maundy Thursday Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Ronnie T. Stout-Kopp+

Maundy Thursday is a central feast day in the life of the Church. It begins in celebration and feasting around the table, then commemorates the feast of the Table, and then ends in lonely silence as Jesus is arrested and taken from our midst by violent hands.

The word “maundy” means “mandate.” This refers to the mandate given to us by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We hear these words read every Maundy Thursday “I give you a new commandment, *that you love one another*. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” This is a mandate and a new commandment, the most difficult of all commandments. Even more than writing these words on our hearts, we need to live them and do them daily. Now, more than ever, in this time of short tempers, paranoia, fear, anxiety, separation, and even depression, we must take our Lord’s commandment to heart. This is not romantic or misty-eyed love. This is divine love infused into every one of us at our Baptism into the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ! This is a Love that, with the help of God, will go on loving, even unto eternity: love for each other and love for God in Christ.

Equally, this is the feast day that commemorates the institution of the Last Supper, the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the Eucharist (which means thanksgiving). Our Lord gathers with his friends in the upper room to celebrate the Passover. But He does and says some very strange things. First, Jesus insists on washing his disciples feet. In those days, most people walked barefoot or with sandals and keeping your feet clean would have been a huge challenge. Usually, servants would have washed visitors’ feet, but Jesus himself does this to demonstrate His servant relationship with those at the table. When he returns to His place, He does something that would be have been abhorrent to Jews of the time. Jesus takes the loaf of bread and breaks it saying that it is His body broken for them and us. Then He takes the cup of wine and says that it is His blood poured out for us. He commands us to do this in remembrance of Him, until He comes again - utterly extraordinary words and actions!

Jesus does not say that these common things, bread and wine, are sort of like or simply symbolize His Body and Blood. He says these are His Body and Blood given for you and me. Our faith tells us this is True in the deepest sense of the word. This is ground zero, where it all begins and continues even to today. We gather ‘round the table and we share in His Ever Blessed Body and Blood, His gift to us for the health of our bodies and souls. For this, we give Him thanks and praise!

We end this night in solemn silence and await the heart wrenching and momentous events of Good Friday. May God give us the strength to face the new day. **The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit + go with you this night and remain with you forever.**

The following psalm is then said. If there is more than one voice, it is said in unison.

Psalm 63:1-8

O God, you are my God; eagerly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you,
as in a barren and dry land where there is no water.

Therefore I have gazed upon you in your holy place;
that I might behold your power and your glory.

For your loving-kindness is better than life itself;
my lips shall give you praise.

So will I bless you as long as I live
and lift up my hands in your Name.

My soul is content, as with marrow and fatness,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips.

When I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the night watches.

For you have been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings I will rejoice.

My soul clings to you,
your right hand holds me fast.

O God of the crucified and risen One, from whom no trial or trouble can separate us:
you feed us with your Word and soothe us with your Spirit, closer to us than breath itself.

Make us glad this night for the life of your servant Jesus;
Make us servants of all for the sake of Jesus;
who for our sake gave his life for the salvation of all.

In the Name of Jesus, your Son, our Lord.

Amen.

Maundy Thursday – Stripping of the Altar

What Is Stripping The Altar? Stripping of the altar – removing all ornaments, linens, candles, plants, flowers, etc. – is an ancient custom of the Church. Congregations mark the way Christ’s life was stripped from him by stripping the altar of all signs of life and beauty during a special service. This almost-bare worship space reminds us of the bareness of life without the hope of Christ that we have through his resurrection. This at-home activity mirrors the church custom, stripping a table at home instead of an altar.

Materials Needed:

- Bible or Prayer Book
- Storage box or bin
- Dark cloth
- Towels/cleaning supplies

Pray Psalm 22: 1-5 together

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

Let none who look to you be put to shame;
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.

Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.

