

Holy Week Services at Home

Palm Sunday a time of prayer at home

Today marks the day that we remember Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. If you have one, use a palm cross. If you don't have one, use a piece of paper scrunched into a shape of a palm. Prepare a comfortable place in your home, you may wish to have a candle lit and a cross present. Begin saying:

Hosanna to the Son of David, the King of Israel.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!

During Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice to celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration with Christians throughout the world. As Christ entered Jerusalem to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die and to rise again, let us journey with him in faith and love, so that, remembering that he shared our human experience of suffering, pain and rejection, we may rejoice to share his risen life.

Place your palm cross or palm in front of you, take a moment to reflect on what it is, a gesture of Jesus' majesty.

God our Saviour, whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem to suffer and to die, let this palm be for me a sign of his victory; and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our king, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

Bible Reading (Matthew 21: 1-11)

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.
Thanks be to God.

If you are able stand up and say:

May I go forth in peace, praising Jesus our Messiah, as did the crowds who welcomed him to Jerusalem.

Pick up your palm cross and walk around your garden, your home, the room you are in or sit and close your eyes imagining the scene of Jesus riding into Jerusalem. You may wish to sing or say this hymn at this moment.

Ride on, ride on in majesty
as all the crowds 'Hosanna!' cry:

through waving branches slowly ride,
O Saviour, to be crucified.

Ride on, ride on in majesty,
in lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, your triumph now begin
with captured death, and conquered sin!

Ride on, ride on in majesty
the angel armies of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty,
the last and fiercest foe defy:
the Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty,
in lowly pomp ride on to die:
bow your meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, your power and reign!

Henry H Milman (1791 - 1868)

*Take time to sit once again in stillness; be aware of Christ's sacrifice for us.
Pray these intercessions for the church and the world.*

We stand with Christ in his suffering. For forgiveness for the many times
we have denied Jesus. Lord, have mercy.

For grace to seek out those habits of sin which mean spiritual death, and by
prayer and self-discipline to overcome them. Lord, have mercy.

For Christian people, that through the suffering of disunity there may grow
a rich union in Christ. Lord, have mercy.

For those who make laws, interpret them, and administer them, that our
common life may be ordered in justice and mercy. Lord, have mercy.

For those who still make Jerusalem a battleground. Lord, have mercy.

For those who have the courage and honesty to work openly for justice and
peace. Lord, have mercy.

For those in the darkness and agony of isolation, that they may find
support and encouragement. Lord, have mercy.

For those who, weighed down with hardship, failure, or sorrow, feel that
God is far from them. Lord, have mercy.

For those who are tempted to give up the way of the cross. Lord, have mercy.

That we, with those who have died in faith, may find mercy in the day of Christ. Lord, have mercy.

Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer *is now said.*

Who, bearing the human likeness, humbled himself
and in obedience accepted death, even death on a cross.
He was lifted up from the earth
that he might draw all people to himself.

Confessing that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,
I know I am in peace with God to love and to serve him.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Take some time to sit in silence, close your eyes as you call to mind the journey we are now on this Holy Week.



Maundy Thursday a time of prayer at home

In preparation, create a comfortable and quiet space in your home. You might like to light a candle or have a cross nearby as a focus. Prepare a small basin or bowl of water for each person present and a towel to dry your hands.

Take some time to still yourself, be aware of God's presence with you.

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

Gospel Reading (John 13. 1-17, 31b-35)

As we remember the loving act of Jesus, in giving his life for us so that we might be given new life, spend a moment in stillness calling to mind our sin to God.

Lord Jesus, you were sent to heal the contrite.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you came to call sinners.
Christ have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you plead for us at the right hand of the Father.
Lord have mercy.

You may wish to sing or say this hymn at this moment.

Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you; let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

Richard A. M. Gillard (1977)

Each take a bowl, place your hands in the water and slowly wash water over them. Think what the water represents: new life, our baptism, cleansing of sin and Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Call to mind how we are servants to one another. Give thanks for those who help us, for those we help and how we can be guided to be faithful servants of Christ. We are especially mindful of all who are serving us at this time, placing themselves at risk during this health crisis.

