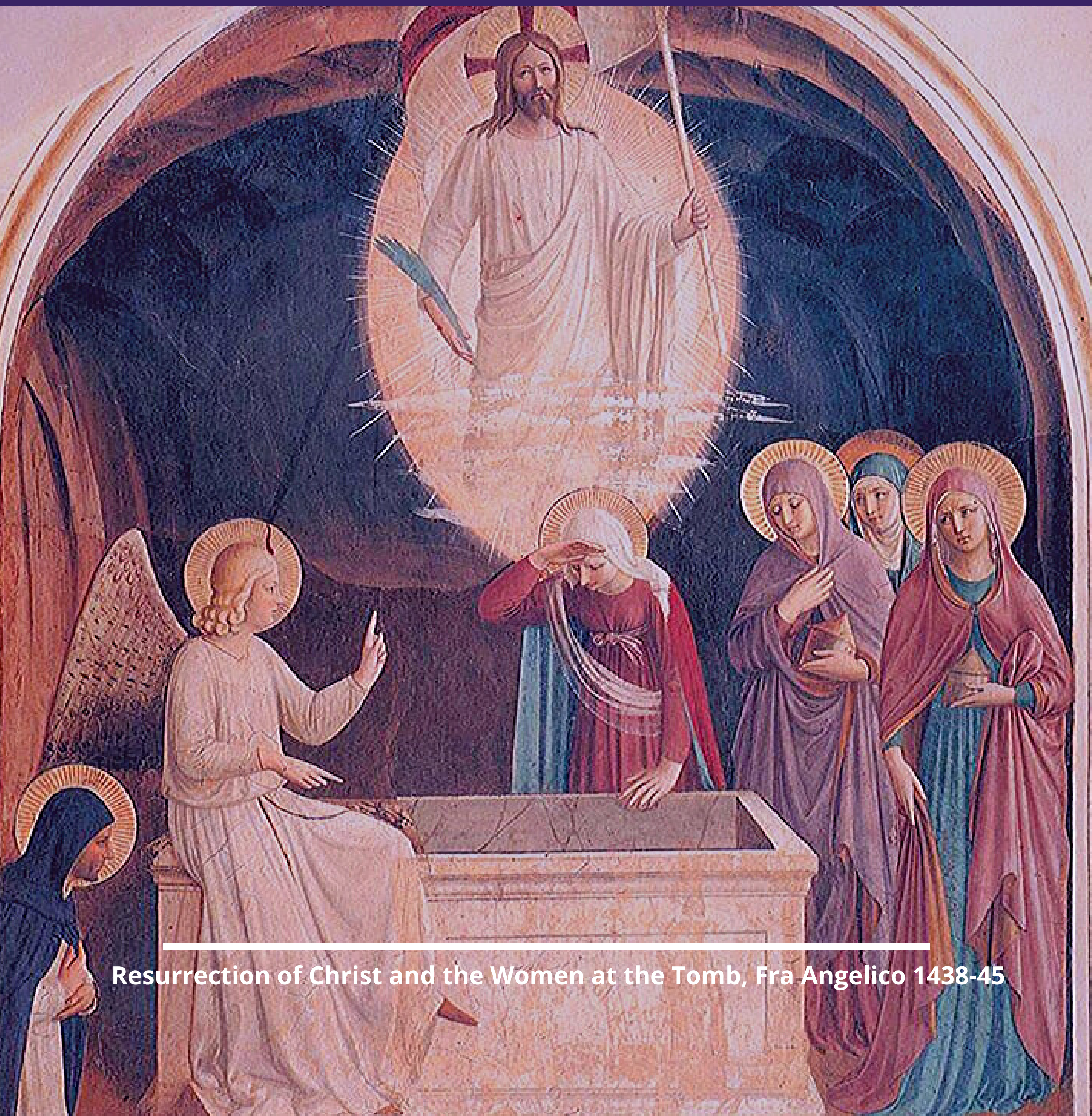


CELEBRATING HOLY WEEK & EASTER 2020

DAILY PRAYERS AND REFLECTIONS FOR HOLY
WEEK & EASTER



Resurrection of Christ and the Women at the Tomb, Fra Angelico 1438-45

Introduction

Dr Anthony Cleary
Director, Mission & Identity, Sydney Catholic Schools

As we approach the holiest of times in the Christian calendar, we are reminded of connecting our own personal suffering with the suffering of Jesus. Jesus did not come to take away suffering, but to bring meaning to it through his life, death and resurrection.

This resource uses sacred art and daily reflections to stimulate personal reflection as we journey through Holy Week, toward the Easter Triduum.

May this week be a time when we deepen our own relationship with Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Suggestions for Preparing to Participate in Holy Week & Easter Liturgies at Home

Sr Moira DeBono RSM

Preparing for Mass

- Have a discussion with your family/household members or consider for yourself how and where you will participate in the liturgies remotely. St Mary's Cathedral and several other churches in the Archdiocese will live stream Masses and prayer services in Holy Week that can be watched live as it happens or streamed from Youtube, Facebook etc at a later time.
- You may like to set up a prayer table next to where you will stream liturgies. Cover a small table with a white or purple tablecloth, light candles, lay out a bible and crucifix etc. For Palm Sunday, you may like to lay out or put in a vase locally sourced palm branches.
- Meditate on the daily readings before Mass or pray the Rosary or Divine Mercy chaplet (see links on page 29) with others – even via Zoom – to help prepare us to enter into these liturgies from home.
- Consider the theme of suffering that is front and centre in all the Holy Week liturgies. Let us remember the humility of Jesus, who submitted himself to the Cross, that we too may learn his lesson of patient suffering especially at this time.

