Triduum in Domestic Church
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This is going to be a Holy Week and Easter unlike any we’ve experienced. It hurts our hearts to think of living this week without being able to gather with loved ones to celebrate these richest of liturgies. However, even in the absence of these liturgies, just as Jesus was not limited by his sealed tomb or the Holy Spirit by the locked doors of the upper room, God’s grace can reach wherever there’s an open heart. As we begin Holy Week, I’d like to invite you to be intentional about giving God these openings.

As I have been preparing my own family’s observance of this week, a few facets of our Catholic life-perspective have come to mind.

**Domestic Church:** The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can and should be called the ‘domestic Church.’ (CCC 2204) Our very own homes are mini churches where holy things happen.

**Incarnation:** God made us body and soul. He is spirit, but chose to take on flesh in Jesus’ Incarnation. In so doing, he raised even the ordinary, physical, most human elements of life to a new level of holiness.

**Sacraments:** God chooses to do his supernatural work in and by physical objects, actions, and words. The seven Sacraments hold a unique place as efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. (CCC 1131) However, our understanding of sacrament (with a lower-case “s”) is much broader and includes any conduit of God’s grace. For well-disposed hearts, all is grace.

**Sacramentals:** Sacramentals are sacred signs instituted by the Church. They prepare men to receive the fruit of the sacraments and sanctify different circumstances of life. (CCC 1677) As this section of the Catechism reminds us, we are a priestly people by Baptism, and by the graces flowing from the Paschal Mysteries, there is scarcely any proper use of material things which cannot be thus directed toward the sanctification of men and the praise of God. (CCC 1670)

No doubt there will be great comfort and grace in uniting with the universal Church by watching the Triduum liturgies streamed or televised. But, in the spirit of the truths of our faith mentioned above, consider planning some rituals of your own this Holy Week, rooted in the liturgies. It may feel awkward if you are home alone or if your family is simply not accustomed to such expressions of faith together in the home. Name it, and embrace the opportunity to express your love for Our Lord in new, holistic, truly human ways—that can supplement liturgies watched from the couch. Actively open to grace.

Here are some practical ideas that can be adapted to your own reality and get you thinking of your own!

Kristi Quinlan
Holy Thursday

The day of Jesus’ Last Supper and the first Mass! Jesus gives us his New Commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” The night Jesus prays very sorrowfully in the Garden of Olives and then is arrested.

Tone for our day:
Joy and thanksgiving for the great gift of the Eucharist.

Sorrow in accompanying Jesus in his agony in the garden.

- Today we also celebrate the beginning of the priesthood. Write a thank you note to your parish priest(s) thanking him for his service, example, and love for God.
- Write specific ways of loving those in your household/neighborhood/extended family on slips of paper. Draw them out during the day and do them. Examples: give a hug, do a hidden chore, pay a compliment, say a Hail Mary for someone, FaceTime with loved ones.
- Wash each other's feet – if you’re alone, give yourself a pedicure while meditating on Jesus’ self-giving to his friends . . . to you.
- Bake a loaf of bread while talking/reflecting about its place in the Passover and Jesus being our Bread of Life in the Eucharist. Share in the one loaf together at dinner, or save it for Easter. (See Resources Page for an unleavened bread recipe.)
- Have a special dinner with candlelight and china, remembering the Lord’s Last Supper. Maybe even celebrate some modified version of a Christian Seder (see Resources Page).
- During grace before dinner, pray or sing the Gloria. Maybe even ring some bells while you’re doing it. This joyful prayer of praise is omitted during Lenten liturgies, but sung with gusto at the solemn Mass of the Lord’s Supper.
- Read a Gospel account of the Holy Thursday events in the life of Jesus.
- Make a spiritual communion. Thank God for the gift of the Eucharist and the privilege we’ve long experienced in being able to go to Mass. Ask him to increase your appreciation for these gifts during this painful separation from them.
- Drive to your parish and make a visit to Jesus in the Eucharist from your car. He’s still there.
- Set up an altar of repose. Use houseplants, flowers, candles, linens, and a favorite image of Jesus. Take turns “watching” with Jesus in silent prayer or spiritual reading, accompanying him during his agony in the garden.
Good Friday

The day Jesus is put on trial, scourged, crowned with thorns, sentenced to death, made to carry his cross, is crucified and dies – all for love of us.

