

HOLY WEEK AT HOME



Welcome!

For Christians, Holy Week is the most important week of the year. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, the Church remembers the journey of Jesus from his entry in Jerusalem to his last meal, trial, crucifixion, death, and resurrection. These are the pivotal events for our faith. Much more than Christmas, this week deserves our attention at home. For a second year, current guidelines prevent us from celebrating Holy Week together as a Community. We will, however, be united in prayer and through the gift of technology will be able to partake in the Easter Ceremonies.

This short guide is to assist us in walking the journey of Holy Week 2021 together, even if we must be apart. There is a short scripture passage and suggestions for what you might do each day. We hope that is a help to you throughout the week

Like anything in life, a little preparation for Holy Week goes a long way! Here are some suggestions of how you might get ready for the week ahead

- Set up a small space in your home with a white cloth, candle, Bible & Cross. You might like to put it near a place where you will watch the Ceremonies.
- Look up the times of the Ceremonies in the Parish
- or on TV. If you can, take a few minutes of quiet before each one.

Holy Week for Families...

- All of the ideas in this leaflet are designed so that they can be adapted for families and children. Pick one/two that might work for you and that you can focus on
- If you have younger children in the house, look up the 'God's Story: Easter' on Youtube. There are loads of great videos which explain about each day
- While children may not sit through all of the Ceremonies, have them on in the background. There are plenty of colouring pages at www.brackenstown-parish.com/family. Download them or encourage your child to draw their own picture while the Ceremonies are on



PALM SUNDAY

On Palm Sunday we remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem before the days of his death and rising from the dead. Great crowds had gathered to welcome the famous preacher and miracle worker from Galilee.

In only a few days, many of that same crowd are shouting 'Crucify him', 'Crucify him!' as they ask Pilate to put Jesus to death on a Cross.

The Gospel today says...

'When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives [...] Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path. The crowds who went in front of him and those who followed were all shouting: 'Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest.' (Matthew 21:1-11)

At Home...

Put some greenery on your front door to remember the Palms that people waved at Jesus. You could also put some greenery on your table for mealtimes. If you have a Palm Cross from the Church, put it somewhere in house where you will be able to see it during the week



MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

The Journey of Holy week continues. Today we focus on the village of Bethany on the outskirts of Jerusalem and the house of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. Oil was very expensive at the time of Jesus. People though Mary was wasting it to pour it on Jesus' feet

Scripture tells us...

'Six days before the Passover, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom he had raised from the dead. [...] Mary brought in a pound of very costly ointment, pure nard, and with it anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair. The House was full of the scent of the ointment.' (John 12:1-11)

At home...

What smells do you like? Fill your house today with the scent of something you love....it might be baking, essential oils, a nice cream, a scented candle. Take a deep breath and thank God as you take in the scent



TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

Today we see Jesus at table with his disciples. Jesus is troubled for he knows one of those present is plotting to betray him. It must have been so hard for him to know that someone he loved was going to do something that would hurt him.

Scripture tells us...

'While at supper with his disciples, Jesus was troubled in Spirit and declared, 'I tell you solemnly, one of you will betray me', The disciples looked at one another, wondering who he meant.' (John 13:21-33. 36-38)

At home...

Take time to tell your loved ones that you care for them, those who are in your bubble and those who are farther away

Pray for areas for the world that suffer from war or violence.

For families - try to do an activity together that you like. It can be taking walk, watching a movie, it's up to you! Simply enjoy spending some time together



SPY WEDNESDAY

Today we see Judas plot Jesus' betrayal. He sold his friendship with him for thirty pieces of silver. We might shake our head in disapproval. However, we too, can let our own selfish thoughts and actions disrupt our relationship with God and with each other.

Scripture tells us...

'One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?' They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him.'

At home...

- Think of three good things in your life and thank God for them.
 - Make a random act of kindness for someone in your house or elsewhere.
 - Is there someone you need to make up with or forgive?
- If you can't forgive the person, say a prayer for them

MOVIES & MUSIC

Watching a movie or listening to music are great ways to help to bring us into journey of Holy Week.

There are loads of movies that you could watch.

- 'Risen' (2016) shows the Easter story from the view of a Roman soldier
- Mel Gibson's 'The Passion of the Christ' is a compelling watch (comes with a 'viewer discretion' warning for violence)
- 'Jesus of Nazareth' (1977) is one of the best known...The Story of Holy Week is in Part 4

Music wise, *Handel's Messiah* is a must. If you've never heard it, start with 'He was despised and rejected of men' or 'And by his stripes we are healed'. And of course, listen to the Hallelujah Chorus on Easter Sunday. For younger family members, have a look at the Silent Monks singing it on Youtube!

The Great Triduum of the Church Begins 'Triduum' comes from the Latin word for 'three days'. The Easter Triduum begins with Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its peak moment in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night and concludes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. These three days represent the highpoint of our entire year as Christians. The Easter Triduum is to the year what Sunday is to the week. Each day has its own particular focus which helps us to draw closer to Christ and share in his passage from death to life.

