

Holy Week Offers Opportunity to Link Home with Faith Life

Kathy Kuczka

Every Holy Week is unique, but this year's sacred celebrations, as those experienced last year, are likely to be different from those we have known before. While some of the faithful may experience the Sacred Paschal Triduum in church, others will participate in these liturgies from their home, surrounded by immediate family. This experience echoes that of our ancestors who, before churches were built, gathered in homes to hear God's Word and to celebrate the sacred meal. In a sense, the coronavirus pandemic has moved us to return to a time that was fittingly called the *domestic church*. At home, families can highlight the symbols and rituals that normally hold pride of place during the Triduum.

PRAYING THE TRIDUUM AT HOME

Holy Thursday

On this night, the Church commemorates the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the Lord's command to be charitable. At home, families can imitate the intimacy that Jesus shared with his disciples at supper by breaking bread together and by recalling their most memorable meal. Families may wash each other's feet as a sign of love, as Jesus did, and decide anew how to serve one another as well as the larger community.

Good Friday

To contemplate the passion of Jesus, families can pray the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. Many stations can be found online and various stations focus on particular themes, such as Pope Francis' stations of mercy. Since this devotion traces the steps of Jesus on the road to his crucifixion and is usually prayed by moving from place to place, families are encouraged to make the stations a spiritual pilgrimage by walking as they pray.

Good Friday

The high points in this liturgy consist of the proclamation of the passion according to John, the extended intercessions, and the veneration of the cross. Families at home can read the Gospel according to John 18:1—19:42 and discuss how the passion according to John differs from the other evangelists. They can talk about the love that is revealed by the death of Jesus. They can pray for their needs and for the needs of others by speaking the prayers aloud or by writing them down on a piece of paper and placing them in a bowl or basket near



On Holy Saturday, families might bring out baptismal candles and photos to celebrate their baptism.

a lighted candle. They can take a cross or crucifix and venerate it with a touch or a kiss.

Holy Saturday

This night is the high point of the liturgical year. It typically begins after nightfall with a blazing fire. In the home, families can light candles as a reminder that Jesus is the light of the world. This is a night for remembering the presence of God throughout salvation history, which is why Scripture passages such as the story of creation, the sacrifice of Isaac, and the exodus are proclaimed. In reflecting on these texts, families can discuss or even create a timeline portraying the experiences when they most felt God's presence.

This is a night to celebrate baptism, and there are many ways families can honor the sacrament. Gather mementos from each person's baptism: a baptismal certificate, baptismal clothing, the baptismal candle, pictures, or religious articles. Tell the story of your children's baptisms. Connect with godparents via a virtual platform. Renew the promises made at baptism. Discuss what it means to be part of a faith community. Share what it means to be a child of God. Give thanks for the gift of water and for the gift of baptism. Bless one another with water!

This Holy Week may present an opportunity to create new rituals and new traditions. Our faith, after all, isn't confined to the church. It begins at home and is meant to be lived in the world.

Text by Kathy Kuczka, author of *Connecting the Liturgy with Our Lives: Print and Digital Resources for Faith Formation* (LTP, 2019).
Art by Boris Stoilov. © 2021 Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 3949 South Racine, Avenue, Chicago, IL 60609; 800-933-1800;
www.LTP.org. *Pastoral Liturgy*® magazine, March/April 2021, www.PastoralLiturgy.org.

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