'Attending' Mass

Attend Mass in the same way you would a normal Mass:

- Dress appropriately.
- Don't have food and drink in the immediate vicinity. You may also like to observe the one hour fast before 'receiving' communion (spiritual communion).
- Talking should be kept to a minimum once Mass begins.
- Make sure your seating is respectful to allow you to participate as much as possible rather than as a spectator in an audience.
- The readings for each Mass are hyperlinked in the calendar on page 4 and the Mass prayers and responses can be accessed on page 29.
- If it isn't already a habit, be particularly attentive to the prayers of the Mass – the ones we join in each time e.g. the Gloria and the Creed and also the Proper prayers, those prayers that are specifically for a day of the liturgical year.

After Mass

- The Mass ends with 'Go in peace'; while we cannot go very far, let us keep in mind those that might be isolated at home and what we can do to support them and connect with them at this time.



Guide to *Visio Divina*

***Visio Divina* – Divine/Sacred Seeing**

Visio Divina is the practice of attentively and receptively gazing upon an image so that the experience leads us to meditation and prayer. While contemplatively looking at the image, we trust that God will illumine our minds and hearts.¹ *Visio Divina* is accessible to the whole family, especially if one person leads the commentary (see below). If possible, you can print everyone their own copy of the image.

***Visio Divina* - How To Pray:**

Prepare: close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind

***Lectio* (read):** Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image. Close your eyes a minute.




***Meditatio* (meditate):** Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

***Oratio* (pray):** Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

***Contemplatio* (contemplation):** Open your eyes and gaze at the image. What is God speaking to you today through this image?

¹ Binz, Stephen, J. *Transformed by God's Word*. Ave Maria Press, Indiana, USA, 2016

April

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5 PALM (PASSION) SUNDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection	6 MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK Live stream Mass Mass readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection	7 TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK Live stream Mass Mass readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection	8 WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK Live stream Mass Mass readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection	9 HOLY THURSDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection	10 GOOD FRIDAY Live stream Service Readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection	11 HOLY SATURDAY (No Mass) Visio Divina Daily Reflection
						 Live stream Easter Vigil Mass readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection 
12 EASTER SUNDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings Visio Divina Daily Reflection	13 EASTER MONDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings	14 EASTER TUESDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings	15 EASTER WEDNESDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings	16 EASTER THURSDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings	17 EASTER FRIDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings	18 EASTER SATURDAY Live stream Mass Mass readings
						

Holy Week | Palm (Passion) Sunday | 5 April 2020

On this day the Church recalls the entrance of Christ the Lord into Jerusalem to accomplish his Paschal Mystery, that is, his Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Prayer for the Morning – *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina - How To Pray:

Prepare: close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind

Lectio (read): Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image.

Close your eyes a minute.

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Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye.

Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image.

What is God speaking to you today through this image?



Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, Pietro Lorenzetti, 1320

Preparation for Mass- Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Special Note: In this time of pandemic, the Holy See has approved more simplified rites to take place for the Holy Week liturgies, celebrated without the presence of the faithful in the churches. Today, this may mean in many places, the blessing of palms and the reading of the Gospel of the Lord's entry into Jerusalem will not take place. Instead, the Mass will begin with what is called the "Simple Entrance," where the entry into Jerusalem is commemorated only by the recitation of the Entrance Antiphon, cf. Jn 12:1, 12-13; Ps 23:9-10.

On Palm Sunday we recall the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem to accomplish his Paschal Mystery, that is, the purpose for which he came among us, to suffer, die and rise again. *"In the palm procession our heart feels a joy mixed with sadness at the sight of the Master's seemingly ephemeral (short-lived) triumph, prelude of suffering and death"* Archbishop Luis Martinez. Today's memorial of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem usually takes place by way of a Procession, or Solemn Entrance. The priest begins with an address inviting the faithful to participate actively and consciously in the celebration of this day and blesses the palm branches and sprinkles them with holy water. While we may not be able to physically partake in this form of ceremony at this time, we can place ourselves spiritually present with the Lord as we unite in prayer. 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

Mass-LiveStream

10:30am, St Mary's Cathedral

Readings for Mass

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Psalm 21: 8-9, 17-20, 23-24

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Philippians 2:6-11

Matthew 27:11-54

Spiritual Communion

In times of being unable to receive Eucharist, we come before God in prayer to express the desire in our hearts to be closely united to him.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the 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 here, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



For Reflection - The Via Crucis Begins

Already in this mysterious moment of time, at the beginning of the *Via Crucis* (Way of the Cross), Christ has given himself to all those whom he will indwell through all the centuries to come. Already he has taken them to himself, made them one with himself. All manner of men and women and children – the rich and the poor, the famous and the infamous, saints and sinners – all who will be redeemed by his Passion are in Christ, and his heavenly Father sees them all as Christ, his Son in whom he is well pleased... Jesus comes... to receive his cross. He comes to it gladly! This is a strange thing, for the cross is a symbol of shame, and it is to be his deathbed. Already he sees the very shape of his death in the widespread arms. From this moment he will be inseparable from it, until he dies on it. He will labour and struggle under the weight of it until the end comes. Yet Christ welcomes the cross. He embraces it, he takes it into his arms, as a man takes that which he loves into his arms. He lays his beautiful hands on it tenderly, those strong hands of a carpenter that are so familiar with the touch of wood...

