

Sample Celebrations of the Word for Holy Week 2020

for Households and Families

Palm Sunday (pg. 2)
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Due to the COVID-19 crises which has prevented the faithful from participating at the Holy Week liturgies in their parishes, these sample prayer services have been adapted from various texts and rituals of Holy Week to allow households the opportunity to celebrate with the Church these sacred days of the year. They are not intended to replace the liturgies if available, or the Church's Liturgy of the Hours when the faithful have the ability and access to participate.

*Compiled by Michael Poradek, Diocese of Gary Liturgical Commission
Holy Week 2020*

A Celebration of the Word for Palm Sunday

Sample Prayer Service at Home Without Mass

At an appropriate time, gather together to celebrate Palm Sunday and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. A simple prayer space can be created for the entire Holy Week, starting today with a candle, crucifix, and/or palms / other plants available (or, children might create palm branches). If there is Holy Water in the home, the family may sign themselves when they gather with it. If the hymn is unfamiliar, you may find it on the internet (example: YouTube), shorten it, or simply move on to the other prayers. A leader should divide up the roles and adjust the service as necessary to make sure everyone is able to participate.

Hymn (Crown Him with Many Crowns)

Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed over the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save.
His glories now we sing, who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring, and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love, behold his hands and side,
Those wounds, yet visible above, in beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of Heaven, enthroned in worlds above,
Crown him the King to Whom is given the wondrous name of Love.
Crown him with many crowns, as thrones before Him fall;
Crown him, ye kings, with many crowns, for he is King of all.

Introduction

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
(*All make the Sign of the Cross together.*)

All: Amen

Leader: Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and home with peace.
Blessed be God for ever.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Leader: Since Ash Wednesday, we have prepared our hearts and home through prayer, fasting, and works of charity for this celebration of Holy Week. While we cannot be together with our parish family in person, we unite with the whole Church at the beginning of this Holy Week, as we walk recall the Paschal Mystery: the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let us walk with Jesus in a special way this week and today remember his entry into the city of Jerusalem. By following in his footsteps and recalling his great sacrifice, may we join our hearts to his, and share in his Cross as we prepare our hearts and homes for the joy of his Resurrection.

Gospel Reading

Reader: Let us listen to the words of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them here to me. And if anyone should say anything to you, reply, 'The master has need of them.' Then he will send them at once." This happened so that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled: Say to daughter Zion, "*Behold, your king comes to you, meek and riding on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.*" The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them. They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them, and he sat upon them. The very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is the he who comes in the name of the Lord;

hosanna in the highest.”
And when he entered Jerusalem
the whole city was shaken and asked, “Who is this?”
And the crowds replied,
“This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Responsorial Psalm [Psalm 22] (said or sung)

Leader Our responsorial psalm is: *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Leader: All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:
"He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him."

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Leader: Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
They have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones.

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Leader: They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me.

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Leader: I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
"You who fear the LORD, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!"

All: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Intercessions

- Leader: As we remember the hardships that Jesus endured for us, we are still filled with hope because God is with us always, even in difficult moments of life. Let us therefore call upon Him who hears all of our needs. Please respond: *Lord, hear our prayer.*
- Reader: For the Pope, our Bishop, and all leaders of the Church; that they will continue to lead us with wisdom and be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: That all nations of the world will always find ways of seeking peace and care for the lives of their people. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: For all those who are suffering from illness. That they will strengthen in their struggle, bring comfort to their family and friends, and keep their caregivers safe. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: That we will keep our hearts open to those who are in most need of our prayers during this Holy Week, and spend these days preparing for the hope and joy of Easter. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: What else shall we pray for? *[Add intentions and prayers.]* For all these intentions, let us pray to the Lord. R:/

Our Father

- Leader: Remember us Lord when you come into your kingdom and teach us to pray as you taught us:
- All: 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.

Conclusion

Leader: Let us pray.
Almighty, ever-living God,
You have given the human race Jesus Christ our Savior
as a model of humility.
He fulfilled your will
by becoming man and giving his life on the cross.
Help us to bear witness to you
by following his example of suffering
and make us worthy to share in his resurrection.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless, protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

Besides the candle, the prayer space can be kept up in the home throughout the Week and changed for the particular days. Spend some additional time as a family in prayer together throughout the day, especially for those who are sick or lonely. Consider finding the Gospel reading in the Bible together.

