

### Exodus 14:15 - 15:1

The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me so? Tell the sons of Israel to march on. For yourself, raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and part it for the sons of Israel to walk through the sea on dry ground. I, for my part, shall make the hearts of the Egyptians so stubborn that they will follow them. So shall I win myself glory at the expense of Pharaoh, of all his army, his chariots, his horsemen. And when I have won glory for myself, at the expense of Pharaoh, and his chariots and his army, the Egyptians will learn that I am the Lord.

Then the angel of the Lord, who marched at the front of the army of Israel, changed station and moved to their rear. The pillar of cloud changed station from the front to the rear of them, and remained there. It came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. The cloud was dark, and the night passed without the armies drawing any closer the whole night long. Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove back the sea with a strong easterly wind all night, and he made dry land of the sea. The waters parted and the sons of Israel went on dry ground, right into the sea, walls of water to right and to left of them. The Egyptians gave chase: after them they went, right into the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots and his horsemen. In the morning watch, the Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians from the pillar of fire and of cloud, and threw the army into confusion. He so clogged their chariot wheels that they could scarcely make headway. "Let us flee from the Israelites", the Egyptians cried, "the Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians!" "Stretch out your hand over the sea," the Lord said to Moses, "that the waters may flow back onto the Egyptians and their chariots and their horsemen". Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and as day broke, the sea returned to its bed. The fleeing Egyptians marched right into it, and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the very middle of the sea. The returning waters overwhelmed the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh's whole army which had followed the Israelites into the sea: not a single one of them was left. But the sons of Israel had marched through the sea on dry ground, walls of water to right and to left of them. That day, the Lord rescued Israel from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. Israel witnessed the great act that the Lord had performed against the Egyptians, and the people venerated the Lord; they put their faith in the Lord, and in Moses, his servant.

### **It was then that Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song in honour of the Lord:**

I will sing to the Lord, glorious his triumph!  
Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea!  
The Lord is my strength, my song, and my salvation.  
This is my God, and I extol him,  
my father's God, and I give him praise.

The Lord is a warrior! The Lord is his name.  
The chariots of Pharaoh he hurled into the sea,  
the flower of his army is drowned in the sea.  
The deeps hide them, they sank like a stone!

Your right hand, Lord, glorious in its power!  
Your right hand, Lord, has shattered the enemy.  
In the greatness of your glory you crushed the foe.

You will lead them and plant them on your mountain;  
the place O Lord, where you have made your home,  
the sanctuary, Lord, which your hands have made.  
The Lord will reign for ever and ever!

# Alleluia!

**The Easter Gospel**

*Matthew: 28:1-10*

**Vigil**

After the sabbath, and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and then other Mary went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him, that they were like dead men. But the angel spoke; and he said to the women, "There is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would. Come and see the place where he lay, then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has risen from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him." Now, I have told you.' Filled with awe and great joy, the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples.

And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. "Greetings", he said, and the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there."

*After the Gospel, we would usually renew our Baptismal Promises and be sprinkled with Easter water. You might like to close your Vigil Prayer by reciting the Apostles' Creed instead:*

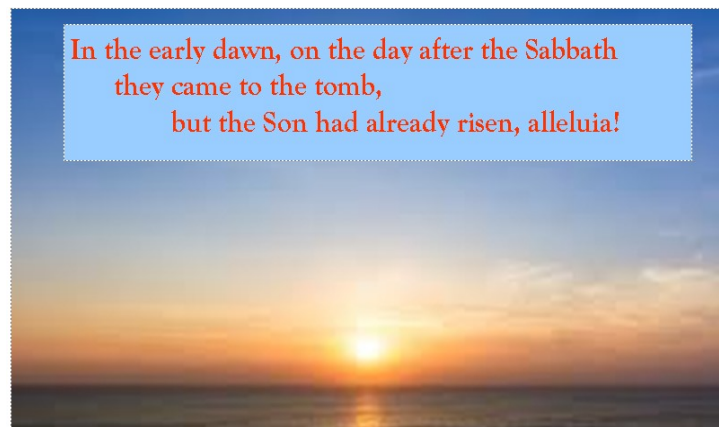
I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

**Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia!  
Quia quem, meruisti portare, alleluia.  
Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia.  
Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.**

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**In the early dawn, on the day after the Sabbath  
they came to the tomb,  
but the Son had already risen, alleluia!**



## Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper

*The Church gathers for the Mass of the Lord's Supper in the early evening. Echo this by taking time in the evening to be still, to picture the Upper Room, and place yourself there with the Lord and his friends. Holy Thursday teaches us that....*

