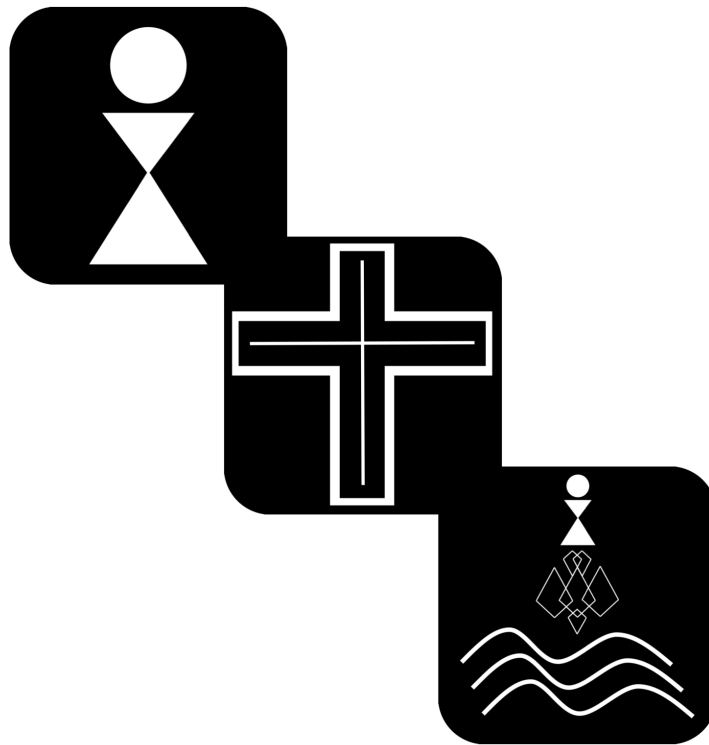


At Home Through the Triduum

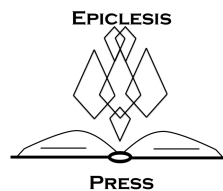
*A Three-Day Home Retreat
For People Physically Separated
from the
Triduum Liturgies*



At Home Through the Triduum

***A Three-Day Home Retreat
For People Physically Separated
from the
Triduum Liturgies***

Ms. Trish O'Connor, OP, MDiv



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Nihil Obstat
Very Reverend
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Imprimatur
Most Reverend
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How to Use *At Home Through the Triduum*

At the time of this writing, the global pandemic of COVID 19 (coronavirus) grips the world, overturning many plans, including my original plans for the launch of Epiclesis Press. This booklet was not intended to be the first publication of my fledgling publishing company, but as I thought of the people who had intended to participate in the annual Easter Triduum services on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, I felt called to do my own part, however small, to help some of them feel connected with the Body of Christ at this difficult time. I also realized that every year, there are people whose desire to be physically present at these rites has been thwarted by circumstances beyond their control. It is for these people with thwarted plans that this booklet has been written.

At Home Through the Triduum is intended, as its subtitle suggests, to be used as the basic structure for a three-day retreat centering on the themes of the Triduum liturgy. It may be used by one person alone, by a family, or by a small group of people who find themselves together while physically separated from the liturgy.

I say “liturgy” rather than “liturgies,” for the services held on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are most properly understood as a single liturgy spread over three days. You will find that this home retreat, like the Triduum liturgy, has an opening and closing prayer only at the beginning and end of the entire Triduum. I encourage you to treat the whole Triduum as one continuous sacred time

period, different from any ordinary three-day span. The activities given for each day may either be done as a single service once a day or may be spread out over a number of hours, as you find practical and helpful, but even the time between activities should ideally be set aside as a special period of prayer and contemplation.