It is a tremendous gesture showing all peoples his love for them openly, because this cross which he is receiving is *their* cross, not his; he is making it his own for love of them, taking their crosses and lifting the dead weight of them from the backs of humankind. That is why Christ receives his cross with joy and lays it to his heart. "Bear one another's burdens," he told us. Now he takes the burden of the whole world upon himself.

Caryll Houselander

Caryll Houselander (+1954) was an English mystic, poet, and an esteemed spiritual teacher.

Monday of Holy Week - 6 April 2020

Prayer for the Morning – *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina - How to Pray:

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Close your eyes a minute.

Meditatio (meditate): Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye.

Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image.

What is God speaking to you today through this image?



Christ in the House of Simon the Pharisee, Peter Paul Rubens, 1618-1620

Preparation for Mass

Judas thought Mary's anointing was wasteful, preventing the costly nard from benefitting the poor. In fact, it served that very purpose: "The house was full of the scent of the ointment." Mary's extravagant love and devotion directed the attention of everyone to Jesus. Did not this enrich them all? For the worst sort of poverty is to be unaware or unmoved by the Saviour's presence. Mary anointed his feet – she consecrated her life to his mission to "bring true justice to the nations" and to be a "light of the nations." Are we willing to "waste" our lives for the love of Jesus? To be embarrassingly attentive to him? Do we believe that he is worth it? "She has done what was in her power to do: she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial." Mk 14:8 Mary understood, as Judas did not, that no money could ever repay the love that carried Jesus toward the cross. She offered instead the intensely personal homage of her loving faith: anointing him for death, she proclaimed him the Christ, meaning "the Anointed One." She remains his faithful witness as her memory is kept today.

[Mass-LiveStream](#)

Mass Readings

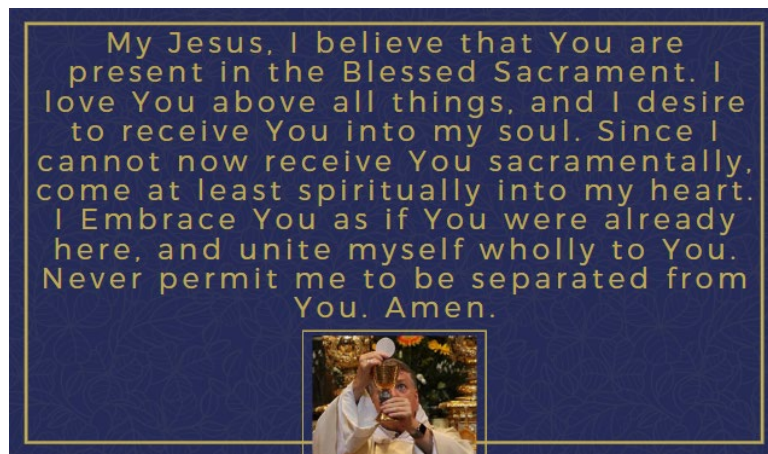
Isaiah 42:1-7

Psalm: 26

R. The Lord is my light and my salvation.

John 12:1-11

Spiritual Communion



For Reflection - The Anointing

Christ accepted the precious ointment poured over his feet for his burial, the gift of sympathy which could not save him from his Passion, yet brought him comfort which was almost festive in the beauty of its expression. Christ in his humanness wanted joy. He chose to suffer completely and to the end, but he also wanted absolute joy; he wanted to receive it and he wanted to give it. Nothing that mattered to a human being was trivial or unimportant in his mind; he was concerned about the possible embarrassment of the host at the wedding feast, and he changes water into wine to prevent it. That first miracle was not done to cure affliction, it was done to increase joy. The occasion was already joyful, a wedding feast, but Christ brought more joy. That too was a perfect expression of his human character. It is a great part of our Christ-life to increase joy in the world, just as it is. First of all in our own lives, for joy must be a reality something as deep and still and pure as water hidden in a well, under the ground. We cannot increase joy unless we "put on" Christ's personality and our own joy is actually his.

Caryll Houselander

Caryll Houselander (+1954) was an English mystic, poet, and an esteemed spiritual teacher.

Tuesday of Holy Week | 7 April 2020

Prayer for the Morning – *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina - How To

Pray:

Prepare: close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind

Lectio (read): Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image.

Close your eyes a minute.

Meditatio (meditate):

Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it.

Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray):

Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio

(contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image. What is God speaking to you today through this image?



Peter's Denial, Carl-Bloch 1834-1890

Preparation for Mass

Peter's self-reliant confidence will be undone when he hears the cock crow. And though Peter will in fact deny Jesus. Jesus will not deny Peter. Contrition and humility will forge Peter into the saint he is meant to become. Our own peace of soul is based on the way Christ loves us: not because of what we do, but because of who he is. Just as we do not earn Christ's love by proving our own goodness, neither do our failures lessen his love for us. We keep our eyes on the Saviour at every moment and in every circumstance of our life, especially in our temptations, fears, and

weakness: “My cause was with the Lord, my reward with my God.” And when we have sinned, we cry out to him, “pay heed to me, and save me.”

Mass ~ Live Stream

Mass Readings

Isaiah 49:1-6

Psalm 70:1-6,15,17

R. I will sing of your salvation.

John 13:21-33,36-38

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the 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 here, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



For Reflection

In today's Gospel Jesus foretells the denial of Peter, which is fulfilled in the account of the Passion. Peter later denies Jesus three times before the cock crows and, remembering Jesus' prediction, breaks down and weeps.

After the Resurrection, Peter and the other disciples returned to Galilee to work as fishermen again, and there spotted Jesus on the far shore. As Jesus draws Peter back into his circle of intimacy, we witness a beautiful act of spiritual direction. Three times the Lord asks Peter whether he loves him, and three times Peter affirms it: “Lord, you know that I love you.”