HOLY THURSDAY



At the heart of Holy Thursday is Jesus' commandment that we serve others. Jesus celebrates the Passover, which is a Jewish feast, with his disciples. (We call this the Last Supper or 'the institution of the Eucharist'.) He also washes the feet of his disciples. Jesus asks his disciples to pray in the garden with him all night, and they fall asleep.

Scripture tells us...

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a some bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in memory of me." In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in memory of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

At home...

Have a special meal at some time today, whether alone or with other people in your bubble. Set the table, light a candle, use the 'good' plates! What you have to eat isn't important, it's the meal itself that matters. But if you like, have some bread and grapes – just as Jesus and his friends did at the Last Supper



GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday has puzzled many people over why this day where we remember the crucifixion would be called 'good'. Of lots of things you could think of 'good' wouldn't be right up there on the list. Of course, when we know it in the perspective of Easter Sunday it is very good, for us. But this dark day of death and agony doesn't bear much sense of 'good'.

We often talk about the 'Way of the Cross' and thinking of that agonising journey that Jesus couldn't manage without help. In our own lives, we can think about kindness of people who walk with us and being grateful for the times others have helped us along our own journeys.

Scripture tells us...

Then they took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out of the city to the place of the skull, or, as it was called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him with two others, one on either side with Jesus in the middle... At 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. Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus there.

At home...

- Think about how you make the Sign of the Cross. Do you make it properly or take a 'short cut'. Maybe today is a good day to make the Sign of the Cross with the people in your bubble and say a prayer of thanks to Jesus
- Have some Hot Cross Buns. Or make your own! Hot cross buns with their combination of spicy, sweet and fruity flavours have long been an Easter tradition. The most common recipe has yeast, milk, flour, butter, eggs, sugar, raisins, and a combination of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and allspice. The buns mark the end of Lent and different parts of the hot cross bun also have a certain meaning, as well as the cross representing the crucifixion of Jesus, the spices inside are said to remind Christians "of the spices put on the body of Jesus."
- Today is a day of 'fast and abstinence'. This means that we have one regular meal and two smaller meals with no snacks in between. We also don't have meat or alcohol. For younger members of family, maybe you could give up screen time – especially between 12 noon and 3pm

HOLY SATURDAY MORNING



This day commemorates the time of darkness and waiting when Jesus was in the tomb. But God is always at work behind the scenes and beyond what we can see or imagine. And so we wait in hope of the glorious resurrection. It is also a day for final preparations before Easter.

At home...

Today is like the day before a big party. You get everything ready and are excited but you know there's a little while longer to wait.

- Make a special Easter Candle. Use a plain pillar candle, put some oasis around it and decorate it with flowers.
- Make an Easter Card for someone you love
- Colour some pictures of the word 'Alleluia' and Easter Eggs and decorate the windows of your house.
- Do a mini-springclean. Pick a drawer/cupboard/car boot and clear out the clutter!

EASTER SUNDAY

Scripture tells us...

The angel spoke; and he said to the women, 'There is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would.'
(Matthew 28:5-6)



The celebration of Easter begins with the Easter Vigil on Saturday night.

A liturgy that reaches back to early centuries of Christianity, the Great Vigil of Easter is truly the highlight of the Church year. We celebrate that three days after His Passion and Death, Christ rose from the dead and in doing so, broke the chains of death forever. The liturgy is dramatic. It takes place after night fall. There is darkness and light, fire, water, quiet readings and Eucharist.

The Great Vigil begins in darkness, a single candle is lit -- perhaps from a fire -- and the church begins to fill with light. Readings and singing alternate, telling many of the great salvation stories from the Bible. A gloriously festive "Alleluia!" There is a blessing of water. The first Eucharist of Easter. Then we can exchange special Easter greetings: "Christ is risen!" "He is risen indeed!"

Easter Day is a day of great joy. As we awake this Easter morn we know the joy of those who came to the tomb on that first day of the week, that first Sunday. The Lord is truly risen, Alleluia. Having set out on the journey of the Easter Triduum we arise this morning and welcome the light of life.

Scriptures tell us...

'It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb...Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of Scripture, that he must raise from the dead'. (John 20:1-9)

At home...

- If you watch the Easter Vigil, have your candle ready and safely light it after the Paschal Candle has been lit. After the Vigil, treat yourself to something nice in celebration of this wonderful night
- If skies are clear, get up early on Sunday to watch the sun rise
- Watch Pope Francis give his Urbi et Orbi message (usually at 11am)
- If you can, collect some Easter Holy Water from the Church. Have each family member bless themselves with it
- Have a special Easter dinner. Table decorations could include decorated eggs, a flowered cross, and just-blooming branches from the garden. Put your Easter Candle on the dinner table
- Ring/facetime family and friends to wish them a very Happy Easter
- Eat chocolate eggs!