***We are a Church born of the Eucharist.***

### **Begin with this prayer**

We come tonight, O Gracious Father,  
to begin the three day Passover Feast,  
at which your Son is our host.  
He will make the Gospel present to us  
in his total self-giving.  
Touch our hearts with wonder this evening,  
to see in faith the Lord of glory  
tie a towel round his waist;  
to witness the Master whom the seas obey  
pour water into the servant's basin;  
to see the one who is King of all the ages  
kneel down to wash the disciples' feet.  
Cleanse us all, and strengthen us,  
that despite the restrictions on our worship,  
we may keep this festival with sincerity and truth.  
Bring us to Easter transformed inwardly  
by our worship and our prayer.  
We ask this through your Son, the Christ,  
who is our Passover and our peace  
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Now read 1 Corinthians 11: 23-25**

This is what I received from the Lord,  
and in turn passed on to you,  
that on the same night that he was betrayed,  
the Lord Jesus took some bread,  
and thanked God for it, and broke it, and he said,  
"This is my body, which is for you; do this as a  
memorial of me." In the same way he took a cup  
after supper, and said, "This cup is the new  
covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do  
this as a memorial of me." Until the Lord comes,  
therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink  
this cup, you are proclaiming his death.

### **Pray Psalm 115**

**The blessing-cup that we bless  
is a communion with the blood of Christ.**

How can I repay the Lord  
for his goodness to me?  
The cup of salvation I will raise,  
I will call on the Lord's name.

O precious in the eyes of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful.  
Your servant Lord, your servant am I,  
You have loosened my bonds.

A thanksgiving sacrifice I make,  
I will call on the Lord's name.  
My vows to the Lord I will fulfil  
before all his people.

### **Read tonight's Gospel from John 13:1-15**



It was before the festival of the Passover, and Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to pass from this world to the Father. He had always loved those who were his in the world, but now he showed how perfect his love was.

They were at supper, and the devil had already put it into the mind of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into his hands, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, and he got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "At the moment, you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand. "Never", said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me". "Then Lord," said Simon Peter, "not only my feet, but my head and my hands as well." Jesus said, "No one who has taken a bath needs washing, he is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are," He knew who was going to betray him, that was why he said, "though not all of you are."

When he had washed their feet and put on his clothes again, he went back to the table. "Do you understand" he said, "what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly, so I am. If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example, so that you may copy what I have done to you.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**



Often, the **washing of feet** takes place after the Gospel. Reflect on your own experience of taking part in this ritual in the past and its expression of servant-love at the heart of the mystery of Christ.

At the end of Mass on Holy Thursday, we usually walk in solemn procession to the Altar of Repose with the Blessed Sacrament, recalling Jesus' journey that night from the Upper Room to the Garden of Gethsemane. There we keep watch.

Later in the evening, you might read this passage from the Gospel of Mark, to keep the biblical focus in your mind and heart as you retire for the night.

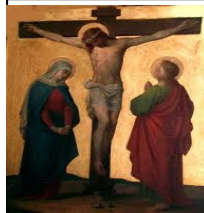
#### Mark 14 32-46

They came to a small estate called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Stay here while I pray". Then he took Peter and James and John with him. And a sudden fear came over him, and great distress. And he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake."

And going on a little further, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. "Abba (Father)!" he said, "Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.

He came back and found them sleeping and he said to Simon Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Had you not the strength to stay awake one hour? You should be awake and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy; and they could find no answer for him. He came back a third time and said to them, "You can sleep on now and have your rest. It is all over. The hour has come. Now the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is close at hand already."

Even while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up with a number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the traitor had arranged a signal with them. "The one I kiss", he had said, "he is the man. Take him in charge and see he is well guarded when you lead him away." So, when the traitor came, he went straight up to Jesus and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him.



## Good Friday of the Lord's passion We are a Church at the foot of the cross

Saint John's Good Friday Passion account embraces earth and heaven. Close to the cross of Jesus stands Mary and the beloved disciple. They stand close enough to hear, see and touch. Good Friday is a day marked by silence, concertina-d in the liturgy by the long silent introduction to the Passion Liturgy, So, begin with a period of silence and focus on your crucifix:

#### A Prayer of Praise to begin

Rejoice O life-bearing Cross!  
You are the invincible trophy of Godliness!  
The door of Paradise! The foundation of the faithful!  
The protection of the Church,  
by which corruption is utterly destroyed  
and the power of death is swallowed up.  
Rejoice O life-bearing Cross!  
We take refuge in the shelter of your wings.  
You are the invincible weapon!  
The adversary of demons! The glory of martyrs!  
The true beauty of saints! The haven of salvation!  
Rejoice O life-bearing Cross.  
On you is hung the world's salvation!