This ancient prayer is often said or sung on Maundy Thursday. Pray it aloud to remember what we are called to do.

Where charity and love are, there God is.
The love of Christ has gathered us into one.
Let us exult, and in Him be joyful.
Let us fear and let us love the living God.
And from a sincere heart let us love each other.

Where charity and love are, there God is.
Therefore, whenever we are gathered as one:
Lest we in mind be divided, let us beware.
Let cease malicious quarrels, let strife give way.
And in the midst of us be Christ our God.

Where charity and love are, there God is.
Together also with the blessed may we see,
Gloriously, Thy countenance, O Christ our God:
A joy which is immense, and also approved:
Through infinite ages of ages. Amen.

After you have dried your hands, pray this prayer.

God our Father, you have taught us through your Son,
that love is the fulfilling of the law;
Grant to us your servants
that, serving you in one another,
we may remain in your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Take a moment in stillness, as we prepare to pray for our world.

Lord Jesus Christ, I am reminded that you are broken for me, that you gladly endured suffering and death for our sakes. You identified yourself with humanity, standing alongside the broken-hearted, accepting the limitations of life and death; a ray of light for those this night who are broken in body, mind or spirit. Lord hear my prayer.

I pray for those who are in pain, racked with disease and illness. I remember particularly those who are suffering from corona virus this night. I pray for our health care services here in the UK and across the world.
Lord hear my prayer.

I pray for those who mourn loved ones or who face death themselves, those tormented by fear or anxiety. For those who are confused and overwhelmed particularly at this difficult time. Lord hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, who endured such turmoil in Gethsemane, whose body was broken on the cross, who surrendered your spirit to the father; reach out now in love and compassion, the comfort of your peace and the joy of your love. Lord hear my prayer.

The Lord's Prayer *is now said.*

Give thanks to the Lord for he is gracious
And his mercy is ever lasting. Amen

Our Lord prayed in the garden with his disciples all night. As you prepare for bed, remember those who will wait and watch with all who are sick and dying.

Good Friday a time of prayer at home

Find a cross in your home. If you don't have one, use a palm cross or draw a cross to focus on. If you would normally light a candle to pray, consider not doing so today to signify the solemnity of today - just focus on the cross.

Take a moment in stillness and silence, then begin with these words:

Almighty Father,
look with mercy on this your family throughout the world
for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed
and given up into the hands of sinners
and to suffer death upon the Cross;
who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen

Gospel reading (John 19: 16-30) or full text (John. 18.1 - 19.42)

Take some time in silence to consider the words you have read.

In silence and stillness focus on the Cross, remember Jesus our Saviour who gave his life for us. Think about his journey that day to Calvary and his love for us. Pray these words:

Behold the Cross on which the Saviour of the world was nailed.
Come, let us worship
We glory in your Cross O Lord
and praise you for your mighty resurrection;
for by virtue of your Cross
joy has come into the world.

You may wish to sing or say this hymn at this moment.

There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all.

We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains he had to bear,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.

There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin.
He only could unlock the gate
Of heav'n and let us in.

Oh, dearly, dearly has he loved!
And we must love him too,
And trust in his redeeming blood,
And try his works to do.

Cecil Frances Alexander, (1818–1895)

Pray these words:

Let us pray for the Church, that all Christians throughout the world will experience God's peace and protection, persevere in faith, grow in unity, and give glory to God.

Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Let us pray for all who minister in the Lord's name, For June our Bishop, and all bishops, priests and deacons, and for all God's faithful people that, filled with grace, they may serve God faithfully.

Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Let us pray for those preparing for Baptism, that through the waters of rebirth they will increase in faith and understanding and rejoice in being one with Jesus Christ.

Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Let us pray for the leaders of the world, for our governments, and all who serve in public office, that they may seek true peace and freedom for all.

Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Let us pray for those who do not believe in Christ: that the Spirit of God will guide them to salvation.

Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Let us pray for those who cry out in suffering, for the hungry and thirsty, the captive, the poor, the sick and those who are close to death, that God will bring the whole of creation to its perfect fulfilment.

Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy upon us.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ submitted humbly to suffering and pain and his prayer was heard: may all find comfort in his outstretched arms and find healing in his wounds. We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *is now said.*

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Sit for some time in silence.