For each of the three days, you will find the following:

- On This Day: A brief description of the significance and rituals of the day. In a group, you may choose either to have one person read this out loud, or to let each person read it on his or her own.
- Scripture: A short excerpt from one of the lectionary readings for that day's service.
- Reflection: A short reflection on the reading, especially in the context of the specific day and of the experience of being separated from the liturgy.
- Prayer: A short verbal prayer. Before you begin, make sure that you have designated which people will read which parts.
- Silence: A time with no words at all. Make sure to take at least a few minutes for silent contemplation, perhaps the most important part of any retreat.
- Journaling: Several sentence-starters to spur your thoughts for a journal writing. If you are using a physical copy of this booklet, you may wish to write in the space provided. If you normally keep a journal, you may prefer to write your responses in it.
- Sharing and Discussion: Even if you are experiencing the retreat by yourself, try to arrange to share some of your thoughts with at least one other person each day, even if by email, telephone, web conference, etc. The process of discussing the day's reflections will

help you to articulate your insights, and you may also benefit from hearing another perspective. Some of your thoughts may be deeply personal. Discuss only as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

If you are making the retreat with a group of people, you will see that some lines are designated to be read by one person or only part of the group, and others by the entire group in unison. Even if you are by yourself, you may find it valuable to read all or some of the parts out loud, but if circumstances require, you may read everything silently.

In addition to this booklet, you may want to enhance your retreat with other resources which happen to be accessible and meaningful to you, such as spiritual music appropriate to each day, the Liturgy of the Hours, the full lectionary readings of each day, or televised or streamed broadcasts of the actual liturgy.

It is my hope and my prayer that all who use this booklet, whether literally in their homes, in hospitals, or elsewhere, may feel “at home” in the embrace of the Church as they reflect upon the Paschal Mystery during these holiest three days of the year.

*Ms. Trish O'Connor, OP
Owner, Epiclesis Press
March 29, 2020*

Holy Thursday

On This Day

Holy Thursday begins the Sacred Triduum by recalling the night before Christ died, when He gave a powerful example of service by washing the disciples' feet, and when He instituted the Eucharist through which His Church continues to receive His Body and Blood under the appearance of bread and wine. The Holy Thursday liturgy can seem to a newcomer like a whirlwind of unusual activity, from the washing of feet to the stripping of the altar, but it culminates in a profound period of Eucharistic adoration. In some places, there is a pious custom of visiting various parishes in one's local area during the period of adoration. This experience can be surprisingly moving, for it serves as a reminder that Christ's Real Presence reaches beyond the boundaries of any single building or congregation. On this night, to be unable to be in the physical presence of one's familiar community and of the Blessed Sacrament can lead to a dark sense of desolation and isolation. But we are none of us alone, even if we are physically in a room by ourselves. Christ reaches beyond the boundaries that attempt to separate us from Him. In prayer, we remain united with the Church community throughout the world, which is His Mystical Body just as truly (though in a different way from) the Eucharist for which we hunger.

Opening Prayer

+Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

Leader: Almighty Father,
Who sent your Son Jesus
into the world for the forgiveness of sins,
as we embark on the Sacred Triduum,
grant that all your Church
may embrace the Paschal Mystery
of our salvation:
the Passion, death, and resurrection
of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.

ALL: Amen.

Scripture

Lector: A reading from the first letter of Saint Paul to the
Corinthians: 11:26

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.

Reflection

“As often ...” Words that speak of time, something that we might think would be of minor concern to the eternal God. But by sharing in our humanity, the Son of God accepted the structure that time imposes on human life, and on this night, we remember how He

faced the rapidly approaching end of His own earthly life, and of His earthly ministry.

When He confronted this boundary, His focus was on His disciples, on the Church He was founding. On that first Holy Thursday, He gave them, and therefore us, two great gifts: the call to humble service exemplified in the washing of each other's feet, and His very sacramental presence in the Eucharist. By these gifts, He made the Church a vehicle of His ongoing presence in the world. Rightly do we call the Church His Mystical Body, for it is through the Church that people far removed from Jesus' historical presence on earth touch Him and are touched by Him.

If you are unable to participate in the rites of that Church on this night, then you know what it is to face hard times in the structure of human life. You know what it is to approach a boundary that seems at first to separate you from other disciples of Jesus. But if your focus, like His, is on the Church He founded, then you are not truly separate from His Body. On this night, focus your being on the Mystical Body of Christ in a world that urgently needs Him.

Prayer: Spiritual Communion

**Group 1: Lord Jesus Christ,
you came into this world
to save us from sin
and to fill us with your love.**

**Group 2: On the night before you gave
your earthly life for us,**

Group 1: you gave yourself to your disciples
in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Group 2: This night, though I am unable
to be physically present
with the assembly of my fellow disciples,
to receive your Body and Blood
and gaze upon you
in the Blessed Sacrament,

Group 1: my heart is joined to your Mystical Body,
the Church throughout the world.