St. Augustine was the first to comment that the threefold statement of love was meant to counteract the threefold denial. Peter emerges as the archetype of the forgiven and commissioned church, for after each of his reaffirmations, Peter hears the command to tend the sheep. Once we are brought back into friendship with Jesus, we are called to love those whom he loves.

Very Reverend Robert Barron, 2018

Wednesday of Holy Week | 8 April 2020



Last Supper, Valentin de Boulogne, 1625-1626

Prayer for the Morning - *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina - How To Pray:

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Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye.

Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image.

What is God speaking to you today through this image?

Preparation for Mass

When Jesus prophesies his own betrayal, it is only because he still loves Judas. It's as if Jesus is saying, "I already know what you are planning to do; I know your problems, your evil intentions, your secret sins. Yet, I am still here with you. Since I already know, why continue in this way? It is not too late." And when the others heard the prediction, instead of becoming defensive and proud, they might have said, "Don't let it be me! Lord, by your mercy sustain me! Give me your grace, Jesus, I love you!" Judas' final betrayal was to refuse God's mercy, to collapse in on himself in despair. If we ask Jesus every day for his mercy and for the grace to persevere, we have nothing to fear. Judas and Peter both betrayed the One whose bread they had taken. The difference between them was that Peter loved and repented; Judas despaired. The Lord, Risen, would have repaid them both with his forgiving love. Judas could not even imagine the possibility.

Mass ~ Live Stream

Mass Readings

Isaiah 50:4-9

Psalm 68: 8-10,21-22,31,33-34

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.

Matthew 26:14-25

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the 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 here, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



For Reflection

Wednesday of Holy Week is traditionally known as *Spy Wednesday*. The reason for this strange name is found in today's Gospel where Judas Iscariot makes a pact with the chief priests to hand Jesus over to them for payment of 30 silver pieces – essentially becoming their spy, and then going on to commit a great act of treason. Although Judas' betrayal of Jesus was terrible, he wasn't the only apostle guilty of serious sin that night. Recall that Peter denied even knowing Jesus not long after telling our Lord that no such thing would ever happen. And it didn't just happen once, but three times. Reflecting on Judas and Peter is an important thing to do during Holy Week for a couple of reasons. First, we are reminded that even though Jesus called a select Twelve to be his apostles, this call, alone, did not guarantee their salvation. There must be a willingness on the part of the one who is called to follow Jesus, and this following is not a onetime thing, but a lifetime thing. Second, Jesus will never compromise our free will, as it is the greatest gift we have been given. Without it, we could not love, yet because we need our free will to love, if we misuse it, we sin, which is what both Judas and Peter did. St John Vianney once said, "Our sins are but a grain of sand in an ocean of God's mercy." Peter believed that to be true. As bad as his denial of Jesus was, it was no match for God's mercy, which Peter ran to, and which turned him into a saint. Judas, however, thought that his sin was too great, too heavy for even God to forgive, and sadly he chose to stay turned in on himself – rejecting the mercy of

God. At the end of the day, the difference between Peter and Judas is that Peter believed in God's mercy and Judas did not. What do you believe?

Lord Jesus, I believe; help my unbelief! Amen (Mk 9:24)

Fr Damian Ference

Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, Grace Lenten Program 2020, p.71

Holy Thursday | 9 April 2020

Thursday of Holy Week is the day when we remember the Last Supper. It is a special day for praying for priests. “And as they were eating, he took the bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them and said: ‘Take; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many...’” (Mk 14: 22-23)

Chrism Mass (to be held at a later date)

At this Mass the priests of each diocese come together at the Cathedral for the Chrism Mass. Chrism means “anointing.” At this Mass, the Oil of Chrism, the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens which are used in Baptism, Confirmation, anointing of the sick and for the catechumens during the coming year are blessed. The Chrism Mass is open to everyone and is usually very crowded as people come to pray for their priests and to support them. The Chrism Mass is usually held on the morning of Holy Thursday, however, due to the current circumstances it will be held at a later date. Perhaps, if possible, a small note (or text!) of appreciation to your priest today would be greatly appreciated!

Prayer for the Morning *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina -

How To Pray:

Prepare: close

your eyes,
breathe, clear
your mind

Lectio (read):

Open your eyes
and scan the
image. Note what
draws your
interest but
continue to scan
the whole
painting.
Close your eyes a
minute.

Meditatio

(meditate): Open
your eyes and let
your eyes be lead.
Focus on just this
part of the image
and name it.

Close your eyes,
seeing that part of
the image in your
mind.

Oratio (pray):

Open your eyes and
look again at that part of the image that caught your eye.

Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image. What is God speaking to you today through this painting?



Jesus Washing Peter's Feet, Ford Maddox Brown, 1852-6

THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

The ceremonies of the final days of Holy Week are known as the Easter Triduum because they take place over three days, with the events of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter. In the Easter Triduum, the Church solemnly celebrates the greatest mysteries of our redemption, keeping by means of special celebrations the memorial of her Lord, crucified, buried, and risen.

THURSDAY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

At the Evening Mass

Note: The simplified rites approved by the Holy See for the Holy Week liturgies during this time of pandemic, celebrated without the presence of the faithful in the churches, means that in many places the Washing of the Feet is to be omitted and there is no "Transfer of the Blessed Sacrament" to the altar of repose. Instead, the Blessed Sacrament may simply be placed in the tabernacle.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the evening, at a convenient time, with the full participation of the whole local community and with all priests and ministers exercising their office. This is also the evening Mass in which we have the Washing of the Feet. While, due to our current circumstances we are unable to be physically together, let us participate to the degree we are able through prayer and live streaming of Mass.

