



Holy Family Parish

Palm Sunday (Year A)
Sunday 5th April 2020

FIRST READING : Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults. So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be shamed.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM : Psalm 21(22):8-9,17-20,23-24

℟. *My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?*

All who see me deride me, they curl their lips, they toss their heads, He trusted in the Lord, let him save him, let him release him if this is his friend. ℟

Many dogs have surrounded me, a band of the wicked beset me, They tear holes in my hands and my feet, I can count everyone of my bones. ℟

They divide my clothing among them, They cast lots for my robe O Lord do not leave me alone, my strength make haste to help me!. ℟

I will tell of your name to my brethren, and praise you where they are assembled, 'You who fear the Lord give him praise, All sons of Jacob give him glory, revere him, Israel's sons. ℟

SECOND READING : Philippians 2:6-11

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave and became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL : Matthew 26:14-27:66

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Key: N. Narrator. ✕ Jesus. O. Other single speaker. C. Crowd, or more than one speaker.

N. One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,

O. What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?

N. They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him.

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say,

C. Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the passover?

N. He replied:

✕ Go to so-and-so in the city and say to him, 'The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples.'

N. The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover.

When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. And while they were eating he said:

✕ I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me.

N. They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn,

C. Not I, Lord, surely?

N. He answered,

✕ Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!

N. Judas, who was to betray him, asked in his turn,

O. Not I, Rabbi, surely?

N. Jesus answered:

✕ They are your own words.

N. Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said:

✕ Take it and eat; this is my body.

N. Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, saying:

✘ Drink, all of you, from this, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.

N. After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them,

✘ You will all lose faith in me this night, for the scripture says: *I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered*, but after my resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee.

N. At this, Peter said,

O. Though all lose faith in you, I will never lose faith.

N. Jesus answered him,

✘ I tell you solemnly, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times.

N. Peter said to him,

O. Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.

N. And all the disciples said the same. Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples,

✘ Stay here while I go over there to pray.

N. He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress. Then he said to them,

✘ My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me.

N. And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed:

✘ My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.

N. He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter:

✘ So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

N. Again, a second time, he went away and prayed:

✘ My Father, if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!

N. And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them,

✘ You can sleep on now and take your rest. Now the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is already close at hand.

N. He was still speaking when Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them. He had said,

O. 'The one I kiss, he is the man. Take him in charge.'

N. So he went straight up to Jesus and said,

O. Greetings, Rabbi.

N. and kissed him. Jesus said to him,

✘ My friend, do what you are here for.

N. Then they came forward, seized Jesus and took him in charge. At that, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus then said,

✘ Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence? But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?

N. It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds,

✘ Am I a brigand, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid hands on me.

N. Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away.

The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter followed him at a distance, and when he reached the high priest's palace, he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might pass the death sentence. But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two stepped forward and made a statement,

O. This man said: 'I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up.'

N. The high priest then stood up and said to him,

O. Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?

N. But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him,

O. I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.

N. Jesus answered:

✘ The words are your own. Moreover, I tell you that from this time onward you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