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Hymn: DIADEMATA; Text by George J Elvery (1868); PD.

Edited: Michael Poradek, 2020.

A Celebration of the Word for Holy Thursday Evening

Sample Prayer Service at Home Without Mass

In the evening, gather together to celebrate the Lord's Supper and start of the Triduum, the Sacred Three Days of the Church's Year leading to the celebration of Easter. A simple prayer space can be created with a candle, crucifix, and/or an image of the Last Supper, grapes/bread, etc. For the washing of feet, prepare a large bowl/basin, towels, pitcher of warm water, and chair. If the hymn is unfamiliar, you may find it on the internet (example: YouTube), shorten it, or simply move on to the other prayers. A leader should divide up the roles and adjust the service as necessary to make sure everyone is able to participate.

Hymn

Refrain: Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.

1. Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine. *(refrain)*

2. Each newborn servant of the Crucified
bears on the brow the seal of him who died. *(refrain)*

3. O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
your death has brought us life eternally. *(refrain)*

4. So shall our song of triumph ever be:
praise to the Crucified for victory! *(refrain)*

Introduction

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

All: Amen

Leader: Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and home with peace.
Blessed be God for ever.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Leader: Tonight we begin to celebrate the three sacred, holy days of the Church's Year, when we remember the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. While we cannot gather with our parish family, we join with our Church family around the world and remember the great love God has for us. Tonight we remember Jesus' sharing of the Last Supper with his disciples and his gift of the Eucharist to them and to all of us. We also remember how he washed the disciples feet as a reminder that we too must serve one another as he served.

Reading (1 COR 11:23-26)

Reader I: Let us first listen to the words of the Saint Paul to the Corinthians:

Brothers and sisters:
I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,
that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over,
took bread, and, after he had given thanks,
broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."
In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood."
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

(pause for silent prayer)

Gospel Reading (John 13:1-5)

Reader: Let us listen to the words of the Holy Gospel according to John:

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father.
He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.
The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.
So, during supper,
fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God,
he rose from supper and took off his outer garments.

He took a towel and tied it around his waist.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples' feet
and dry them with the towel around his waist.
He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,
"Master, are you going to wash my feet?"
Jesus answered and said to him,
"What I am doing, you do not understand now,
but you will understand later."
Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."
Jesus answered him,
"Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."
Simon Peter said to him,
"Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."
Jesus said to him,
"Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed,
for he is clean all over;
so you are clean, but not all."
For he knew who would betray him;
for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet
and put his garments back on and reclined at table again,
he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Washing of Feet

Leader: Just as Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, let us remember that we are called to help those around us, especially those who are most in need.

The Leader invites others to have their feet washed and to wash each others' feet. After removing shoes/socks, one by one each may be seated and extend their feet over the bowl. This can be done by simply pouring water over the foot/feet and drying with a towel symbolically.

Intercessions

- Leader: As we celebrate the night that Jesus gifted us with his Body and Blood in the Eucharist before he was betrayed, we gather our prayers as one family. Please respond: *Lord, hear our prayer.*
- Reader: For the Church, especially those who serve in ministry; may all be strengthened to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in these challenging times. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: That through the example of Jesus Christ's service to others, all nations will work to provide for the most vulnerable among us, especially the poor and homeless. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: For all who care for the sick. May the compassion of Christ strengthen them in their efforts to bring healing and hope to others. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: For all our friends, neighbors, and others who are lonely. May they remember they are loved and are part of our family in Christ. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/
- Reader: What else shall we pray for? [*Add intentions and prayers.*] For all these intentions, let us pray to the Lord. R:/

Our Father

- Leader: Remember us Lord when you come into your kingdom and teach us to pray as you taught us:
- All: 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.

Conclusion (Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours)

Leader: Let us pray.
Father,
for your glory and our salvation
you appointed Jesus Christ eternal High Priest.
May the people he gained for you by his blood
come to share in the power of his cross and resurrection
by celebrating his memorial in the eucharist,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless, protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

Besides the candle, the prayer space can be kept up in the home throughout the evening or prepared for Good Friday. Spend some quiet time as a family in prayer together for the remainder of the evening if possible. Consider beginning your Good Friday fasting and abstaining once the prayer time has concluded.

