



THE TRIDUUM

The Great Triduum of the Church Begins

'Triduum' comes from the Latin word for 'three days'. The Easter Triduum begins with Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its peak moment in the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night and concludes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday. These three days represent the highpoint of our entire year as Christians. The Easter Triduum is to the year what Sunday is to the week.

The Triduum can be viewed as one moment of celebration that unfolds over the course of three days. Here we meet the deepest mysteries of our faith in some of the most unique rituals of the Church. In these liturgies we celebrate and re-insert ourselves into the Paschal Mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Christ. This is our faith, poured out before us and within us.

Each day has its own particular focus which helps us to draw closer to Christ and share in his passage from death to life.



HOLY THURSDAY

There are only two Masses allowed on Holy Thursday, the Chrism Mass and the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. At the Chrism Mass the bishop blesses the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens and consecrates the Oil of Chrism. These oils are used in the diocese throughout the following year. Many dioceses have had to defer this Mass to a time when we can gather once more as a diocesan family. After the Evening Mass on Holy Thursday, no other Mass is celebrated until the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night.

Mass of the Lord's Supper

At the heart of Holy Thursday is Jesus' command to serve others, modelled by Jesus in the washing of feet and the gift of himself in the Eucharist. 'Do this in memory' is a call to us as members of the Christian community to be a Eucharistic people. This means not only receiving the precious gift of Christ in the Eucharist but living Eucharist in our daily actions of care and service to one another.

Scripture tells us

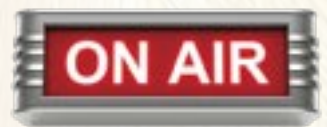
'Do you understand' he said 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.' (John 13:12-15)



Deepening our Participation in the Broadcast Celebration

Before the broadcast begins:

- Gather with other members of your household, if you can.
- Place a jug of water, a bowl and towel on a (kitchen) table or in the sacred space, together with an unlit candle.



During the broadcast look out for the following:

- The **Gloria**, with its joyful tones, returns now that our Lenten fast has concluded. During the Gloria the church bells ring and then fall silent until the Easter Vigil. If you have a small bell, you might like to ring it during the refrain of the Gloria.
- The **Readings** of today place before us the gift of the Eucharist and the self-giving of Christ for our redemption. As Christ has done for us, so we are called to do. How do we follow the example of Christ in our own lives? In these challenging days, where are we witnessing people living this example of loving service for the sake of others?
- The **washing of feet** has been called a homily in action. While it cannot take place this year, you are invited at this point of the liturgy to pour water from the jug into the bowl in grateful remembrance of all those in our very midst living this call of Christ to 'Do this in memory of me'. Light your candle at this point to remember and pray for all those who are making Christ present in our world in these days through their loving service.
- As you make your **Act of Spiritual Communion** take a moment to welcome the presence of Christ into your very being. As we yearn for the day when we can gather together to celebrate the Eucharist and receive the Body of Christ, give thanks to God for the gift of the Eucharist and the life to which it calls you.

A Prayer Ritual for the home

Gather with other members of your household, if you can. Place a jug of warm water, a bowl and a towel on your kitchen table or in your sacred space, if you have one. Beside it place an unlit candle. Include a bible, if you have one, opened on John 13:1-15.



In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

in the gift of your Eucharist you have shown the depth of your love for us.

In the washing of feet, you call us to share this love in our service of others.

Help us to welcome your saving presence into our lives.

Grant us the courage to bring your love to those with whom we share our lives and to all those in need. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading

Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it around his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing. 'Do you understand' he said 'what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you.' (From the Gospel of the day – see John 13:1-15 for full text)

Reflection

'I have given you an example so that you may do what I have done for you'. The love of Jesus is being poured out into our world in so many extraordinary ways in these days. This love demonstrates to us that we are not isolated individuals, even if we are in isolation from one another. Divine love unites each one of us. Pope Francis, during the Urbi et Orbi blessing he gave on March 27th 2020, spoke of how 'our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary, often forgotten people; doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves.' Today the washing of feet goes on, the love of God endures. Take a moment to reflect on the many ways you witness and give witness to 'the washing of feet' in your life.

Ritual Action

While particular safety advice may mean this is not possible, if it is possible and a number of the household are present, people are invited to follow the example of Jesus and to take it in turn to wash and dry the feet of another. As those gathered do so, be aware of how it feels personally to both receive and do this sacred action. If praying by yourself, or if unable to have your foot washed, at this time pour the water into the bowl and unfold the towel at this time.

Intercessions *Light the candle.*

As we light this candle we take a moment to remember and pray for all those many people who are living the example of Jesus in these very days. *(Pause)*

We pray for our needs and the needs of the world this day. We remember in our prayer... *(Bring your intentions to God)* **Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.**

Our Father ...

Prayer

God of mercy and compassion,
may we be sustained by your abiding presence with us
as we continue our journey through Holy Week.

May the example of your son call us to the service of others,
knowing that we have the strength to do your will
through the gift and nourishment of your Eucharist. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless us and keep us; The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us; The Lord turn his face toward us and give us his peace both now and forever. Amen.

Sign of the Cross ...

To do

Try to make a special effort to share a family meal today or if you are not with family to give them a call. Say a grace before and after your meal. Share a favourite recipe on social media or elsewhere. Remind yourself of this year's Trócaire Lenten campaign (see trocaire.org and your Trócaire box) and think about how you can support their work.