N. At this, the high priest tore his clothes and said,

O. He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?

N. They answered,

C. He deserves to die.

N. Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him,

C. Play the prophet, Christ! Who hit you then?

N. Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him and said,
O. You too were with Jesus the Galilean.
N. But he denied it in front of them all, saying:
O. I do not know what you are talking about.
N. When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there,
O. This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.
N. And again, with an oath, he denied it:
O. I do not know the man.
N. A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter,
C. You are one of them for sure! Why, your accent gives you away.
Then he started calling down curses on himself and swearing:
O. I do not know the man.
N. At that moment the cock crew, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus. They had him bound, and led him away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor. When he found that Jesus had been condemned, Judas his betrayer was filled with remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders, saying:
O. I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood.
N. They replied:
C. What is that to us? That is your concern.
N. And flinging down the silver pieces in the sanctuary he made off and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said,
C. It is against the Law to put this into the treasury: it is blood-money.
N. So they discussed the matter and bought the potter's field with it as a graveyard for foreigners, and this is why the field is called the Field of Blood today. The words of the prophet Jeremiah were then fulfilled: *And they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by children of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me.* Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him this question:
O. Are you the king of the Jews?
N. Jesus replied,
✘ It is you who say it.
N. But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him,
O. Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?
N. But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges. At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them,
O. Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?
N. For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message,
O. Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.
N. The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them,
O. Which of the two do you want me to release for you?
N. they said,
C. Barabbas.
N. Pilate said to them:
O. But in that case, what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?
N. They all said:
C. Let him be crucified!
N. Pilate asked:
O. Why? What harm has he done?
N. But they shouted all the louder,
C. Let him be crucified!
N. Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said,
O. I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.
N. And the people, to a man, shouted back,
C. His blood be on us and on our children!
N. Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified. The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying,
C. Hail, king of the Jews!

N. And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him. On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him. Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said,

C. So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!

N. The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, saying:

C. He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He puts his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, 'I am the son of God.'

N. Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

✕ Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?

N. That is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said,

C. The man is calling on Elijah.

N. and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink.

The rest of them said:

C. Wait! See if Elijah will come to save him.

N. But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said,

C. In truth this was a son of God.

N. And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate thereupon ordered it to be handed over. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre. Next day, that is, when Preparation Day was over, the chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate and said to him,

C. Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I shall rise again.' Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.

N. Pilate said to them:

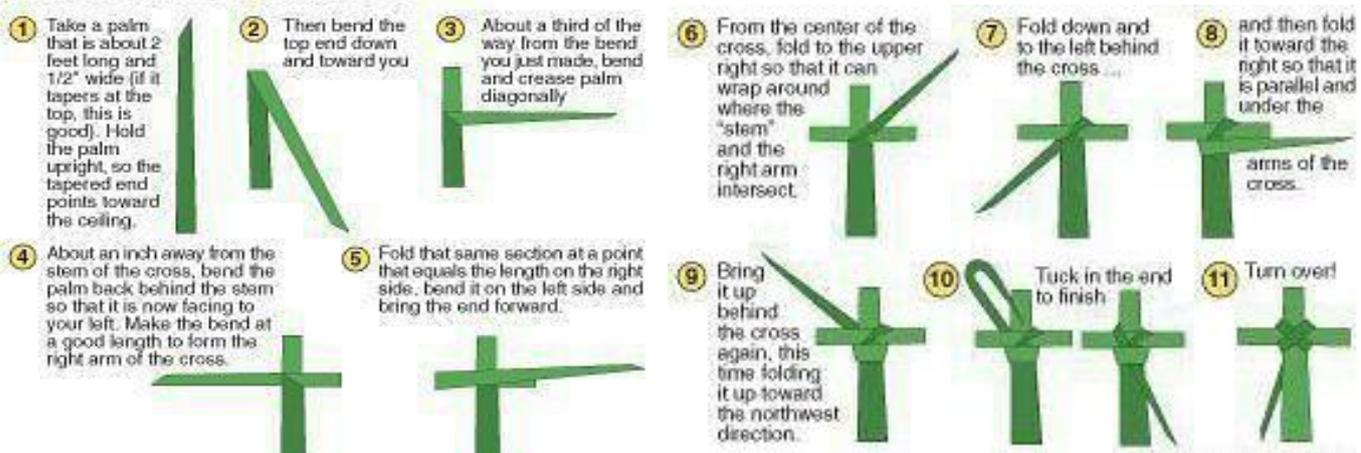
O. You may have your guard. Go and make all as secure as you know how.