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Hymn: Lift High the Cross, 'Crucifier' Sydney H. Nicholson, 1916. Setting: "Hymns Ancient and Modern", 1922. copyright: public domain.

Edited: Michael Poradek, Diocese of Gary, 2020.

A Celebration of the Word for Good Friday

Sample Prayer Service at Home Without Good Friday Services

At an appropriate time, preferably in the afternoon or evening, gather together to celebrate Good Friday, the passion and death of Jesus Christ. A simple prayer space can be adjusted with a candle, cross or crucifix, and red cloth. If the song is unfamiliar, you may find it on the internet (example: YouTube), shorten it, or simply move on to the other prayers. A leader should divide up the roles and adjust the service as necessary to make sure everyone is able to participate.

For the reading of the Passion, the Leader should assign parts: Narrator (N), Voice (V), Jesus (✠), and all others as Crowd (C). These parts may be doubled if there are less than four people able to read a part. Before the prayer service, the Leader may choose to highlight each part, especially for children, to ease in finding their parts. Encourage as much participation as possible.

Song

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

2. Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?

3. Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?

Introduction

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

All: Amen

Leader: Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and home with peace.
Blessed be God for ever.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Leader: Today we remember the passion of Jesus Christ on the Cross and the great example of love he has given us. While we cannot be with our parish family today, we remember and join with all those suffering around the world as we mark this important day in our Holy Week journey with our Lord.

The Reading of the Passion

[Reminder: Narrator (N), Voice (V), Jesus (✝), and all others as Crowd (C).]

N: From the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said,

C: “Hail, King of the Jews!”

N: And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them,

V: “Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him.”

N: So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them,

V: “Behold, the man!”

N: When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out,

C: “Crucify him, crucify him!”

N: Pilate said to them,

V: “Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.”

N: The Jews answered,

C: “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.”

N: Now when Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus,

V: “Where are you from?”

N: Jesus did not answer him. So Pilate said to him,

V: “Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?”

N: Jesus answered him,

⌘ “You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from Above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

N: Consequently, Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out,

C: “If you release him, you are not a Friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.”

N: When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews,

V: “Behold, your king!”

N: They cried out,

C: “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!”

N: Pilate said to them,

V: “Shall I crucify your king?”

N: The chief priests answered,

C: “We have no king but Caesar.”

N: Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle... When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another,

C: “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,”

N: in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says: They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots. This is what the soldiers did. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother,

⌘ “Woman, behold, your son.”

N: Then he said to the disciple,

⌘ “Behold, your mother.”

N: And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said,

⌘ “I thirst.”

N: There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said,

⌘ “It is finished.”

N: And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

(All kneel and pause for a short time in silence before the Cross/Crucifix (if present). Then the Leader invites all to stand.)

N: Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe. For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled: *Not a bone of it will be broken.* And again another passage says: *They will look upon him whom they have pierced.* After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Intercessions

Leader: We join our prayers with our brothers and sisters around the world. Please respond: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader: I. For the Church. *(pause)* That God will guide her in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ and serving all in need. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: II. For the Pope. *(pause)* That God will protect Pope Francis and continue to inspire him in his leadership of the Church around the world. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: III. For all members of the Church. *(pause)* That God will guide all Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and Lay Faithful to share their gifts in service to others. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: IV. For catechumens. *(pause)* That God will strengthen all catechumens, those preparing for baptism, as they enter the Church this Easter Season. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: V. For Christian unity. *(pause)* That God will gather all those who share a believe in his Son, Jesus Christ, to journey with one another in faith and service. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: VI. For the Jewish People. *(pause)* That God will be present to all those who are of the Jewish faith and that they may grow closer to him by recognizing his loving kindness. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: VII. For those who do not believe in Christ. *(pause)* That God will be present to all those who seek the love and mercy which comes from following Jesus Christ. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: VIII. For those who do not believe in God. *(pause)* That God will aid in allowing himself to be known through the witness of service, love, and peace of his Church. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: IX. For those in public office *(pause)* That God will guide those in government offices to serve the needs of all people, especially the poor and most vulnerable. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: X. For all those in need. *(pause)* That God will hear their prayers and answer them in their time of need bringing healing, comfort, mercy, peace, forgiveness, and love. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Our Father

Leader: Remember us Lord when you come into your kingdom and teach us to pray as you taught us:

All: 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.

