

# Catechist

## Family Meditations for the Triduum

### Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Vigil

**By Deanna Bartalini**

The three days of the Triduum are Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. They are considered the holiest days in our Church year. This year, most of us will not be able to celebrate in our parish church. But we can still participate by watching a live-stream Mass and praying together as a family. If you do watch any of the Triduum, here are a few things to keep in mind, due to liturgical changes being made due to the coronavirus, COVID-19:

**On Holy Thursday** there will not be the feet washing, or a procession or removing the Eucharist from the tabernacle.

**On Good Friday** there is never Mass. There is a Liturgy of the Word service, Veneration of the Cross, and distribution of Holy Communion. This year, due to the current restrictions, only the priest will venerate the cross.

**On Holy Saturday**, at dusk, the Easter Vigil Mass usually begins outside with a fire, the blessing of the new Paschal (Easter) candle, and then a procession into a dark church with candles being lit. This may not happen the same way this year.

**I encourage you to honor these three day as best you can with your family. What you'll find below is an opportunity to invite your family to meditate on the meaning of each day of the Triduum.**

**Feel free to adapt these meditations as needed for your children.**

#### **A few tips for each meditation:**

Gather at whatever time of day is best for you.

Set up a small home altar space or table: Make the space you gather in special: place candles, a crucifix, if you have holy water, a bible on a table. Use a white cloth for Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday, red for Good Friday.

Reading from the Bible: Depending on the age of your children, you can read from a children's bible. If possible, have older children read the passage after practicing. Start each reading with: A reading from the Holy Gospel of ..." At the end, say, "The Gospel of the Lord" and respond with "Praise to you, Lord Jesus, Christ."

To share the meditation, it is suggested that a parent or another adult read the meditation slowly and with effective pauses at each paragraph break.

Song suggestions are listed to close your session together.

## Holy Thursday

### Overview

Today is Holy Thursday. It is the day we remember and celebrate Jesus giving us Himself in Holy Communion. The [readings for the Mass](#) tell us about the Jewish Passover as Moses and the people prepared to leave Egypt. The second reading is from St. Paul and it tells the story about the Last Supper. The Gospel though, tells us not about the meal, but about what Jesus did after the meal for his apostles.

### The Gospel

Read aloud [John 13:1-15](#). If that's too long for your family, use verses 4-10; 12-15. An adult can do the reading or an older child that might be able to reverently read aloud. Find the Gospel here:

<http://cms.usccb.org/bible/john/13:1>

After reading the Gospel passage, have everyone close their eyes if they wish, as you slowly read the following.

### Meditation

We are going to put ourselves in the room with Jesus and His disciples. Imagine you can see the room and the table and the cushions on the floor.

Can you smell the food? Hear them talking?

Jesus and his disciples have eaten their meal. They had lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread and wine. They sang songs and prayed.

Jesus told them that He would be with them always.

You can see them sitting around the table, feeling full and happy after a good meal. And then Jesus gets up and gets ready to wash everyone's feet.

This is strange. Dinner is over. Don't you wash before dinner, when people first come into the house?

Why is Jesus doing this?

I think I understand why Peter says not to wash his feet. I would feel weird for someone as holy as Jesus to wash my feet. Yet Jesus tells him that He must do so Peter can have a part in Jesus' life and what He has in store for him.

Okay, I want what Jesus has to give me, so He can wash my feet. Maybe it's not so much about having clean feet.

Jesus tells the apostles why He washed their feet. As an example. Examples are better than words; they help me understand. Jesus wants the apostles to wash other people's feet just like He washed theirs.

Does that mean I should wash other people's feet? I think it does. Is it really about washing feet though? Or is it about serving others? Being kind? Helpful?

What else is it about? It's about not thinking you are better than others.

If Jesus, who is the Son of God can wash feet, then I can do what I'm asked to do. That is what Jesus wants us to learn. To take care of others.

How can I take care of others?

*(After a few moments of quiet, have everyone open their eyes.)*

### Discussion

Discuss with the family their feelings and thoughts. Here are a few questions to get started:

What would it be like to have Jesus wash your feet?

Why does Jesus show his apostles what to do?

How can you wash other people's feet?

How can we, as a family, wash each other's feet?

### Song

[Servant Song](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdmgpMfnjdU), found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdmgpMfnjdU>

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## Good Friday

### Overview

Today we remember the death of Jesus. The [Gospel reading](#) we read tells us what happened from Jesus arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane all the way to his burial.