Gather and remove items. Go through the house to gather all icons and religious symbols that can be easily moved (crosses, statues, candles, prayer beads, etc.) Ask everyone to work silently as a sign of respect for the task. Pack these items away in the storage bins. Use dark cloth to drape any other items that are too large or permanent to pack away.

Wash the table. Finally, remove all items from your dining or kitchen table and together wash the table thoroughly.

Washing Feet. After you have washed the table, join together and either wash one another’s feet or hands.

Wait. Leave the table bare until Easter morning.

Good Friday

The Friday before Easter Day, on which the church commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. It is a day of fasting and special acts of discipline and self-denial. In the early church candidates for baptism, joined by others, fasted for a day or two before the Paschal feast. In the west the first of those days eventually acquired the character of historical reenactment of the passion and death of Christ. The liturgy of the day includes John's account of the Passion gospel, a solemn form of intercession known as the solemn collects (dating from ancient Rome), and optional devotions before the cross (commonly known as the veneration of the cross). The eucharist is not celebrated in the Episcopal Church on Good Friday.

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The Solemn Collects for Good Friday

All standing, the person appointed, says to the people

Dear People of God: Our heavenly Father sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; that all who believe in him might be delivered from the power of sin and death, and become heirs with him of everlasting life.

We pray, therefore, for people everywhere according to their needs.

Let us pray for the holy Catholic Church of Christ throughout the world;

For its unity in witness and service

For all bishops and other ministers and the people whom they serve

For Andrew, our Bishop, and all the people of this diocese

For all Christians in this community

That God will confirm his Church in faith, increase it in love, and preserve it in peace.

Silence

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified:

Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth, and for those in authority among them;

For Donald, the President of the United States

For the Congress and the Supreme Court

For the Members and Representatives of the United Nations

For all who serve the common good

That by God's help they may seek justice and truth, and live in peace and concord.

Silence

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth; that in tranquility your dominion may increase, until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all who suffer and are afflicted in body or in mind;

For the hungry and the homeless, the destitute
and the oppressed

For the sick, the wounded, and the crippled

For those in loneliness, fear, and anguish

For those who face temptation, doubt, and despair

For the sorrowful and bereaved

For prisoners and captives, and those in mortal danger

That God in his mercy will comfort and relieve them, and
grant them the knowledge of his love, and stir up in us the
will and patience to minister to their needs.

Silence

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of
all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come
to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all
their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve
them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus
Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us pray for all who have not received the Gospel of Christ;

For those who have never heard the word of salvation

For those who have lost their faith

For those hardened by sin or indifference

For the contemptuous and the scornful

For those who are enemies of the cross of Christ and
persecutors of his disciples

For those who in the name of Christ have persecuted others

That God will open their hearts to the truth, and lead them to
faith and obedience.

Silence

Merciful God, creator of all the peoples of the earth and
lover of souls: Have compassion on all who do not know you
as you are revealed in your Son Jesus Christ; let your Gospel
be preached with grace and power to those who have not
heard it; turn the hearts of those who resist it; and bring
home to your fold those who have gone astray; that there
may be one flock under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us commit ourselves to God, and pray for the grace of a holy life, that, with all who have departed this world and have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to God alone, we may be accounted worthy to enter into the fullness of the joy of our Lord, and receive the crown of life in the day of resurrection.

Silence

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The service may be concluded here with the Lord's Prayer, and the final prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, we pray you to set your passion, cross, and death between your judgment and our souls, now and in the hour of our death. Give mercy and grace to the living; pardon and rest to the dead; to your holy Church peace and concord; and to us sinners everlasting life and glory; for with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Easter Sunday

The feast of Christ's resurrection. According to Bede, the word derives from the Anglo-Saxon spring goddess Eostre. Christians in England applied the word to the principal festival of the church year, both day and season. Easter Day is the annual feast of the resurrection, the pascha or Christian Passover, and the eighth day of cosmic creation. Faith in Jesus' resurrection on the Sunday or third day following his crucifixion is at the heart of Christian belief. Easter sets the experience of springtime next to the ancient stories of deliverance and the proclamation of the risen Christ. In the west, Easter occurs on the first Sunday after the full moon on or after the vernal equinox. Following Jewish custom, the feast begins at sunset on Easter Eve with the Great Vigil of Easter.