Preparation for Mass

This evening's Gospel "contains a phrase that is the very core of what Jesus did for us: having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end....Jesus loves us to the point of giving his life for us....And everyone of us can say: He gave his life for me" (Pope Francis). It is not a coincidence that this assurance of the Lord's love is joined to the institution of both the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Holy Orders: Jesus continues to stoop, to wash us, to serve us, to sanctify us – to love us – through the priesthood and the Eucharist.

[Mass – Live Stream](#)

6:30pm, St Mary's Cathedral

Mass Readings

Exodus 12:1-8,11-14

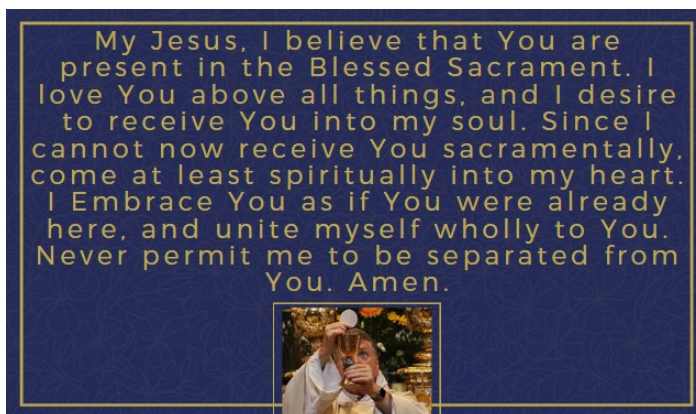
Psalm 115:12-13,15-18

R. Our blessing-cup is a communion with the blood of Christ

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 13:1-15

Spiritual Communion



Transfer of the Most Blessed Sacrament & Adoration Vigil for Holy Thursday Night

As we have noted, there is no “Transfer of the Blessed Sacrament” to the altar of repose tonight. Yet it may still be possible for many to spend some time in prayer of thanksgiving for the wonderful gift Christ has given to us, his Real Presence in the Eucharist. The usual way this night is commemorated is by way of an Adoration Vigil, where many may stay with the Lord in Adoration following the evening Mass. While we cannot partake of this in our churches at this time, we might like to keep vigil with Jesus this night by way of prayer and contemplation considering why he chose to spend Holy Thursday evening in a garden. In memory of the night Our Lord spent in Gethsemane, the altar of repose is often decorated to look like a garden. There is a lovely custom of visiting these “gardens” in seven different churches on Holy Thursday evening. In places where this is possible, it is a beautiful way to pray and walk with Our Lord. Perhaps that might be something some of us could look forward to doing in Holy Week next year.

For Reflection

During the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples, *As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you*. These words are astonishing. As? The love between the Father and the Son infinite, perfect and eternal. Jesus loves us so? With a love that great? This seems too good to be true. The garden of Eden, with its overflowing abundance, was meant to be an image of the seemingly impossible beauty and fruitfulness of the love God has for us. God’s plans for us are always ordered toward our happiness and always complete. And so, in Eden, in the midst of his original plan for humanity, nothing was wanting, everything was perfect.

Everything, that is, except the choice of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve lost Eden not because of a lack on God’s part, but because of a lack on their own part. God provided everything, took care of everything, but the one thing he asked for in return – trust – Adam and Eve did not give. They failed to trust in the greatness of the Father’s love and this failure led them to disobedience. When Jesus went to a garden to begin his Passion, he went as the new Adam. In Gethsemane, he gave the Father the loving obedience that Adam and Eve should have given in Eden but did not. Unlike the first Adam, Jesus responded perfectly to the Father’s love. He left nothing wanting. He did not falter. He understood that obedience would involve great suffering, but his love for the Father knew no bounds. It is this boundless love that Jesus came to Gethsemane to offer the Father, and it is the same love he offers us.

Sr Maria Frassati Jakupcak O.P.

Good Friday | 10 April 2020

On the afternoon of this day, about 3 o'clock, we have the Celebration of the Lord's Passion. This is the Church's principal liturgy on Good Friday. The Mass is not celebrated at all on this day. Instead, the liturgy consists of silent prayer and readings from scripture including the lengthy account of the Passion of the Gospel according to John. Solemn Intercessions for the needs of the Church and the whole world will be prayed, including a special additional intercession for the afflicted in this time of pandemic. Following the Liturgy of the Word, there is Adoration of the Cross, and the reception of Holy Communion from hosts consecrated at the Mass of the Lord's Supper the previous evening. As we cannot ourselves partake physically in our churches at this time, we can make a Spiritual Communion and grow in our desire to once more receive our Lord in Holy Communion.



Carrying of the Cross, Tiziano Vecellio 1485-1490

Prayer for the Morning - *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina - How To Pray:

Prepare: close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind

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Close your eyes a minute.

Meditatio (meditate): Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

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Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image. What is God speaking to you today through this image?

Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross are an important devotion during Lent and are also customarily prayed in parishes on the morning of Good Friday. This is an ancient way of following Christ on the way to Calvary. Long ago, pilgrims to the Holy Land would walk the route that Christ himself took as he carried his Cross to the hill where he was crucified. The pilgrims took this tradition home with them and the Church established the fourteen 'stations,' visual images to be contemplated by people who could not travel to the Holy Land themselves. Today, Catholic churches have fourteen Stations depicted around their walls and "praying the stations" has become a popular devotion which can be prayed as a community or in small groups or individually. You may be familiar with some places such as retreat centres or religious houses that have outdoor Stations of the Cross, where you can walk in the outdoors and follow Christ's path to Calvary. Wherever you are, this devotion is a prayerful way to draw close to Christ by contemplating and meditating on what he did for us.



The Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus is given his cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time
4. Jesus meets his mother
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments
11. The Crucifixion: Jesus is nailed to the cross
12. Jesus dies on the cross
13. Jesus' body is taken down from the cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

Stations of the Cross ~ Live stream

10:00am, St Mary's Cathedral

Preparation for the Celebration of the Lord's Passion

At this liturgy we commemorate the death of Jesus on the Cross. The altar will be completely bare: without a cross, without candles and without cloths. The liturgy begins with the entrance of the Priest(s) wearing red vestments. They will go to the altar in silence, and after making a reverence to the altar, prostrate themselves in a sign of humility, for his people that he represents (we may kneel too) in acknowledging Jesus' dying for us and pray in silence for a while. The liturgy will continue with the Liturgy of the Word, Adoration of the Cross and Holy Communion. In the Liturgy of the Word we will hear a reading from the Prophet Isaiah, about the Suffering Servant, who prefigures Jesus. The Second Reading is the Letter to Hebrews speaking about the suffering of Christ. Once again, we will hear the Passion – often said in parts. If you have the text from the Mass Readings, you can add

your own voice to the parts of the crowd. Following the Adoration of the Cross and Holy Communion, the liturgy ends with the Dismissal and we depart in silence.

St Augustine exhorts us to “admire, congratulate, rejoice, love, praise, adore; because through the death of our Redeemer, we are called from darkness to light, from death to life, from exile to home, from grief to everlasting joy.” St Bernard of Clairvaux asks “Who is the one that is not filled with hope of obtaining confidence and courage when he gazes trustfully on the position of our Lord’s crucified body? His head is bent to give us the kiss of peace, his arms extended to receive us, his hands pierced to pour his blessings upon us, his heart is opened to love us, his feet nailed to the cross to soften our hearts and remain with us.”

Live Stream-Celebration of the Lord’s Passion

3:00pm, St Mary’s Cathedral

Readings

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Psalm 30:2,6,12-13,15-17,25

R. Father, I put my life in your hands.

Hebrews 4:14-16,5:7-9

John 18:10-19:42

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the 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 here, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



For Reflection- That First Good Friday

On the best tour that I have ever had of Saint Peter’s Basilica, the tour guide pointed out that Michelangelo’s *Pieta* in the original basilica was placed above the altar. It was a free-standing altar as well, so one could circle it to appreciate the work of Michelangelo. But the tour guide went on to say that the only way to understand this great work of art would be to understand the even greater work of the Eucharist itself. On Good Friday, Mass is not celebrated. It seems odd because this is the day that the Mass itself represents sacramentally. We do receive Holy Communion but we do not share in the offering of the sacrifice. It is almost as if we, like Michelangelo’s Mary, can only hold Christ, keep him on our lap, and pause in wonder at what a great gift this Body truly is. This *Pieta* in Saint Peter’s is the only work of Michelangelo that was ever signed. He wanted to avoid any confusion among those who would admire his artistic merit. The first *pieta* on mount Calvary was signed as well, not by Pilate and his royal decree at the top of the cross, nor by the wounds on his Body etched there by our sins, but rather signed by the love of the Father in the complete gift of his Son. This is the gift of every Mass, of every Holy Communion. We take pause on this good day to receive anew the gift of wonder.

Fr James M Sullivan O.P.

Holy Saturday | 11 April 2020

On Holy Saturday the Church honours Christ in the tomb. Everything is silent: the Mass is not celebrated, the church is empty. There is an air of expectation. We have commemorated Good Friday, now it is Holy Saturday, and the next day is the third day. And as we recall in the Creed, “On the third day he rose again.”

Prayer for the Morning - *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina - How To Pray:

Prepare: close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind

Lectio (read): Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image.

Close your eyes a minute.

Meditatio (meditate):

Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it.

Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray):

Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio

(contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image.

What is God speaking to you today through this image?



Lamentation of Christ, Giotto Di Bondone, 1305

For Reflection - Why Christ is In the Tomb

Speaking of Jesus, Paul writes, *that Christ dies for us* (Ga 2:20). Each of us can repeat those words of the apostle: *for us*.

My Jesus,
 you have died for me,
 how can I doubt your mercy?
 And if I can believe in that mercy with a faith
 that teaches me that God has died for me,
 how can I not risk everything to return to such love?
 For me...
 Words that wipe away the solitude of the most lonely
 and give divine value
 to every person despised by the world.
 Words that fill every heart and make it overflow
 upon those who either do not know
 or do not remember the Good News.
 For me.
 For me, Jesus, all those sufferings?
 For me that cry on the cross?
 Surely, you will never give up on us.
 You will do everything imaginable to save us
 if only because we have cost you so much.
 You gave me divine life
 just as my mother gave me human life.
 In every moment
 you think of me alone,
 as you do of each and every person.
 This-more than anything in the world-
 gives us the courage to live as Christians.
 For me. Yes, for me.
 And so, Lord,
 for the years that remain,
 allow me also to say:
 for you.

Servant of God Chiara Lubich

Chiara Lubich (+2008) was the founder and president of the Focolare movement.

The Easter Vigil | 11 April 2020

Prayer for the Day - *Visio Divina*

Visio Divina - How To Pray:

Prepare: close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind

Lectio (read): Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image. Close your eyes a minute.

Meditatio

(meditate): Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye.

Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio

(contemplation):

Open your eyes and gaze at the image. What is God speaking to you today through this image?



