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This Holy Week - your home is your church

I can't believe that we cannot gather to celebrate the Paschal Triduum - the most important solemnities of the liturgical calendar - this year. So what can we do to remember and commemorate Jesus' passion, death and resurrection at home?

We began the season of Lent with Jesus going into the desert to be alone and to pray and we have shared that sense of isolation that Jesus experienced. Every Lent, we are asked to give up something that we like. Penance and fasting are ways to eliminate things that are non-essential in order to focus on what is important. This year, we have given up church, the Eucharist and our community. So what are we to focus on?

Although we cannot access the sacraments, we still have the Word of God. Although we cannot gather in church, we are reminded that the family is the domestic church. What does that mean? Every baptised person and every Christian family are priestly people. And the role of the priest is to offer worship and prayer to God. You are called to do that! The climax of worship and prayer are the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, but that does not exclude but rather presupposes individual and family prayer. **This Holy Week, we are called to pray together and reflect on the word of God as a family.**

In the history of the church, there have been many instances of laity and families living the faith in heroic ways. They are our models and examples at this time. In the early days of the Christian faith, believers gathered in their homes to pray and celebrate the Eucharist, often facing great danger of persecution and even death. After the missionaries were expelled from Korea, the people kept the faith alive in their families by reading the Bible, catechizing their children and praying in small communities. When the Redemptorist St. Clement Hofbauer was banned by the government from leaving his own church, he decided to "preach the Gospel anew." The Redemptorists made the sacraments and formation available to all at their church of St. Benno's in Warsaw.

In his own suffering, Jesus placed his hope in God. He learnt to trust that God, who is all-loving could turn suffering into good. In Holy Week, we remember how God took the death of a broken and discouraged man and made his life and death the means of salvation. At this difficult time, we cling to the message of Easter. Suffering and death are not the end. God turns them into the means of our salvation. Share that hope with your family. Encourage and strengthen each other. Have a blessed Holy Week.

Reflection by Gerard Louis, CSSR

Novena notes



Palm Sunday
 Year A
 5th April 2020

Readings & Responses for the Week

Sun, 5 April Palm Sunday	Mt 21:1-11; Is 50:4-7; Phil 2:6-11; Mt 26:14-27,66 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Mon, 6 April	Is 42:1-7; Jn 12:1-11 The Lord is my light and my help.
Tue, 7 April	Is 49:1-6; Jn 13:21-33,36-38 My lips will tell of your help.
Wed, 8 April	Is 50:4-9; Mt 26:14-25 In your great love, O Lord, answer my prayer for your favour.
Thu, 9 April Holy Thursday	Is 61:1-3,6,8-9; Rev 1:5-8; Lk 4:16-21 I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.
Fri, 10 April Good Friday	Is 52:13-53,12; Hebr 4:14-16,5:7-9; Jn 18:1-9,42 Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.
Sat, 11 April Holy Saturday	Gen 22:1-18; Ex 14:15, 15:1; Is 55:1-11; Rom 6:3-11; Mat 28:1-10

Holy Week at Novena Church

As Redemptorists, we are challenged by the situation that we face today. We cannot preach the Good News or welcome you to our shrine, a place that is like a second home to many of you. In this time of crisis, St. Clement inspires us to preach the Gospel anew.

After some discernment, we felt called to help you and your family celebrate Holy Week in your home. We have prepared a handout that you can print and have recorded a number of videos that offer suggestions and ideas of what you can do. These prayer services are meant to be participative and personal. We hope that you find them helpful. Do join us, pray with us and share the videos with your friends.

Look to our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/novenachurch/> or subscribe to the Novena Church YouTube page.