Holy Saturday Evening (Easter Vigil) a time of prayer at home

The Easter Vigil is celebrated after sunset on Holy Saturday and before sunrise on Easter Day. Find a candle and create a quiet place in your home where you are comfortable to be in this time of prayer.

If you are able, take your candle outside of your home, to your garden, porch or just outside your front door, and light it. When it is lit, say:

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

Bring the candle into your home saying these words:

The light of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

If you are able, continue with just the light of your candle or minimal light. Be aware of the light from your candle, sit for a moment in stillness remembering the risen Christ.

Say, sing or listen to the great hymn of Easter praise, the Exsultet. This hymn is sung at the Easter Vigil all over the world.

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation around God's throne!
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Saviour shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's people!
It is truly right
that with full hearts and minds and voices
we should praise the unseen God,
the all-powerful Father, and his only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
For Christ has ransomed us with his blood,
and paid for us the price of Adam's sin to our eternal Father!

This is our Passover feast,
when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain
whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.
This is the night when first you saved our ancestors,
you freed the people of Israel from their slavery
and led them dry-shod through the sea.

This is the night when Christians everywhere,
washed clean from sin
and freed from all defilement,
are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

This is the night when Jesus Christ
broke the chains of death
and rose triumphant from the grave.

Father how wonderful your care for us!
How boundless your merciful love!
To ransom a slave
you gave away your Son.

O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam,
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!

The power of this holy night
dispels all evil, washes guilt away,
restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy.

Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth,

and all creation is reconciled to God.

Therefore, heavenly Father, in the joy of this night,
receive our evening sacrifice of praise,
your Church's solemn offering.

Accept this Easter candle,
may it always dispel the darkness of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still burning:
Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead,
and shed his peaceful light on all the world,
your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

Take a bell, pot or pan, make a loud noise, put on all the lights and say or sing the words of the Gloria. Remember the joy of Christ's resurrection.

Glory to God in the highest,
And peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
Almighty God and Father,
We worship you, we give you thanks,
We praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
You take away the sin of the world:
Have mercy on us;
You are seated at the right hand of the Father:
Receive our prayer.

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.

A Reading (Romans 6. 3-10)

Psalm 114

When Israel went out from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange language,
Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel his dominion.
The sea looked and fled; Jordan turned back.
The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.

Why is it, O sea, that you flee? O Jordan, that you turn back?
O mountains, that you skip like rams? O hills, like lambs?
Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turns the rock into a pool of
water, the flint into a spring of water.

*For the first time since we began our journey through Lent we can say or
sing alleluia before we read the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;
I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.
Alleluia!

The Gospel Reading (Matthew 28. 1-10)

Alleluia, alleluia!

Let us pray for the church, the world and all who need God's mercy.

The light of the risen Lord illuminates the darkness of our hearts and minds.
On this holy night, let us turn to Christ our light, offering our prayer in his
name for the Church and all people.

For all who live in the dark shadow of war and violence: may the light of
Christ dispel their fears and bring peace and reconciliation.
God said, 'Let there be light' And there was light.

For all who live with the deep darkness of loneliness: may the light of Christ
shine in their hearts and bring them comfort and reassurance.
God said, 'Let there be light' And there was light.

For all who live in the darkness of pain and suffering: may the light of Christ
overcome their fears and bring them healing and wholeness.
God said, 'Let there be light' And there was light.

For those whose darkness is the fear of death: may the light of Christ
illuminate their hearts and raise their eyes to heaven and its eternal hope.
God said, 'Let there be light' And there was light.

For those whose darkness is filled with tears and mourning: may the light of
Christ glow in their hearts and bring them peace and consolation.
God said, 'Let there be light' And there was light.

For those who dwell in the darkness of doubt and despair: may the light of Christ enlighten their minds and bring them guidance and hope
God said, 'Let there be light' And there was light.

For those who have been raised to light through the waters of baptism: may the light of Christ be their constant guide and lead them in the way of goodness and mercy.

God said, 'Let there be light' And there was light.