Group 2: I pray that I may receive
your Divine Presence
into the depths of my soul
that I may be filled with love
for God and for my neighbor
as you, in your infinite goodness,
have commanded.

Group 1: I pray also for a day when my own body
shall again be in the presence
of your sacred Body:

Group 2: in your people the Church,
in the faithful proclamation of your Word,
and especially in the Holy Eucharist.

Group 1: I ask that, in your mercy,
I may one day be welcomed
into your eternal presence
to live with you, the Father,
and the Holy Spirit
in heaven forever.

ALL: Amen.

Silence

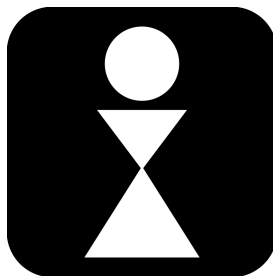
Take some time to reflect in silence.

Journaling

- I am not participating in the Mass of the Lord's Supper tonight because
- The hardest thing I am facing at this time is
- One way I could still be of service to someone else at this difficult time would be
- At this moment, when I hear the phrase "Mystical Body of Christ," I think

Sharing and Discussion

Discuss as much or little as you feel comfortable sharing.



Good Friday

On This Day

Good Friday is the only day in the entire year when the Eucharistic Liturgy, the Mass, is not celebrated anywhere on earth. On this day, we recall the suffering and death of Jesus. But it is not a day of despair. Rather, on this day we cherish a strong hope for our salvation, even as we realize at what great a price it was bought for us. The liturgy of this day stands in three parts:

- *The Liturgy of the Word, including the reading of Christ's Passion and death on the cross*
- *The Veneration/Adoration of the Cross, in which we show our reverence for a physical reminder of the instrument on which Jesus was put to death*
- *Holy Communion, in which we are joined sacramentally to our Lord by receiving communion previously consecrated at Mass*

Scripture

Lector: A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:
53:4-5

It was our infirmities that he bore,
our sufferings that he endured,
while we thought of him as stricken,
as one smitten by God and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our offenses,
crushed for our sins;
upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,
by his stripes, we were healed.

The word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Reflection

The cross: An instrument of torment, of punishment, of humiliation unto death. Why would we adorn our homes and our church buildings with it? Why would we trace its stark shape on our own bodies as we begin and end prayers? Shouldn't we want to forget it, to hide it from view, to banish it from our awareness?

As Christians, we can never forget the cross, because the cross is what makes us what we are called to be in Christ. On the cross, His arms are open in an embrace that welcomes us even when we feel far from embraces.

What is Jesus welcoming us into from His cross? Not always into anything we want to embrace! He welcomes us into death to sin, to selfishness, to self-importance. Yet the pain of those many deaths is itself nailed to the cross with Him. He bears our infirmities; He makes us whole. If we want to experience the joy of resurrection, there can be no shortcut around the cross.

Prayer: Adoration of Christ on the Cross

Leader: Behold, the wood of the cross,
on which hung the Salvation of the world.

ALL: Come, let us worship.

Leader: Behold, the burden of our sufferings,
which our Savior has taken
upon His own shoulders.

ALL: **Come, let us worship.**

Leader: Behold, the weight of our sins,
for which our sinless Savior died.

ALL: **Come, let us worship.**

Leader: Behold, the instrument of death,
which was embraced by our Savior,
the Living God.

ALL: **Come, let us worship.**

Leader: Behold, the means of our salvation,
through which we may attain eternal life.

ALL: **Come, let us worship.**

Leader: Behold, the wood of the cross,
on which hung the Salvation of the world.

ALL: **Come, let us worship.**

Silence

Take some time to reflect in silence before the cross.

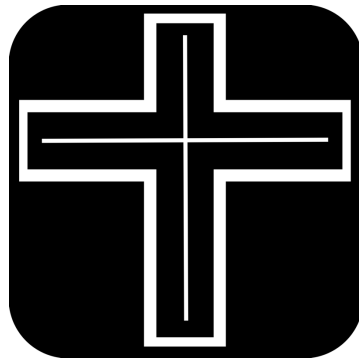
Journaling

- I am not at the Good Friday liturgy this year because

- The single greatest “infirmity” I need to see nailed to the cross is

Sharing and Discussion

Discuss as much or little as you feel comfortable sharing.