Conclusion (Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours)

Leader: Let us pray. *(pause)*

Father,
look with love upon your people,
the love which our Lord Jesus Christ showed us
when he delivered himself to evil men
and suffered the agony of the cross,
for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

(If there is no Cross/Crucifix present, the Leader leads the Sign of the Cross and all depart quietly or continue to spend some time in quiet prayer. Or:)

Adoration of the Cross (if a Cross/Crucifix is present)

Leader: *(turns to the Cross/Crucifix present)*
We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you,

All: for by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

Leader: *(Reverences the Cross with a touch, kiss, or other gesture. Then makes a Sign of the Cross in silence. Invite others to do the same.)*

(Depart quietly or continue to spend some time in quiet prayer.)

Besides the candle, the cross/crucifix and red cloth can preferably be left up for prayer time throughout the day until Saturday evening. Encourage those in the household to spend some additional in quiet prayer throughout the remainder of the day/evening and into Saturday morning.

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Song: *'Were You There'* African-American Spiritual, before 1899. Setting: attr. Charles Winfred Douglas, 1940. copyright: public domain.

Edited: Michael Poradek, Diocese of Gary, 2020.

A Celebration of the Word for Holy Saturday Evening

Sample Prayer Service at Home Without Mass

In the evening, gather together to celebrate the start of the Easter Season, normally celebrated at the great Easter Vigil. A simple prayer space can be created with white/gold tablecloths, candles, crucifix, and/or plants and flowers. If Holy Water is available, place in a small bowl. If the hymn is unfamiliar, you may find it on the internet (example: YouTube), shorten it, or simply conclude the prayer time. A leader should divide up the roles and adjust the service as necessary to make sure everyone is able to participate.

(Light candles and turn off other lights; use another light for reading if necessary.)

Introduction

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

All: Amen

Leader: Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and home with peace.
Blessed be God for ever.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Leader: Having walked with Jesus by remembering his Passion and Death, tonight we begin the celebration of his Resurrection from the Dead with the Church around the world this Easter. While we cannot be with our parish family tonight, we remember that we are united to them in prayer as we celebrate with Easter joy until we can be with them again. Let us first remember how God has always been with us, from the creation of the world and through all time.

Reading I (GN 1:1, 26-31A)

Reader I: Let us first listen to a reading from the Book of Genesis:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth,
God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.
Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,
the birds of the air, and the cattle,
and over all the wild animals
and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."
God created man in his image;
in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them.
God blessed them, saying:
"Be fertile and multiply;
fill the earth and subdue it.
Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air,
and all the living things that move on the earth."
God also said:
"See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth
and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;
and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air,
and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground,
I give all the green plants for food."
And so it happened.
God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good.

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

(pause for silent prayer)

Reading II (EX 14:15—15:1) [Can be omitted for time]

Reader I: Let us first listen to a reading from the Book of Exodus:

The LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me?
Tell the Israelites to go forward.
And you, lift up your staff and, with hand outstretched over the sea,
split the sea in two,
that the Israelites may pass through it on dry land.
But I will make the Egyptians so obstinate
that they will go in after them.
Then I will receive glory through Pharaoh and all his army,
his chariots and charioteers.
The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD,
when I receive glory through Pharaoh
and his chariots and charioteers."

The angel of God, who had been leading Israel's camp,
now moved and went around behind them.
The column of cloud also, leaving the front,
took up its place behind them,
so that it came between the camp of the Egyptians
and that of Israel.
But the cloud now became dark, and thus the night passed

without the rival camps coming any closer together all night long.
Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,
and the LORD swept the sea
with a strong east wind throughout the night
and so turned it into dry land.
When the water was thus divided,
the Israelites marched into the midst of the sea on dry land,
with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.

The Egyptians followed in pursuit;
all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and charioteers went after them
right into the midst of the sea.
In the night watch just before dawn
the LORD cast through the column of the fiery cloud
upon the Egyptian force a glance that threw it into a panic;
and he so clogged their chariot wheels
that they could hardly drive.
With that the Egyptians sounded the retreat before Israel,
because the LORD was fighting for them against the Egyptians.