The Holy Women at the Tomb, William Bouguereau, 1825 - 1905

Preparation for Mass

Note: During this time of pandemic, the simplified rites approved by the Holy See for the Holy Week liturgies celebrated without the presence of the faithful in the churches, means the lighting and blessing of the fire and procession into the church is omitted and the Vigil begins with the simple lighting of the Paschal Candle. In the Archdiocese of Sydney baptisms are deferred to later in the year when people may gather, so the rites associated directly with Baptism are omitted at the Easter Vigil.

The Easter Vigil is one of the most dramatic events of the Church's year. The liturgy of Easter is the highlight or apex of the whole of the Church's liturgical year. This is the night of all nights, the most glorious of all feasts, the central point on which the whole of our Faith is centred – it is the reason why we celebrate every Sunday in the year. It celebrates the most magnificent event of all history, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. For this reason, the liturgy includes many rituals and traditions that we only see and hear on Easter night. The liturgy will begin in darkness. The Easter candle will be lit and we will have the beautiful hymn, the Exultet sung. This is an ancient hymn that tells the Easter story, the story of salvation. Then we come to the Liturgy of the Word which consists of a number of readings, first from the Old Testament, then from the New Testament, from the Book of Genesis to the Gospel account of the Resurrection. In these readings we hear the story of salvation. We hear the power of God made manifest. From Genesis all the way to Resurrection that this is the reason Christ has come, Christ has broken the chains of death. And we finally say the 'A' word that we haven't said the whole time of Lent, 'Alleluia!' Jesus is victorious over death! The light of Christ is made visible through the darkness.

Our celebration will be more subdued due to our circumstances, but let us enter into it as much as we can with a joyful heart. We don't know the future, but we know Jesus has been victorious over death. We know that we are in the hands of the Father because we are his children. Although there will be no baptisms at his Mass, we will renew our Baptismal Promises because it is through our Baptism that we are joined with Christ. That we are in communion with one another. So we join in saying the responses with courage and joyful hope. Mass will continue with the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Dismissal that includes an elegant and prolonged Alleluia to help us remember the joy of the night. This Alleluia will continue all through the following week at Mass as well. The reality of Easter means we need the whole week of Easter to celebrate. In our circumstances let us enter into this time as best as we can. Let it be a time of faith, a time of hope and a time of love.

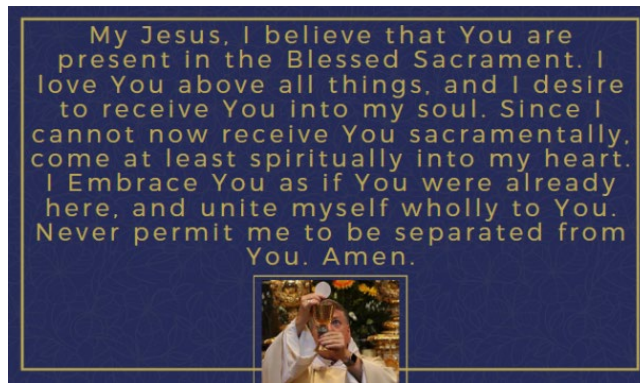
[Mass – Live Stream](#)

6:30pm, St Mary's Cathedral

Mass Readings

Genesis 1:1 – 2:2	Isaiah 55: 1-11
Psalms 103 or 32	Responsorial Psalm (Is 12) Baruch
Genesis 22:1-18	3:9-15, 32-4:4
Psalms 15	Psalms 18
Exodus 14:15 – 15:1	Ezekiel 36:16-17, 18-28
Responsorial Psalm (Ex 15)	Psalms 41-42
Isaiah 54: 5-14	Romans 6:3-11
Psalms 29	Gospel according to Matthew 28:1-10

² From Prayers of the Easter vigil



For Reflection - Easter Sunday

Myths express, not historical events, but the great necessities and rhythms of nature. And this is why they are set *in illo tempore* (once upon a time), or a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.... No one wonders exactly when Hercules was born or on what planet Luke Skywalker went to school, for those characters aren't part of the real world but rather symbolic representations of timeless truths. Many people are tempted today to construe the story of Jesus' Resurrection as a mythic tale, a symbolic narrative expressive of the life force or the regenerative power of nature. But as C.S. Lewis observed, those who think the Resurrection of Jesus is simply another myth haven't read many myths.

Jesus' story is not set *in illo tempore*, but in a very definite, historically verifiable period of time, when Herod was tetrarch of Galilee and Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea. The Gospel narrators mention well-known places such as Jericho, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem. And they speak, with breathtaking directness, of "eating and drinking" with their friend Jesus after he rose from the dead. Moreover, all of these first witnesses, with the exception of Saint John, all went to their deaths defending the truth of what they taught. How many martyrs are there to Osiris, Hercules, or Dionysus? The answer is none! No one dies for a mythic abstraction, but people were more than willing to die for their friend, "whom they had looked upon and their hands had touched," and who had come back from the dead. To grasp this still – startling truth is to grasp the meaning of Easter.

Very Reverend Robert Barron



Happy Easter

THE SEASON OF EASTER

The Easter season lasts forty days, just as Lent did. Easter officially ends on the feast of the Ascension, traditionally celebrated on a Thursday, thus making up exactly forty days. Though it is now moved to the nearest Sunday. All through the Eastertide season you will hear “Alleluia!” in the liturgy of the Mass. On the Sundays of the Easter season, the readings at Mass tell us about Christ’s appearances to his disciples following his resurrection. The miracle of his Resurrection is at the heart of our faith, and we can say with St Thomas: “My Lord and my God.”