Holy Saturday

On This Day

In liturgical time, as in the Jewish calendar, a new “day” begins as the sun sets on the old one. Easter thus begins not on Sunday morning, but on Saturday night. On Holy Saturday, the Church keeps watch (or “vigil”) as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Though this event happened just once in history for all time, with each turning of the year, we enter again into the Paschal Mystery in hope of eternal salvation. It is fitting, then, that on this night, the Church customarily initiates new members through the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. Even in difficult times when no new Christians can be initiated, the Easter Vigil draws its richly joyful flavor from the significance of these sacraments, and each of us can deepen our appreciation of Easter’s triumph by recalling the great gift we have been offered through our own reception of them. Just as the newly baptized receive white garments and lighted candles, the church is decorated in white and illuminated by candles lit from the newly-blessed Easter fire. As their baptism is completed by Confirmation, we recall the mission we, as members of the Church, have received from the Holy Spirit. As they receive the Lord in Holy Communion for the first time, they are joined to all who receive and are members of the Body of Christ. Even when we cannot be present at the Easter Vigil, we are joined to that Body and strengthened in our Christian mission by the sacraments we have received.

Scripture

Lector: A reading from the Book of Genesis: 1:1-3

In the beginning, when God created the heavens
and the earth,
the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness
covered the abyss,
while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

Then God said,
“Let there be light,” and there was light.

The word of the Lord.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Reflection

“And there was Light.” The same circumstances that physically separate us from the rites of the Church at this holy time may make our world seem dark, but there is no darkness too deep for the Light of Christ to penetrate, not the darkness of suffering, and not even the deeper darkness of sin.

When life seems like a “form-less” wasteland, the Breath of God, the Holy Spirit, sweeps over the waters of Baptism to “trans-form” everything. On Holy Saturday, we remember that, like the neophytes standing alongside the font, wet-haired in white robes holding newly lit candles, we stand before God utterly transformed.

May the light we received in Baptism and Confirmation guide us to everlasting union with Jesus and His people, even when we cannot experience that union through Holy Communion.

Prayer: Recollection of Initiation

Leader: We were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death

ALL: that we might live in newness of life.

Leader: I reject Satan,

**ALL: and all his works,
and all his empty show.**

Leader: I believe in God, the Father Almighty,

ALL: Creator of heaven and earth.

Leader: I believe in Jesus Christ,
His only Son, our Lord,

**ALL: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried,
rose again from the dead,
and is seated at the right hand
of the Father.**

Leader: I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**ALL: the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,**

Leader: the resurrection of the body

ALL: and life everlasting.

Leader: Thus says the Lord:
I will give you a new heart,
ALL: and place a new spirit within you.

Leader: Come Holy Spirit.
Fill the hearts of your faithful,
ALL: and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Leader: Send forth your Spirit
ALL: and they shall be created

Leader: and you shall renew
ALL: the face of the earth.

Leader: Why spend your money for what is not bread,
ALL: your wages for what fails to satisfy?
Lord Jesus,
 though I am unable to receive your
 sacred Body and Blood
 in the Holy Eucharist,
I fix my thoughts on the Paschal Mystery
 of your death and resurrection
 for the salvation of sinners.
I open my heart to your presence
that you may fill me
 with faith in your resurrection,
 with hope for eternal life,
 and with the love of God,
 the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
I ask you, this night and always,
 to unite my soul to you
 and to your Mystical Body.
Amen.

Silence

Take some time to reflect in silence.

Journaling

- I am not at this year's Easter Vigil because
- When I look back on or look forward to my baptism, I think about
- When I look back on or look forward to my Confirmation, I think about
- When I look back on and look forward to receiving the Holy Eucharist, I think about
- I can live more fully in Christ's resurrection by

Sharing and Discussion

Discuss as much or little as you feel comfortable sharing.

Closing Prayer

Leader: God of light and life,
who has delivered your people from sin,
by your Church's celebration
of this Paschal feast,
illumine for us the path of salvation
and guide us to life everlasting.

ALL: Amen.

+**Leader:** Grant this prayer, we ask you,
in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