Then the LORD told Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea,
that the water may flow back upon the Egyptians,
upon their chariots and their charioteers."
So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,
and at dawn the sea flowed back to its normal depth.
The Egyptians were fleeing head on toward the sea,
when the LORD hurled them into its midst.
As the water flowed back,
it covered the chariots and the charioteers of Pharaoh's whole army
which had followed the Israelites into the sea.
Not a single one of them escaped.
But the Israelites had marched on dry land
through the midst of the sea,
with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.
Thus the LORD saved Israel on that day
from the power of the Egyptians.
When Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore
and beheld the great power that the LORD
had shown against the Egyptians,
they feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:
I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant;
horse and chariot he has cast into the sea.

All: The Word of the Lord
 Thanks be to God

(pause for silent prayer)

Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)

(A cantor sings a familiar version of the Alleluia; Turn on lights in the space.)

Cantor: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

All: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Cantor (reads): Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
 for his mercy endures forever.
 Let the house of Israel say,
 “His mercy endures forever.”

All: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Gospel Reading (MT 28:1-10)

Reader: Let us listen to the words of the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning,
Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.
And behold, there was a great earthquake;
for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven,
approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.
His appearance was like lightning
and his clothing was white as snow.
The guards were shaken with fear of him
and became like dead men.
Then the angel said to the women in reply,
“Do not be afraid!
I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified.
He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said.
Come and see the place where he lay.
Then go quickly and tell his disciples,
‘He has been raised from the dead,
and he is going before you to Galilee;
there you will see him.’
Behold, I have told you.”

Then they went away quickly from the tomb,
fearful yet overjoyed,
and ran to announce this to his disciples.
And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them.
They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage.
Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid.
Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee,
and there they will see me."

All: The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Leader: When we were Baptized, we were joined to the same death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will now renew our baptismal promises. If so, say "I do" to each promise:

Leader: Do you renounce Satan?
All: I do.

Leader: And all his works?
All: I do.

Leader: And all his empty promises?
All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?
All: I do.

Leader: 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?
All: I do.

Leader: 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.

Leader: May the Lord bless and give us strength to live these baptismal promises, now and always.

All: Amen.

(If Holy Water is present: the Leader signs himself/herself with Holy Water with the Sign of the Cross and invites others to do the same.)

Intercessions

Leader: As we celebrate the victory of Christ Jesus over death, let us remember all those who are in need with our prayers. Please respond: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader: For the Church and her leaders, that all may follow in the example of Christ, the Good Shepherd, who laid down his life. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: For the whole world, that peace may always be present with an end to wars and violence. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: For all who are sick. May they too experience the joy of the Easter season and be strengthened by Christ during their illness. Let us pray
to the Lord. R: /

Reader: That all our friends and friends, especially those who cannot be with us for Easter, experience a blessed Easter and be with us again soon. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Reader: For all who have died [*insert names of family and friends who have died, or simply pause*], that they too may experience the joy of the Resurrection and be united with Christ in heaven. Let us pray to the Lord. R: /

Our Father

Leader: Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

All: 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.

Conclusion (Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours)

Leader: Let us pray.
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, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless, protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.
(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

Hymn (Jesus Christ is Risen Today)

Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
who did once upon the cross Alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing Alleluia!
unto Christ our heav'nly King, Alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!
our salvation have procured; Alleluia!
now above the sky he's King, Alleluia!
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above Alleluia!
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!
praise him, all ye heav'nly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

Besides the candle, the prayer space can be kept up in the home for the next day.

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Hymn: Jesus Christ is Risen Today (Surrexit Christus hodie) Meter: 7.7.7.7 with alleluia Source: Verse 1 based on Latin hymn, 14th cent. Copyright: Public Domain

Edited: Michael Poradek, Diocese of Gary; 2020.

A Celebration of the Word for Easter Sunday

Sample Prayer Service at Home Without Mass or before the Easter Meal

Continue to celebrate Easter Sunday with these prayers in the morning and/or before for the First Meal of Easter with the following traditional blessing. A simple prayer space can be created with white/gold tablecloths, candles, crucifix, and/or plants and flowers; or, the prayer could be moved into the table / kitchen before the Easter Meal with at least some of the foods for the meal present, which remind us of this festive season and God's bountiful love. If Holy Water is available, place in a small bowl for use. If the hymn is unfamiliar, you may find it on the internet (example: YouTube), shorten it, or simply move on to the other prayers. A leader should divide up the roles and adjust the service as necessary to make sure everyone is able to participate.

