



# Triduum *Reflections*

by Reverend Robert J. Hater | **Holy Week 2020**

In our uncertain future, as the world deals with COVID 19, we enter the holiest Christian season. We call these three days of Holy Week the “Triduum”—Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter (the Holy Saturday Vigil and Easter Sunday). This Holy Week is different. We sit in our homes and watch events, including religious liturgies online and on television. We do so without receiving the Eucharist. Perhaps, it is the first time that we realize what we miss without it.

In our darkness, we have the opportunity to gain deeper insight into what it was like for Jesus, Mary, Peter, and the other disciples as the Crucifixion and Resurrection occurred. We, also, can better appreciate our own sorrows and joys. To help us along the way, we offer the following Triduum Reflections to enhance our faith in these awesome mysteries.

The following reflections follow the format of the Triduum. For each day, a key theme is identified, followed by suggestions for biblical reflection taken from the liturgy of each day, and then suggested activities. By using this format, we pray you come to a deeper appreciation of the mysteries of our faith.





# Triduum *Reflections*

Holy Thursday | **April 9, 2020**

Holy Thursday is the day when we remember that Jesus instituted the Eucharist and washed his disciples' feet at the Last Supper. We begin the Triduum with anticipation and hope.

**Theme** Service

The liturgy of the Mass of the Lord's Supper focuses on service. Christ served us by instituting the Eucharist and by washing of the feet of his disciples.

**Biblical Reflection** John 13:1-20

After Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he said, "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do" (John 13:15).

1. Discuss the model that Jesus gives us to follow.
2. What do you think Jesus means when he says that we "ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14)?
3. In these difficult times, in what ways can we figuratively wash a family member's feet and reach out to relatives and friends who are alone? What other ways might we serve one another, as Jesus served?

**Family Activities**

1. **Thanksgiving Ritual.** In appreciation for the Eucharist, instituted on Holy Thursday, place a loaf of bread on a table and say a prayer of thanks to God for the Eucharist. Invite each person to take a piece and hold it. As you do so, encourage those present to share why each person is thankful. Eat the bread and close with the Our Father. You may wish to do this through video with friends and family who live elsewhere.
2. **Discuss the Eucharist.** Ask those gathered how Jesus continues to serve us by giving us the Eucharist. Why did Jesus choose bread for the Eucharist?
3. **Express appreciation.** Contact a friend or family member who performed an act of service for you to express your thanks.
4. **Commitment to family service.** Identify a friend, neighbor, or family member who could use your help and reach out to him or her in service in a meaningful way.





# Triduum *Reflections*

Good Friday | **April 10, 2020**

Jesus suffered and died on the Cross on Good Friday. This day is a time for self-reflection, looking into our lives, acknowledging that we are sinners, seeking forgiveness, and asking God for the grace to begin a new life with Christ.

## **Theme** Love and Forgiveness

Central to Good Friday is the realization that Jesus suffered and died on the Cross to make up for our sins. Today, we reflect on God's infinite love and the price he paid for our sins. It is a day to fall on our knees, kiss or reverence the Cross, and ask for forgiveness, as we pledge to forgive others. As we do so, we reflect on the themes of Good Friday: Love and forgiveness.

## **Biblical Reflection** John 13:1-20

Identify the times that Jesus spoke during his Passion. Reflect on his words, including, "I told you that I AM" (18:8), "My kingdom does not belong to this world" (18:36), "Woman, behold, your son," (19:26), "I thirst" (19:28), and "It is finished" (19:30).

1. What other passages made you think? What about them caught your attention?
2. What did Jesus mean when he said, "I thirst" (John 19:28)? In addition to physical thirst, what else might Jesus thirst for?
3. During these challenging times, in what ways can we gain strength from the realization that Jesus gave his life for us?
4. When Jesus told Mary to "behold your son", he was referring to John (John 19:26). In what way does John symbolize all of us who need Mary's prayers during these difficult days?

## **Family Activities**

1. **Love and forgiveness.** On Good Friday, remember the importance of our Christian beliefs and how they can help us appreciate God's immense love and forgiveness, especially in difficult times. In what ways did Jesus show his love by forgiving others? Is there someone in your life whom you need to forgive? Make an effort to reconcile with that person today.





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Good Friday | **April 10, 2020**

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2. **Devotions at home.** Prayer in the home is important, especially in the present circumstances. Regardless of your family configuration, select a devotion that you can do in your home today. This may be praying the Way of the Cross, taking time to venerate the Cross by holding or kissing a crucifix, praying the Rosary with the sorrowful mysteries, or reading and reflecting on Scripture together.
3. **Rekindling love.** Take some silent time to remember the price Jesus paid for our sins and thank him for his great love. Imagine Jesus carrying his Cross to Calvary, his being nailed to the Cross, the agony he endured, and his Death. Examine your conscience, ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to acknowledge the sins for which you are especially sorry, and resolve to do your best to avoid them in the future. After reflecting on God's great love for you, make an act of contrition.





