

The Celebration of the Triduum

The celebration of the Triduum takes the form of a series of guided meditations. In order to prepare for the celebration of the Triduum during these extraordinary days, the community will have received and read the theological reflection.

Holy Thursday

Environment

Prepare the place of prayer with a suitable “focus center.” Remember that the liturgical color of the day is white. If you are in a community that reserves the Blessed Sacrament, perhaps gather in that place. Or, a handmade loaf of bread and carafe of wine could be your focus, along with a basin, water and a towel. Have candles lighted and other lights are dim. Make sure everyone has a comfortable place to sit.

Beginning

The leader calls everyone into silence

The leader continues with these, or similar words:

Make yourself comfortable in your chair.

Close your eyes.

Take a few deep breaths.

In your mind, put yourself in the place where you normally worship. Perhaps recall our celebration together last year, when we were on retreat together. Recall where you were seated. In your imagination see other familiar people around you. It’s quiet and peaceful. You are happy to be here, and you await the beginning of the celebration of the greatest Feast of all – the High Holy Days of our ancient Christian tradition.

Over the next three evenings, we will be experiencing the ritual of the Triduum, the three days of festival that commemorates the reality of our faith.

(pause, then continue:)

We begin our celebration on Holy Thursday, the day we celebrate the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist.

Music: Glory in the Cross

Leader: Listen to the gospel for Holy Thursday.

A reading from the Gospel of John:

(Have another voice read the Gospel for the day John 13:1-15)

Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come
to pass from this world to the Father.
He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end.
The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over.
So, during supper,
fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power
and that he had come from God and was returning to God,
he rose from supper and took off his outer garments.
He took a towel and tied it around his waist.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples' feet
and dry them with the towel around his waist.
He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,
"Master, are you going to wash my feet?"
Jesus answered and said to him,
"What I am doing, you do not understand now,
but you will understand later."
Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet."
Jesus answered him,
"Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me."
Simon Peter said to him,
"Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well."
Jesus said to him,
"Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed,
for he is clean all over;
so you are clean, but not all."
For he knew who would betray him;
for this reason, he said, "Not all of you are clean."

So when he had washed their feet
and put his garments back on and reclined at table again,
he said to them, "Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so, for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you, you should also do."

Sacred Silence

(After sufficient silence has been observed, begin playing music, softly:)

Music: Ubi caritas

(Then continue:)

This Gospel of Holy Thursday shows us that Eucharist does not stand alone; it is tied to the ritual of the washing of the feet. Jesus is showing us how to be servant to one another. Jesus has celebrated the paschal meal with his friends, his mother, and the women who always accompany him and see to his needs. He has told us that when we remember him, we are to share a meal with one another. But then, he also demonstrates for us that we are to be of service to one another. Nothing that we can do for one another is too humbling. We are to do as Jesus did . . .

(pause, and then continue):

Be present with Jesus and the other disciples and allow Jesus to wash your feet. Feel the hands of Jesus as he takes off your shoe and begins to gently wash your feet. Experience the healing his touch has for you. Jesus knows the many roads you have walked in your life. He has been with you. What he wants now, is for you to allow him to comfort your weary feet.

(When music ends sit in silence for 5-10 minutes)

(Begin to play music, softly)

Music: Pange lingua

(Wait for the first verse to be sung before continuing; speak slowly)

In your mind see the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the altar of repose where it will stay until Good Friday. After the meal with his family and friends, Jesus went to the Garden of Olives. There he prayed, asking God to let the cup of agony pass him by. But it was not to be. Judas, one of his chosen friends, betrays Jesus and he spends much of the night in jail as a criminal. We spend some time in silent adoration keeping vigil. . . .

Sacred Silence

After a sufficient time of silence is observed, the leader leaves silently, indicating that the evening's prayer is suspended until the community gather again on Good Friday.

If your community keeps the Blessed Sacrament, someone in the community should remove it from its place of reserve and place in another safe and sacred place.