Hymn (Alleluia! Alleluia! Let the Holy Anthem Rise)

1 Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let the holy anthem rise,
And the choirs of heaven chant it
In the temple of the skies;
Let the mountains skip with gladness,
And the joyful valleys ring
With Hosannas in the highest
To our Savior and our King.

2 Alleluia! Alleluia!
Like the sun from out the wave,
Christ has risen up in triumph
From the darkness of the grave,
Glorious splendor of the nations,
And the lamp of endless day;
Christ the very Lord of glory
Who is risen up today.

3. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Blessed Jesus, make us rise
From the life of this corruption
To the life that never dies.
May your glory be our portion
When the days of time are past,
And the dead shall be awakened
By the trumpet's mighty blast.

Introduction

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

All: Amen

Leader: Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and home with peace.
Blessed be God for ever.

All: Blessed be God forever.

Leader: Throughout Lent we prepared for Easter by prayer, fasting, and works of service and charity. When we gather during this feast of Easter, we remember it is the Risen Christ who now fills us with joy, for he has conquered death. Alleluia!

Reading I (JN 20:1-9)

Reader I: Let us listen to the Gospel according to John:

On the first day of the week,
Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning,
while it was still dark,
and saw the stone removed from the tomb.
So she ran and went to Simon Peter
and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them,
“They have taken the Lord from the tomb,
and we don’t know where they put him.”
So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb.
They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter
and arrived at the tomb first;
he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.
When Simon Peter arrived after him,
he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there,
and the cloth that had covered his head,
not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.
Then the other disciple also went in,
the one who had arrived at the tomb first,
and he saw and believed.
For they did not yet understand the Scripture
that he had to rise from the dead.

All: The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

[NOTE: If the baptism promises were not renewed the night before, you may renew them now. Otherwise, skip to the next section/page.]

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Leader: When we were Baptized, we were joined to the same death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will now renew our baptismal promises. If so, say “I do” to each promise:

Leader: Do you renounce Satan?

All: I do.

Leader: And all his works?

All: I do.

Leader: And all his empty promises?

All: I do.

Leader: Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

All: I do.

Leader: 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?

All: I do.

Leader: 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.

Leader: May the Lord bless and give us strength to live these baptismal promises, now and always.

All: Amen.

(If Holy Water is present: the Leader signs himself/herself with Holy Water with the Sign of the Cross and invites others to do the same.)

Intercessions [from the Book of Blessings]

Leader: The Son of God who invites us to the Paschal feast stands ready to help. Let us call upon him in our need. Please respond: *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Reader: That Easter may find us cleansed of sin and ready to live anew our Christian faith. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/

Reader: That the bread we share may be a reminder of the bread of life we share in the eucharist. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/

Reader: That we may be ready to give from our table to those who hunger and thirst. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/

Reader: That all who are sick may be strengthened by the Risen Christ to overcome their illness and those who care for them may be kept safe. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/

Reader: That we may one day enjoy the banquet of the Lord in the heavenly kingdom. Let us pray to the Lord. R:/

Our Father

Leader: Let us pray as Jesus taught us:

All: 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.

[NOTE: If the food for the First Easter Meal is to be blessed, the Leader turns to the Food and prays the following blessing prayer. If there is no food to be blessed, move to the next section.]

Blessing of Food for the Easter Meal (Prayer from the Book of Blessings)

Leader: Let us pray.

God of glory,
the eyes of all turn to you
as we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death.
Bless us and this food of our first Easter meal.
May we who gather at the Lord's table
continue to celebrate the joy of his resurrection
and be admitted finally to his heavenly banquet.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Conclusion

Leader: Let us pray.

God our Father,
by raising Christ your Son
you conquered the power of death
and opened for us the way to eternal life.
Let our celebration today
raise us up and renew our lives
by the Spirit that is within us.
Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless, protect us from all evil,
and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.
(All make the Sign of the Cross together.)

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Hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia, Let the Holy Anthem Rise. Edward Caswall, Meter: 8.7.8.7 D; Copyright: Public Domain.

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