### The Gospel

This mediation will focus on [John 19:16-30](#). Find it here:  
<http://cms.usccb.org/bible/readings/041020.cfm>

### Meditation

Let's imagine that we are there with Jesus and his apostles.

What are we thinking? How do we feel?

It is just one day after the apostles celebrated the Passover with Jesus. They went to the garden to pray and then Jesus was arrested. The apostles were very afraid for Jesus.

What was going to happen? Jesus had told them He would suffer and die. Was it going to happen now? From far away they waited and watched. They saw Jesus being beaten and made fun of by soldiers. It was horrible to see.

Why did they hurt Jesus so much? He was always good to everyone. All the people gathered to hear what Pilate would do to Jesus. He gave in to the crowd and told them that Jesus would be crucified.

They gave Jesus a heavy cross to carry. He walked, slowly, painfully up to the hill where criminals were crucified. But Jesus wasn't a criminal. Why didn't they know that?

Why didn't they love Jesus?

Many people watched as Jesus walked up to the top of the hill. Some were sad and cried. Others made fun of Him. I don't think I could watch Jesus like that. It would hurt too much.

At the top of the hill, the soldiers laid Jesus on the cross He had carried and nailed him to it. The pain was horrible. But Jesus said nothing. How did He do that? Because His Father was with him.

They put the cross up; all the people could see Jesus up on the cross. His mother Mary, her sister, her cousin, Mary Magdalen and his apostle John stood at the cross, looking at Jesus. Praying. Crying.

There was nothing they could do. Yet they stayed there until he died. That must have been very hard, but they loved Him so much, they stayed. They were very brave and trusted on God to help them.

Jesus told Mary that John would be her son now and told John that Mary was his mother now. Even as He was dying, He was taking care of those He loved.

Jesus asked for a drink and then, taking a last breath, He said, "It is finished" and he died.

*(pause and then pray)*

Let's kneel down now and say a prayer, thanking Jesus for dying for us:

Dear Jesus, you gave up Your life for me. You did that out of love. Help me to love you every day, remembering what you did for me.

*(Add your own prayers from family too now)*

Ask, "is there anything you want to say to Jesus?"

*(Close your prayer time with a song)*

### **Song**

Why by Nicole Nordman <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvYn5orawgE>

Jesus, Remember Me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGB2E0NzO2A>

My Deliverer by Matt Maher

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pb\\_DT0MhY0&list=RDPBvU7arNhQs&index=7](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pb_DT0MhY0&list=RDPBvU7arNhQs&index=7)

# Catechist

## Holy Saturday

### Overview

Once the sun has set, gather your family together to reflect on the Resurrection. To really focus on Jesus as the Light of the World, light one candle and then have each family member light their own. Tealights or pillars can work so there are no dripping tapers.

### The Gospel

Read the Gospel, [Matthew 28:1-10](#). Find it here: <http://cms.usccb.org/bible/readings/041120.cfm>

### The Meditation

*(Ask the group: What is the first word that comes to your mind? Listen as I read this meditation.)*

An angel came down from heaven while Mary Magdalene and Mary and the guards were at Jesus' tomb. And there was an earthquake. I would be afraid.

I just wanted to come and pray. Now this happens! The angel says, "Do not be afraid." OK, I'll try.

The angel says that Jesus has been raised from the dead and I see the tomb is empty.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Jesus rose from the dead!

He told us he would, but we didn't understand. Thank you, Jesus, for rising from the dead.

Now, the angel tells Mary Magdalene to go and see the apostles, to let them know that Jesus has risen. He wants to see them in Galilee.

The women go and — *wow!* — they meet Jesus on the way! I can't believe it. How exciting! How joyful everyone is.

They want to thank Jesus and give Him praise and glory. Jesus is happy to see them. He loves them. He loves us too!

Then Jesus reminds them they have a job to do. He wants them to tell the apostles He is risen and to go to Galilee so He can see them.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

*(Pause and pray)*

Thank you, Jesus, for rising from the dead. You give us new life. A life that is full of joy and peace and hope. We want to share that joy with all those we love. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Amen.

### Discussion

How can we share the joy of the Resurrection with others?

What do we want people to know about Jesus?

### Song

*Resurrection Power* by Chris Tomlin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Nwcr-Eys40>

*Christ is Risen* by Matt Maher <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bJzhkWVANC>

*Jesus Christ is Risen Today* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h9mGLh5WvI>