#### Liturgy of the Word

*If you have a missal do read the scriptures in full:*

**Isaiah 52:13-53:12** *The song of the Suffering Servant.*

*Here is a very much shortened version*

See, my servant shall prosper,  
he shall be lifted up, exalted, rise to great heights.  
Like a sapling, he grew up in front of us,  
like a root in arid ground.  
Without beauty, without majesty, we saw him,  
no looks to attract our eyes;  
a thing despised and rejected by men,  
a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering,  
a man to make people screen their faces.  
He was despised, and we took no account of him.  
And yet, ours were the sufferings he bore,  
ours the sorrows he carried.  
He was pierced through for our faults,  
crushed for our sins.  
Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly,  
he never opened his mouth, like a lamb  
that is led to the slaughterhouse, never opening its mouth.

#### Psalm 30

**Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.**

In you O Lord I take refuge,  
let me never be put to shame.  
In your justice, set me free.  
Into your hands I commend my spirit.  
It is you who will redeem me, Lord.

In the face of all my foes, I am a reproach,  
an object of scorn to my neighbours  
and of fear to my friends.

Those who see me in the street  
run far away from me.  
I am like a dead man, forgotten in men's hearts,  
like a thing thrown away.

But as for me, I trust in you, O Lord.  
I say, "You are my God".  
My life is in your hands, deliver me  
from the hands of those who hate me.

Let your face shine on your servant;  
save me in your love.  
Be strong; let your heart take courage,  
all who hope in the Lord.

#### The Glorious Passion of John the Evangelist.

*The full version is John 18:1-19:42*

*This is only a very short excerpt.*

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then to the disciple he said, "This is your mother. And from that moment, the disciple made a place for her in his home.  
After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfil the scripture perfectly, he said, "I am thirsty." A jar full of vinegar stood there, so, putting a sponge soaked in vinegar on a hyssop stick, they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar, he said, "It is accomplished;" and bowing his head he gave up the spirit.

*Take a time of silence to let these words of the Passion sink in.*

#### Intercessions

In the Liturgy, there are ten Good Friday Intercessions in which all the world is prayed for, beginning with the Church, the Holy Father, our Bishop, all God's faithful people; for those to be baptised and joined to the Church, for those who do not yet believe, and those in public office. *If you have a missal, take time to pray these prayers. If not, at least pray this final one and include in it those who are suffering from Covid 19.*

**Let us pray** to God the Father almighty, that he may cleanse the world of all errors, banish disease, drive out hunger, unlock prisons, loosen fetters, granting to travellers safety, to pilgrims return, health to the sick, and salvation to the dying.

#### Pause

Almighty everliving God, comfort of mourners, strength of all who toil, may the prayers of those who cry out to you in any tribulation come before you, that all may rejoice, because in their hour of need, your mercy was at hand. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### Veneration of the Cross

In the Liturgy, we would now proceed to venerate the cross: it would be unveiled and shown to us and the priest would sing joyfully **Behold, the wood of the cross, where hung the Saviour of the world. Come, let us worship, and we would all echo, Come let us worship.**

*In your own home, take time to venerate your crucifix and say:*

We adore you O Christ, and we praise you; because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world:



*You might like to conclude your prayer time by reciting the words of this lovely old hymn:*

**Ye priestly hands**, which on the cruel cross,  
were stretched so wide to welcome all our race.  
Lift up your wounds, before your Father's eyes,  
that I may one day feel their dear embrace.

Ye weary feet, way-worn and pierced for me,  
which contrue Mary bathed with tearful grief,  
O let me lie, like her, beneath your wounds,  
and find for sin's disease, a sure relief.

And thou - thou wounded heart of pity deep,  
through which my way lies to the Father's throne.  
Teach me the love which rent that crimson path,  
gave us thy life but made our pains thine own.

## The Easter Vigil in the holy night

*The Vigil, we know, begins in darkness round the fire, then the great candle is lit and we listen to the whole story of salvation.*

*Celebrating this Vigil alone, you could use your missal and read and pray over the entire texts. Here is given a very much shortened version for use at home.*



*Recall the darkness at the fire and the words the priest solemnly proclaims as he prepares the candle:*

**Christ yesterday and today, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha, and the Omega.**

**All time belongs to him, and all the ages.  
To him be glory and power  
through every age and for ever. Amen.**

*Then the cry goes up: Lumen Christ: Deo Gratias.  
Christ our Light. Thanks be to God.*

*After the Exultet is sung, we settle down to hear the scriptures, the whole story of salvation unfolding.*

*Do take time to follow the pattern of the readings if you are at home, but above all, read the Exodus account and the crossing of the Red Sea, the journey of Israel from slavery to freedom, God's definitive act of salvation for them. Here it is overleaf, unabridged:*