N. So they went and made the sepulchre secure, putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.

Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

How to make a palm cross



If you are unable to read the instructions here is a link to a instructional video:
<https://youtu.be/CrEorJngmrM>

Keeping the Triduum Alive at Home

April 1, 2020 - DARIA SOCKEY

The loss of Sunday mass in our parishes has left feeling bereft. We're scrambling to find live-streamed mass and other ways to keep the Sabbath holy. Now that it's several weeks into self-isolation, perhaps you've settled on a Sunday routine. But we will soon be dealing with a greater loss—that of the Church's "high holy days" known as the Easter Triduum. Doubtless, all the liturgies will be live-streamed, but that hardly seems enough during these days of anxiety, especially for our children. What can we do to make the holiest of all



weeks in the Church calendar memorable—solemn yet joyous, and even—dare I say it—kind of fun? Because doing so will be a distraction from worry and boredom. Who knows? It might even be the start of new annual traditions that will continue long after COVID-19 is just a bad memory.

What follows are the home liturgical customs that our family has observed for years, along with some adaptations for our time of quarantine.

Early Holy Week

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were traditionally days of spring cleaning for European housewives. The idea was to contribute in a very concrete way to our Savior's work of "making all things new", or perhaps letting our sparkling clean homes mirror the state of the newly baptized souls. Undoubtedly during these weeks of quarantine, you've put some kind of chores in place for your children. But spring-cleaning involves not everyday chores, but rather those things that are only done a few times a year. Make a list of those jobs that don't get done very often in your house, and from these, choose the ones that your children can easily learn to do. A few ideas: washing windows; removing cobwebs from ceilings with a dust mop or an old t-shirt pulled over a broom; removing items from each kitchen cabinet, cleaning the insides and purging unused items before putting everything else back; cleaning out a closet; raking debris out of garden beds; sweeping out the garage; wiping finger marks off switch plates and door frames; dusting baseboards; getting dead bugs out of ceiling light fixtures. Hopefully, the novelty of these tasks will make them less burdensome.

Continue to do the daily Mass readings, especially the gospel readings which include the dramatic events leading up to Easter. Before doing the reading on Wednesday of Holy Week, tell the kids that this day is sometimes called "Spy Wednesday," and after listening to the reading, to tell you why this should be so. (Answer: because the reading says that Judas began watching for an opportunity to betray Jesus to the temple authorities. This implies the sly, sneaky behavior we associate with spies.) This might be a good day for an indoor or outdoor game of hide and seek or some other game that involves sneaking and spying. Another game that involves a short kid-friendly lesson on greed for money and the response of Peter vs. Judas upon feeling guilt for sin can be found [here at Catholic All Year](#).

Holy Thursday

Important note: This one involves a special dinner, with recipes that will be new to you, so some advance planning and shopping are required.

The upside is that the recipes are not difficult and that the kids are going to love this. Several of mine tell me that this is their favorite dinner of the year, surpassing that of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter Sunday. My married kids still recreate it for their *own* families, and my single sons do their best to come home for Holy Thursday.

The idea here is to recall elements of the Passover meal Jesus shared with the twelve at the last supper. It is *not* a lame Christian attempt to hold a seder, a ritualized meal that belongs to the Jewish faith. Here is the menu along with an explanation of each item.

Roast leg of lamb – This recalls the lamb consumed by the Hebrews in Egypt, the blood of which marked their doorposts to save them from the angel of death who "Passed over" their homes during the 10th plague. It recalls the yearly sacrifice of a lamb that Jews offered each year in commemoration of that event, and points to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God whose death would free us from slavery to sin.

Unleavened bread – ([see this recipe](#)) The Hebrews ate unleavened bread before they left Egypt because there was no time to make yeast bread with its long rising times. It also reminds us of the manna in the wilderness that kept the Hebrews nourished while on earth. It was unleavened bread that Jesus took and consecrated at the Last Supper.

Bitter herbs – This is a simple salad made with either romaine or green leaf lettuce, green onion or scallions, and your choice of a few other chopped, fresh herbs, such as cilantro, rosemary, parsley, basil, dill—whatever is available and seems pleasing to you. (At our house we favored parsley and dill for many years, but somewhere along the line switched out dill in favor of cilantro.) The dressing is plain oil and vinegar, going slightly heavy on the vinegar. This is a traditional part of the Passover meal, bringing to mind the "bitterness" of slavery endured by the Hebrews, and for us — the "bitterness" of sin.