- Fast from TV, music, and all digital devices/social media in order to maintain a spirit of silent reflection throughout the day.
- Do a good examination of conscience and an act of contrition. Consider quietly reflecting on how you’ve hurt each other, as family members. “Confess” these to one another - seeking, giving, and receiving forgiveness.
- Take turns venerating a cross, even lying prostrate before one (like the priests/deacons do at the start of the Good Friday liturgy.) Sing Were You There or listen to an appropriate song.
- Do the Stations of the Cross (See Resources Page). Kids love coloring and posting them throughout the house. Process with candles or a crucifix.
- The Good Friday liturgy includes extensive prayers of petition. Write your own and pray them together. Be sure to include all those suffering from the Coronavirus and those serving our communities.
- Pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy at 3:00 p.m., the hour Jesus died (see Resources Page).
- Read the account of the Passion in the Gospel of John.
- Construct and place a cross in your front yard to witness to your neighbors and passersby.
- Have a simple soup supper with conversation questions based on the Passion reading (see Resources Page).
- Watch part of Jesus of Nazareth.

Tone for our day:

Sorrow for our own sins that caused Jesus' suffering.

Sadness, gratitude, and love as we remember all that Jesus went through.

A certain silent, serious reverence and reflection.
Holy Saturday

The day Jesus was in the tomb, dead. His friends locked themselves away, grieving and fearful of what might happen next.

Tone for our day:
This is a day of waiting with the apostles and especially with the Blessed Mother, Mary.

We are grateful for what Jesus has done, still a little serious, but we know the rest of the story and are looking forward to it.

Soon and very soon Jesus will rise!

- Observe a certain silence, reflectively waiting with Mary, while you prepare your home for Easter – cleaning, getting decorations and eggs ready, name cards for the Easter dinner table, etc.

- Pray the rosary.

- Bake Resurrection Rolls (see Resources).

- In the evening, do your own form of the Easter Vigil:
  - In darkness, light a candle or even your own Easter fire and share the flame from candle to candle. You may even pull your family’s Baptism candles out of storage! Pray and respond: “Christ, our Light. Thanks be to God.”
  - Read stories of Salvation History by candlelight. Use the actual Vigil readings or children’s Bible books for kids.
  - Pray or sing the Gloria . . . with bells! Turn on your lights.
  - Bless yourselves with Holy Water and process around blessing your house. Renew your Baptismal promises (see Resources).
  - Sing along to your favorite “Alleluia” song!
  - Read the Easter story.
  - Make a spiritual communion.
Easter Sunday

The day Jesus rose from the dead!
“This is the day the Lord has made. Let us be glad and rejoice in it!”

- **Dress up!** The tradition of Easter clothes reminds us that we are a new creation. We have put on Christ.
- **Have an Easter egg hunt** out in the yard if possible, recalling the women searching in the garden for Jesus who was no longer in the tomb.
- **Have a special meal** (or two!) in the formal dining room with linens, china, candles, flowers – whatever you can pull together to make it truly a feast.
- **Make a playlist of Easter-Alleluia songs** to listen to throughout the day.
- **Read the Easter story** – there are various accounts in the four Gospels!
- If you placed a **cross in your yard** on Friday, **find a way to witness to the Resurrection** – drape it in a white cloth, add flowers or the words “He is Risen.”
- **Share the joy** with neighbors across the fence and family by FaceTime. Send out Easter cards.
- As you encounter family members throughout the day, **say and respond:** “Christ is risen. Christ is indeed risen!”
- **Take a few minutes of silence simply seeking to encounter the risen Christ in prayer** and inviting him into your heart – with all of the power, peace, joy, and love that he brings.

**Tone for our day:**
Completely joyful and happy!
Jesus has won. He is with us.
He has opened heaven for us!

Alleluia!
Alleluia!
Links to Resources

References to the Catechism of the Catholic Church can be explored at: https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

**Holy Thursday**
Unleavened Bread Recipe:  
https://www.alyonascooking.com/unleavened-bread-matzah/
Seder:  
http://archive.wf-f.org/Seder.html
An Act of Spiritual Communion:  

**Good Friday**
Stations of the Cross:  
Chaplet of Divine Mercy:  
https://www.thedivinemercy.org/message/devotions/pray-the-chaplet
Soup Supper Recipe:  

**Holy Saturday**
Resurrection Rolls:  
https://www.catholicicing.com/how-to-make-resurrection-rolls-aka/
Vigil Readings:  http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041120.cfm
The Easter Story:  http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041120.cfm

Find more of Christine Hilbert's Artwork at www.christinehilbert.com