Easter Sunday | 13 April 2020

Prayer for the Morning - *Visio Divina*



The Incredulity of Saint Thomas, Caravaggio, 1601-1602

Visio Divina - How To Pray:

Prepare: close your eyes, breathe, clear your mind

Lectio (read): Open your eyes and scan the image. Note what draws your interest, but continue to scan the whole image. Close your eyes a minute.

Meditatio (meditate): Open your eyes and let your eyes be lead. Focus on just this part of the image and name it. Close your eyes, seeing that part of the image in your mind.

Oratio (pray): Open your eyes and look again at that part of the image that caught your eye. Allow it to bring forth a word, image, or emotion. Close and rest your eyes.

Contemplatio (contemplation): Open your eyes and gaze at the image. What is God speaking to you today through this image?

Preparation for Mass

Although the Easter Vigil is one of the most magnificent events in the Church's year and participation fulfils Sunday's obligation, there is something special about celebrating Mass on Easter Sunday morning. Jesus is Risen from the dead! This message resounds in the Church the world over, along with the singing of the Alleluia. "Faith in the Resurrection of Jesus says that there is a future for every human being; the cry for unending life which is a part of the person is indeed answered. Through Jesus we do know 'the room where exiled love lays down its victory.' He himself is the place, and he calls us to be with him and in dependence on him. He calls us to keep this place open within the world so that he, the exiled love, may reappear over and over in the world... God exists: that is the real message of Easter. Anyone who even begins to grasp what this means also knows what it means to be redeemed." (Pope Benedict XVI)

Mass Readings

Acts 10:34, 37-43

Responsorial Psalm: 117

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Colossians 3:1-4

Gospel Acclamation Alleluia, alleluia! Christ has become our paschal sacrifice; let us feast with joy in the Lord.

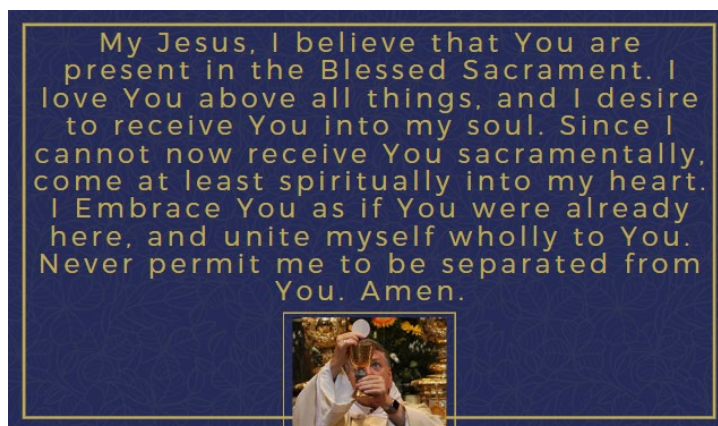
Alleluia!

John 20:1-9

[Mass - Live Stream](#)

St Mary's Cathedral, 10:30am

Spiritual Communion



For Reflection - The Heartbeat of the Risen Lord

After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. We can picture them as they went on their way. They walked like people going to a cemetery, with uncertain and weary steps, like those who find it hard to believe this is how it all ended. We can picture their faces, pale and tearful. And their question: can Love have truly died?

Unlike the disciples, the women are present – just as they had been present as the Master breathed his last on the cross, and then, with Joseph of Arimathea, as he was laid in the tomb. Two women who did not runaway, who remained steadfast.... *And suddenly there was a great earthquake.* Unexpectedly, those women felt a powerful tremor, as something or someone made the earth shake beneath their feet. Once again, someone came to tell them: *Do not be afraid*, but now adding: *He has been raised as he said!...*

The heartbeat of the Risen Lord is granted us as a gift, a present, a new horizon. The beating heart of the Risen Lord is given to us, and we are asked to give it in turn as a transforming force, as the leaven of a new humanity. In the

resurrection, Christ rolled back the stone of the tomb, but he wants also to break down all the walls that keep us locked in our sterile pessimism.... That is what Easter calls us to proclaim: the heartbeat of the Risen Lord. Christ is alive! That is what quickened the pace of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. That is what made them lay aside their mournful gait and sad looks. They returned to the city to meet up with the others.

Now that, like the two women, we have visited the tomb, I ask you to go back with them to the city. Let us all retrace our steps and change the look on our faces. Let us go back with them to tell the news.... In all those places where the grave seems to have the final word, where death seems the only way out. Let us go back to proclaim, to share, to reveal that it is true: the Lord is alive! He is living and he wants to rise again in all those faces that have buried hope, buried dreams, buried dignity.... Let us go, then. Let us allow ourselves to be surprised by this new dawn and by the newness that Christ alone can give. May we allow his tenderness and his love to guide our steps. May we allow the beating of his heart to quicken our faintness of heart.

Pope Francis

Useful Links

- [Catholic Mass Prayers and Responses](#)
- [Prayer Resources for the Coronavirus Pandemic, Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney](#)
- [Live-streaming Masses around the Archdiocese](#)
- [Prayer in Times of Epidemic](#) (Apostolic Nuncio to Australia, Archbishop Adolfo Tito Yllana)
- [Suggestions for Preparing to Participate in Holy Week and Easter Liturgies at Home](#) (Sr Moira DeBono RSM)
- [The Rosary](#) (Youtube video)
- [The Chaplet of Divine Mercy](#) (Youtube video)
- [St Mary's Cathedral Sydney](#)

References

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- St Paul's Holy Week Missal, St Paul's Publications, Strathfield, 2012