All powerful God,
you raised Jesus from the darkness of death to the heights of heaven.
May we who rejoice in his resurrection from the dead
bring his light and peace to the world you created.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You may wish to sing or say this hymn at this moment.

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia,
our triumphant holy day; alleluia,
who did once upon the cross; alleluia,
suffer to redeem our loss; alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing; Alleluia,
unto Christ our heavenly king; alleluia,
who endured the cross and grave; alleluia,
sinners to redeem and save: alleluia!

But the pains which he endured; Alleluia,
our salvation have procured; alleluia,
now above the sky he's King; alleluia,
where the angels ever sing: alleluia!

Lyra Davidica (1708)

If you feel able, go to a window or your front door and say or shout:

Christ is Risen
He is risen indeed – ALLELUIA.

Take a moment to celebrate with family members or with a phone call to a friend to share the glorious resurrection of Christ. Christ is Risen – Alleluia.

Easter Sunday Morning a time of prayer at home

This service can be any time between sunrise and midday on Easter Sunday. If it is possible to do so, find a space in your home or garden where you can sit comfortably in the light of the sun. Close your eyes and still your mind for a moment, then open your eyes and say:

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

We sing an Easter hymn to give thanks to God, or if you prefer you can pray the words without singing:

Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes
where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won!*

Lo! Jesus meets us,
risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us,
scatters fear and gloom.
Let the Church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth;
death hath lost its sting.

Chorus

No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of Life!
Life is naught without thee:
aid us in our strife.
Make us more than conquerors
through thy deathless love.
Bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above.

Chorus (Edmund Louis Budry, translated by Richard Birch Hoyle, © Copyright Control)

Most glorious Lord of life,
whose Son Jesus Christ conquered death
and rose victorious from the grave:
may we walk in his company,
hear the mystery of the Scriptures unfold to us,
and, with burning hearts, know his presence
in the breaking of the bread,
for our Saviour is risen indeed – Alleluia!
Blessed be God for ever.

Psalm 66

If you are gathering with other members of your household for this service then you may choose to alternate verses of the psalm.

At the end of the psalm we say together:

Glory to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading (John 20: 1-18)

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
Thanks be to God.

Easter is the time when the early church brought new believers to baptism. As we renew the promises of our baptism you may wish to call to mind your own baptism, your confirmation, and to remember those who brought you to be baptised.

You may want to have a bowl of water to hand. As you renew your promises you can dip your hand into the water, cup your hand and let the water fall back into the bowl, or dip your fingers into the water and make the sign of the cross on your forehead.

In Baptism, we have been buried with Christ
so that we may walk with him in newness of life.
Now that our Lenten observance is over,
let us renew the promises of Holy Baptism:

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?
I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?
I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?
I come to Christ.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, Source of all being and life, the One for whom we exist?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

I believe and trust in him.

Almighty God, we thank you
for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all those baptized in your name:
keep us faithful to our baptism,
and make us ready for that day
when the whole creation shall be made perfect
in your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

In this time of prayer we present to God the things for which we are grateful, the things about which we are sorrowful, and anything that is weighing on our hearts. You may wish to pray for those within our church family who are saying this service in their own homes, remembering that we are united in our prayers. You may wish to pray for our world, our local community, and those who lead us. You may wish to pray for those who are suffering at this time. You may wish to pray aloud, or to pray silently, confident that God will hear us.

As we greet our risen Lord, let us pray as he taught us:

The Lord's Prayer *is now said.*

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity. Amen.

You may wish to sing or say this hymn at this moment.

The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad;
the passover of gladness, the passover of God!
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky,
our Christ hath brought us over, with hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil, that we may see aright
the Lord in rays eternal of resurrection-light;
and listening to his accents, may hear, so calm and plain
his own "All hail!" and, hearing, may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful, and earth the song begin,
the round world keep high triumph, and all that is therein;
let all things, seen and unseen, their notes of gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord hath risen, our joy that hath no end.

(St John of Damascus, translated by John Mason Neale)

May God the Father,
by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,
awaken you to new life. Amen.

May Christ
who walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus,
kindle in you the fire of his love
and strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,
send you out to bring his new life to the world. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all, evermore. Amen.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!



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