Charoset – This is a dish of finely chopped apples and nuts, seasoned with cinnamon, a little honey, and sometimes sweet wine. There are many variations which you can find on an internet search. We add some apricots to our charoset, and the nuts we use are either almonds or walnuts. This dish represents the mortar the Hebrew slaves used to make bricks in Egypt during their years of slavery, but at the same time, the “sweetness” of God’s deliverance.

Wine or grape juice – Our family tradition includes buying Manischewitz kosher wine, which is *very* sweet. (But feel free to make your own wine or juice selections.) In our home, the kids got a very small glass of Manischewitz (more, depending on their ages) and they loved it. (Refills are grape juice.) The Hebrew letters on the label and statement that it’s “kosher for Passover” are one more little thing to remind us of our spiritual connection to the Jewish people, whom Pope St. John Paul II called “our elder brothers in the faith of Abraham.”

If you think your children are not familiar with the story of the Exodus, then go over it ahead of time, earlier in the week, and/or watch a movie such as *The Ten Commandments*. As you actually serve this meal, remind them of the story and the significance of each item. You may wish to read aloud Exodus 12:1-14 at the start of the meal before you say grace. In addition, remind them that the Passover meal was what Jesus and His apostles were eating the night before He died. Then ask what new thing Jesus did that night which turned this meal into the very first mass.

Since many people we will not be able to attend Holy Thursday mass this year due to the pandemic, find a live-streamed Mass of the Lord’s Supper. Make a spiritual communion.

At the end of mass, the altar will be stripped, cloths removed. The Blessed Sacrament will be moved from the tabernacle to a side altar. Explain the symbolism: Jesus went forth from the last supper and out to the garden of Gethsemane. Note that the side altar or repository is usually decorated with many flowers to remind us of that garden where Jesus suffered his agony and received strength and courage from His Father through an angel. Reciting the sorrowful mysteries of the Rosary, or at least doing the first decade — the Agony in the Garden — would be appropriate for night prayers.

Sometime in the evening — if she’s not too tired — Mom or one of the family’s kitchen helpers can make the dough for hot cross buns. [Here’s a recipe](#). After step 2 (first rising) just punch the dough down, put in a covered container, and refrigerate.

Good Friday

Mom (or the baker or kitchen helper in your family) gets up early to get the hot cross bun dough out of the fridge, let it rise again, and bake. (If all this sounds like too much trouble, you might be able to find these at your supermarket OR just make your favorite muffin recipe and mark with frosting crosses.) In our family, one hot cross bun plus tea or coffee make each of the “two small meals” of our fasting day on Good Friday.

Today’s activity should be subdued. If you watch any TV at all, let it be a film about the life of Jesus. Encourage quiet play or reading as much as possible.

In a central location in your home, create a Good Friday shrine. On top of a table or bookcase, place a cloth of lace, satin, or other quality fabric. White, purple, or black would be appropriate but use whatever you have that looks appropriate. Lay your largest crucifix on this table, or an icon or other artwork depicting the crucifixion. If you don’t own anything like this, you may be able to find something online and place a tablet or laptop displaying this picture as the focal point of your shrine. Light a candle or two there.

Next, decorate with flowers or plants. If you live in a warm climate in the country or suburbs the children can probably find blooming wildflowers or pick flowers in your garden. If you live in a northern area, purchase cut flowers from the supermarket or bedding plants from a nursery. (If these are not available due to quarantine/shutdowns, do your best with whatever houseplants or artificial flowers you may already have at home.

This little shrine is meant to recall the altar of repose at your local church. It should be a place where family members might pause as they pass to briefly meditate on the passion of Jesus or to sit nearby to pray or read the bible. (Have one nearby open to one of the Passion narratives in the gospels.)

The Great Silence – Observe this from noon until 3 pm. These are the hours that Jesus hung upon the cross. In honor of that, we try to maintain silence. This is not easy with anyone under age five, so don’t go crazy trying to enforce it. But older children can enter into the spirit of silence, especially when you make it a challenge.

