

Holy Thursday

The Triduum is all one liturgy, and Holy Thursday begins that liturgy. On Holy Thursday we remember how Christ celebrated the Passover with his disciples and washed their feet. For the Catholic Church, this day celebrates the institution of the priesthood and the first Eucharistic meal.

The following is a guide for a Holy Thursday Liturgy of the Word. The guide is based on the Roman Missal and can be adapted to your household. Homes with small children may wish to shorten the service by simply reading the Gospel and washing each other's feet. Others may wish to celebrate the full service and will need at least one leader and a reader. This service can be adapted for families to connect online as well. Groups may want write their own petitions, though some have been provided, or add music. Make the service work for you and your context. The goal is to pray together and to celebrate these holy days.

It is a good idea to celebrate in a prayerful atmosphere. One way to do this would be to set up a table like an altar with candles. You might put a white or purple table cloth on the table along with a crucifix, icon, or religious painting. This table could be your kitchen table, a coffee table, or whatever works for you, so long as the space is conducive for prayer. During the Holy Triduum you might want to return to this same space for the other parts of the liturgy.

Materials you might need: candles, bells for the Gloria, songs on a playlist, a washbasin if you choose to do the washing of the feet, a towel

Possible songs to sing or listen to: [Servant Song](#), [I am the Bread of Life](#), [What Wondrous Love is This](#), [Abide with Me](#), [At the Table](#), [We Will Feast in the House of Zion](#)

Entrance Antiphon

We should glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
in whom is our salvation, life and resurrection,
through whom we are saved and delivered.

Introductory Rites

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your Spirit.

Leader: This night we are gathered to solemnly begin our celebration of the Sacred Triduum. Together we enter into the mystery of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. We pray that through this celebration the Lord may enter our hearts and we may grow in love and mercy.

We acknowledge that there are times when we have fallen short of our call to be imitators of Christ, and so we pray:

Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Leader: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Gloria

It is recommended that the recitation or singing of the Gloria be accompanied by bells or other similar musical instruments.

All: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Collect

Leader: Let us pray.

O God, who have called us to participate in your most sacred Supper, in which your only Begotten Son, when about to hand himself over to death, entrusted to the Church a sacrifice new for all eternity, the banquet of his love.

Grant, we pray, that we may draw from so great a mystery, the fullness of charity and of life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading (Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14)

A reading from the Book of Exodus:

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,
“This month shall stand at the head of your calendar;
you shall reckon it the first month of the year.
Tell the whole community of Israel:
On the tenth of this month every one of your families
must procure for itself a lamb, one apiece for each household.
If a family is too small for a whole lamb,
it shall join the nearest household in procuring one
and shall share in the lamb
in proportion to the number of persons who partake of it.
The lamb must be a year-old male and without blemish.
You may take it from either the sheep or the goats.
You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month,
and then, with the whole assembly of Israel present,
it shall be slaughtered during the evening twilight.
They shall take some of its blood
and apply it to the two doorposts and the lintel
of every house in which they partake of the lamb.
That same night they shall eat its roasted flesh
with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.

“This is how you are to eat it:
with your loins girt, sandals on your feet and your staff in hand,
you shall eat like those who are in flight.
It is the Passover of the LORD.
For on this same night I will go through Egypt,
striking down every firstborn of the land, both man and beast,
and executing judgment on all the gods of Egypt—I, the LORD!
But the blood will mark the houses where you are.

Seeing the blood, I will pass over you;
thus, when I strike the land of Egypt,
no destructive blow will come upon you.

“This day shall be a memorial feast for you,
which all your generations shall celebrate
with pilgrimage to the LORD, as a perpetual institution.”

The Word of the Lord
All: Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 116)

Reader: Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.

All: Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.

How shall I make a return to the LORD
for all the good he has done for me?
The cup of salvation I will take up,
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.

All: Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.

Precious in the eyes of the LORD
is the death of his faithful ones.
I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;
you have loosed my bonds.

All: Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.

To you will I offer sacrifice of thanksgiving,
and I will call upon the name of the LORD.
My vows to the LORD I will pay
in the presence of all his people.

All: Our blessing-cup is a communion with the Blood of Christ.

Second Reading (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians:

Brothers and sisters:

I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,
that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over,
took bread, and, after he had given thanks,
broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood."
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory

I give you a new commandment, says the Lord:
love one another as I have loved you.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory

Gospel (John 13:1-15)

A reading of the Holy Gospel according to John

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father.
He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.
The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.
So, during supper,
fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God,
he rose from supper and took off his outer garments.
He took a towel and tied it around his waist.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples' feet
and dry them with the towel around his waist.
He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,
"Master, are you going to wash my feet?"
Jesus answered and said to him,
"What I am doing, you do not understand now,
but you will understand later."
Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."
Jesus answered him,
"Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."
Simon Peter said to him,
"Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."
Jesus said to him,
"Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed,
for he is clean all over;
so you are clean, but not all."
For he knew who would betray him;
for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet
and put his garments back on and reclined at table again,
he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,

you ought to wash one another's feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

The Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection

A prepared reflection may be offered. This time could also be a chance for silent meditation on the readings or even a time to allow each person present to share their own response to the readings and the feast.

Traditionally, a washing of the feet follows the reflection, but it may be omitted out of pastoral concern or necessity.

Prayers of the Faithful

These or similar petitions may be offered.

Leader: On this holy night, the Lord gave us the commandment to love one another. We now turn to the Father in humble petition and pray for the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Reader: We pray for the Church and Her many ministries around the world. We pray especially for Her humble servant, Pope Francis, and all other ministers of the faith. May their witness to the love of Christ be a source of steady light, and may we all be drawn to contemplate how we may better serve our brothers and sisters.

We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray for our world in this time of need. We pray for an end to this global pandemic and healing for all who have been affected by the virus. May the Lord grant wisdom to world leaders, perseverance to medical workers, comfort to the afflicted, and patience to all.

We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray for the poor, the forgotten, the stranger, the addict, all who have no one to pray for them, and all who are suffering in any way. May Christ, who has called us to radical love, expand our hearts and inspire us to reach out to the most vulnerable in prayer and service.

We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray for our families. We pray for mothers and fathers and children, for grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, for the families we were born into, and the families we have formed along the way. May those we hold most dear be a source of joy and strength in these difficult times, and may all of us come to see with greater clarity the one human family of which we are all a part.

We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: We pray for the sick, for the dying, and for all who will die this day. May the Lord, the Good Shepherd, grant them comfort, peace, and life eternal.

We pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Consider inviting those present to offer their own petitions either in silence or aloud.

Leader: God, our shelter and our strength, you listen in love to the cry of your people. Hear our prayers and come to our aid. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Our Father

Leader: At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

All: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil:

Leader: Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, sustained by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope, the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

All: For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Sign of Peace

Depending on the setting, the sign of peace may be omitted. In a circumstance where physical contact is unwise, a simple and reverent bow may be more appropriate.

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you always

All: And with your spirit.

Leader: Let us offer each other a sign of peace.

Conclusion

Leader: Let us pray.

God of infinite compassion, to love you is to be holy;
fill our hearts with your love.

By the death of your Son you have given us hope, born of faith;
by his rising again fulfill this hope in the perfect love of heaven,

where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Leader: Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

Acknowledgements

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The Liturgical Texts

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Texts compiled by Louis Hotop, SJ