Definition from "An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church"

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A Service for Easter Sunday

The Collect:

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Lesson: (Act 10:34-43)

Peter began to speak to Cornelius and the other Gentiles: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ--he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Psalm 118:1-2,14-24

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his mercy endures for ever.

Let Israel now proclaim,
"His mercy endures for ever."

The LORD is my strength and my song,
and he has become my salvation.

There is a sound of exultation and victory
in the tents of the righteous:

"The right hand of the LORD has triumphed!
the right hand of the LORD is exalted! the right hand of the LORD has triumphed!"

I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the LORD.

The LORD has punished me sorely,
but he did not hand me over to death.

Open for me the gates of righteousness;
I will enter them; I will offer thanks to the LORD.

"This is the gate of the LORD;
he who is righteous may enter."

I will give thanks to you, for you answered me
and have become my salvation.
The same stone which the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
This is the LORD's doing,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
On this day the LORD has acted;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew (Matthew 28:1-10)

AFTER the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

“Easter is NOT Cancelled!”

Easter Sunday Sermon

The Rev. Dr. Ronnie T. Stout-Kopp+

Proclaim this with me: **Alleluia. Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

It might feel like we are still in exile, still in this virus-wilderness, but Easter can never be cancelled. I know how you feel: we are stuck in our homes hiding from this unseen enemy. We can't go to St. Mary's and celebrate the resurrection together. My heart is breaking not being able to be with you; however, just like Christmas, Easter still happens. Easter is the feast day when God, humanity, and all of creation acts together to give us the great Christian HOPE of everlasting life, resurrected life with God, all the saints, and the whole host of heaven! The darkness of Lent and the horror of Good Friday is over as we all shout together “ALLELUIA” once again. The Valley of Dry Bones is behind us and God is victorious over evil and death: “I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you. Again I will build you, and you shall be built...”

Let us go to the garden tomb together. It is early morning and we join Mary Magdalene on her way to the tomb. She carries her alabaster jar of nard to anoint Jesus' body in death. We see, even from afar that something is amiss: the tomb is open! Mary is so shocked that she runs back to inform Peter and the others about what she has seen. They rush back to the tomb together and find Him gone! They see Jesus' discarded shroud and the cloth covering his bloody face neatly rolled up (code language that Jesus is coming back.). The men depart but Mary remains behind. Jesus comes and speaks to her but she is so hysterical with grief that she does not recognize him until he actually speaks her name: “Mary.” The story does not end there.

Mary tries to embrace Him but he tells her not to hold him down or hold him back because he has not yet ascended to “my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” And then the most important words of all: “Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’ and she told them that he had said these things to her.” Mary Magdalene, a woman, is the first to see and speak with our resurrected Lord. More than that, she is the very first person to proclaim to the world that Christ has been raised from the dead! Without Mary Magdalene, we would not be here today.

Jesus speaks to us today telling each of us to proclaim his sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection from death to life for you and me and the whole world. Through the power of God, Jesus is resurrected and gifts to us the promise and hope of resurrected and eternal life with him.

ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA! ALLELIUA!

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight; and **the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, go with you this day and remain with you always+. AMEN!**

Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life. Therefore, now that our Lenten observance is ended, let us renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and all his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church.

The Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Reader Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

People I do.

Reader Do you believe in God the Father?

People I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

Reader Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

People I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Reader Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

People I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.

Reader Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

People I will, with God's help.

Reader Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

People I will, with God's help.

Reader Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

People I will, with God's help.

Reader Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

People I will, with God's help.

Reader Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

People I will, with God's help.

The Reader concludes the Renewal of Vows as follows

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

Blessing

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. *Amen.*

THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



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