Fill in the time with biblical movies, reading, silently doing chores, going for a walk, etc. Silence may be broken for prayer: assuming that live-streamed Good Friday liturgies will be available, any vocalizing done to make the responses is certainly permitted! Make a spiritual communion.

At 3 o’clock, the hour that Jesus died, blow out the candle at your little shrine. Now, or later on Good Friday is a good time to [begin the Divine Mercy novena](#).

Good Friday, of course, is a fast and abstinence day. If your family has been taking it seriously, you'll be pretty hungry by early evening, so plan for an early dinner. In our family, this was very simple, such as pea or lentil soup and bread, but there was plenty of it. (No dessert.)

The crucifix from our Good Friday shrine is put away, but in the evening, we gather some stones from the garden, looking out for those that are flat on at least one side. Back on our shrine table, we construct what we imagine looks like Jesus' tomb, with one stone blocking the front opening. We place the flowers behind it, maybe adding some cut branches to resemble trees.

Holy Saturday

Remind the kids what we are thinking about today: Jesus' body is lying in the holy Sepulcher, but His soul and divinity are active. He "descended into hell" as the apostles' creed tells us. This means he went to the abode of the dead — where all the people who had died in friendship with God were waiting to be released — waiting for centuries until they could be redeemed by Jesus and enter into heaven. Help your children imagine Adam and Eve, Noah, Moses, Elijah, John the Baptist, St. Joseph, and countless others who welcomed Jesus on this day. (Learn more in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 631-637.)

Because the work of redemption is now accomplished, the mood of this day is not so sad as it was on Good Friday. Today is the day of last-minute preparations for Easter Sunday.

Although for many, it doesn't look like we'll be going to church this Easter, it still might be a good idea to pick out a nice Easter outfit to wear while watching the live-stream Mass. This doesn't have to be suits and ties and fancy dresses — but consider taking whatever you normally wear at home to the next level: school clothing or business casual rather than sweats and tee shirts.

Do any additional house cleaning — not to make a fetish of having a spotless home, but enough to make the family aware that tomorrow is not just another Sunday.

Go over your Easter menu, whether your custom is a fancy brunch or an Easter dinner in the evening. Do whatever baking or advance meal prep you need to do.

Dye Easter eggs! Let the kids customize eggs with stickers or hand drawn or painted designs. It's up to you whether to hold Easter egg hunts today or tomorrow (or both). Traditionally in our family, Lenten penances came to an end at noon on Holy Saturday. So, whatever you gave up, get it back!

Our family Easter celebration begins in with Saturday night dinner. After all, it's Easter Eve, the vigil of the greatest day in the Church year. Starting tonight, and continuing each day for the octave of Easter, we preface grace before meals with this responsory:

Parent: The Lord is risen, Alleluia!

Family: He is truly risen, Alleluia!

Parent: This is the day the Lord has made, Alleluia!

Family: Let us rejoice and be glad, Alleluia!

(Have this responsory printed on individual place cards, or write them on a large poster that everyone can see. After a few meals they will know it by heart.)

Later in the evening, either watch a televised Easter vigil mass, or do the readings from the Mass, or pray the glorious mysteries of the Rosary. Continue with the Divine Mercy novena.

Easter Sunday

If you built the little stone tomb described above, remove the stone that blocks the opening. If you have a small statue of Jesus, place it there. If not, light a small candle, a holy card depicting the Resurrection, or make a small sign at the tomb entrance stating: "He is Risen!"

Most families have traditions involving baskets and bunnies and festive meals, so do whatever you've always done. If you didn't watch a Vigil mass, watch a live streamed Easter day mass. Spend time calling or Skyping grandparents and other distant relatives. Pray the glorious mysteries of the rosary.

Above all, do whatever you can to make this a day of rejoicing. Yes, this year is strange and different. That does not change the fact that Jesus died for us and conquered sin and death, rising to new life and inviting us to join Him in life unending. That is always a cause for joy.