# Triduum *Reflections*

Holy Saturday | **April 11, 2020**

This day of preparation readies us for the Resurrection of Jesus. Try to create in your home and in your heart an atmosphere of quiet anticipation.

## **Theme** Light and Hope

Holy Week teaches us that life includes more than suffering and death. In dark times, the eternal flicker of hope in God and one another shines forth. Hope is our theme this Holy Saturday, as we await Jesus' Resurrection and the end of this pandemic. It symbolizes the joy promised to those who faithfully follow Jesus.

## **Biblical Reflection** Genesis 1:1–2:3

This first reading from the Easter Vigil speaks of light. It says, “Then God said: Let there be light . . . God saw that the light was good” (Genesis 1:3-4). Then, a little later in the Vigil's liturgy, the Responsorial Psalm says, “Lord, send out your Spirit and renew the face of the earth” (Psalm 104).

1. In what ways can we bring light and hope into our homes?
2. In what ways do we allow the light of our faith to guide our decisions?  
Our interactions with others?
3. In what ways is Easter a renewal? What does it mean to have new life in Jesus?

## **Family Activities**

1. **Sharing the story.** In preparing for Easter, gather those in your home to retell the Easter story. Select one of the four Gospels and invite someone to read the passage on the Resurrection. If children are present, invite them to act out a play about the Resurrection account or aspects of it. Draw or decorate Easter eggs symbolizing the beginning of new life and Jesus' Resurrection. Be creative.
2. **Light conquers dark.** Gather household members to reflect in silence on how light conquers darkness. After a few moments of silence, discuss dark times in their lives or times that felt disappointing or hopeless. Share what helped overcome those times. Give examples of how good actions and patience bring light into the lives of others, no matter what the situation might be.
3. **A combined effort.** Invite those present to decide how together they will celebrate Easter and Jesus' Resurrection. Discuss how blessed they are to be able to celebrate the day Jesus rose from the dead with one another. Find online or on television a celebration of the Easter Mass of Resurrection that the family will watch. If possible, work as a team to arrange events for Easter day and meal.





# Triduum *Reflections*

Easter Sunday | **April 12, 2020**

The glorious day of Easter celebrates God's immense love for us manifested in raising Jesus from the dead. Regardless of our condition during this Easter or into the future, we know that God will never abandon us.

## **Theme** New Life

Jesus' Resurrection conquered sin, suffering, and death. As early Christians said, "Life has changed, because He is Risen!" As Christians, "He has Risen!" is our joyful cry. It is especially appropriate this year to celebrate this Easter theme, as we anticipate new life.

## **Biblical Reflection** John 20:1-18

Imagine you are Mary of Magdala, Peter, and the other disciple when they found the empty tomb.

1. What do you think the Gospel means when it says, "For they did not yet understand the scripture that he had to rise from the dead" (John 20:9)?
2. Why does Easter promise us hope and new life?
3. Why is this Easter promise of hope important today?

## **Family Activities**

1. **Gospel reading.** Before tuning into the Mass on the internet or television, discuss the Easter Gospel (John 20: 1-9). Put yourselves at the scene of the empty tomb with Mary of Magdala, Peter, and the other disciple. Reflect on what the other disciples may have been feeling. What do you think Mary, Jesus' mother, may have felt before and after she heard that Jesus was raised from the dead? How is the Resurrection a sign of new life? Discuss what the disciples may have been feeling before and after the news of the empty tomb.
2. **An Easter walk.** If appropriate, find a safe spot to go outside. Sit or take a walk to reflect on nature. Name the new life emerging: the flowers, tree buds, and birds appearing after a long winter. Start a conversation about newness budding forth in all of nature and let this new life be a symbol that in due time we also will witness new life coming into our lives. When finished, call or text a friend, neighbor, or relative living alone and wish him or her a Happy Easter!
3. **Emphasize good times.** Have older family members stress that good times usually follow difficult ones. Easter tells us this in a dramatic way. As we celebrate new life, discuss at dinner or at another appropriate time the good things that can come out of this pandemic, like family and world unity, better communication with each other, forgiveness, or a return to faith for some who have left the Church.





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Easter Sunday | **April 12, 2020**

4. **Celebrate life.** As a family, play uplifting music and sing together happy songs from the lives of children and adults. Make a list of things your family can do to celebrate the joy of Easter for the entire season!

## **Conclusion**

We can look at the present crisis in the world through the eyes of despair or through the lens of the Triduum. **Holy Thursday** promises us strength in trials, symbolized by Jesus' presence in the Eucharist, and challenges us to serve one another. **Good Friday** points to the reality that we are sinners and to the inevitable difficulties that each person will suffer in life. Seen through the eyes of God's divine love and forgiveness, this motivates us to keep going, looking beyond the present to experience new life. **Holy Saturday** invites us to put our lives in better focus, as we move ahead with hope and anticipation. **Easter Sunday** assures us that just as Jesus was raised from the dead by his loving Father and thereby brings us new life, so will he do the same for those who are faithful. "He has risen; He still lives among us!"

# Alleluia!

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