A PRAYER RESOURCE FOR CELEBRATING
THE LITURGIES OF HOLY WEEK

THY WILL BE DONE
"Thy Will be Done" is a prayer resource for all the faithful of the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux. In these strange times, we know that we must seek the Lord with our whole hearts, and ever turn our eyes to him in prayer. But our prayer looks very different this Holy Week, and has done for much of Lent as well. This resource seeks to aid Catholics of all walks of life and all depths of faith to pray as best they can as a Diocese and as one Christian people. How can we do that when we are so far apart from one another? Through preparation, prayer, and processing together as a family. Even when our community may be linked only digitally, if each of us puts forth an effort to really prepare our homes and our hearts to welcome Christ this Holy Week, we will see deep and abiding beauty.

PREPARE

1. **CREATE A HOME ALTAR.**
Make a place where you and your family can gather. Bring in any statues or religious art you may have, candles, and perhaps some beautiful cloth to cover it. Use a small table, preferably one that you can leave as is for the duration of Holy Week.

2. **ARRANGE YOUR TIME FOR PRAYER.**
Turn off any alarms, silence your phone, make sure nothing will distract you from your time with the Lord. This may take some foresight! When do I need to start the laundry so that it doesn’t finish during the Liturgy? When do my children need their naps? Who do I need to notify about my being “offline” during this time?

3. **MAKE YOUR RESOURCES READILY AVAILABLE.**
Have this prayer resource and anything else you feel you need to help you focus in on your prayer ready before the liturgy begins. If you are able, read the readings and/or the reflections ahead of time. The words you find below in bold are your responses to say out loud. This helps to prime your heart, “till the ground”, as it were, in order that the Word of God might be more deeply planted to grow in your heart.
PRAY

1. Focus on the beautiful.
Beauty can be seen in so many aspects of our prayer. Particularly in this time of grief and uncertainty, the beauty of the liturgy can lift our weary spirits. Find even just one thing that you find beautiful about the liturgy, and allow it to steep in your mind and heart as you continue to pray.

2. Focus on one aspect of the prayer.
If the liturgy seems overwhelming, that’s ok; these are long, intense prayers! If it all seems to be too much to take in, choose one thing each time you come to pray: a reading (or even just a few lines), a part of the homily, or a section of the Eucharistic Prayer. Perhaps something special to that particular liturgy moves your heart. Hold on to that! Pray with it!

3. Respond as you normally would.
Does it seem strange to respond to a computer screen? Perhaps. But remember that the graces of the Mass are still flowing, are still sanctifying the world, even when the Body of Christ (that is, the people of God) cannot be physically present. So we give our full attention and hearts to participating as much as we can in the distribution of those graces, as our baptismal priesthood calls us to do.

PROCESS

1. Read the reflections.
If you want to, save the reflections for after Mass and use them to guide your further meditation on the liturgy. Do they speak to you in a particular way? What movements do they cause in your heart? Those reflections can be found on the final pages of this resource.

2. Discuss with your family. Discuss with the Lord.
It’s okay if you and your family are new to discussing Scripture or the liturgy. Start slow. Offer what beauty you saw, or what part of the prayer struck you most. Dive deeper as you feel comfortable. If you desire to go deeper with the Lord, consider spending time journaling about what you read, heard, and felt during the liturgy. Journaling can be a simple exercise, but can have beautiful results.

3. Encourage silence after the liturgy.
Silence is a difficulty in this day-and-age. Even in a time of staying in our homes, there is still much fodder for distraction. Take deliberate time to foster silence after the liturgy. Just 5 minutes can give you the time to absorb the magnitude of what your prayer has provided. Cultivating silence is well worth the effort, and can lead to deeper prayer and deeper understanding of God and his mysteries.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

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.

**Collect**

O God, who on this day, through your Only Begotten Son, have conquered death and unlocked for us the path to eternity, grant, we pray, that we who keep the solemnity of the Lord’s Resurrection may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit, rise up in the light of life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**First Reading | Acts of the Apostles 10:34A, 37-43**

Peter proceeded to speak and said: “You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day
and granted that he be visible, not to all
the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen
by God in advance, who ate and drank
with him after he rose from the dead. He
commissioned us to preach to the people and
testify that he is the one appointed by God
as judge of the living and the dead. To him
all the prophets bear witness, that everyone
who believes in him will receive forgiveness
of sins through his name.”

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 118 | This is the day the Lord has
made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his mercy endures forever.
Let the house of Israel say,
“His mercy endures forever.”

“The right hand of the LORD has struck with
power;
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.
I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the LORD.”

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.

Epistle | I Corinthians 5:6B-8
Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that
a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear
out the old yeast, so that you may become
a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you
are unleavened. For our paschal lamb,
Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us
celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the
yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the
unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Paschal Sequence
Christians, to the Paschal Victim
Offer your thankful praises!
A Lamb the sheep redeems;
Christ, who only is sinless,
Reconciles sinners to the Father.
Death and life have contended in that
combat stupendous:
The Prince of life, who died, reigns
immortal.
Speak, Mary, declaring
“What you saw, wayfaring,
“The tomb of Christ, who is living,
The glory of Jesus’ resurrection;
bright angels attesting,
The shroud and napkin resting.
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;
to Galilee he goes before you.”
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new
life obtaining.
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!
Amen. Alleluia.

Gospel Acclamation | 1 Corinthians 5:7B-8A
Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed;
let us then feast with joy in the Lord.

Gospel | John 20:1-9
On the first day of the week, Mary of
Magdala came to the tomb early in the
morning, while it was still dark, and saw the
stone removed from the tomb. So she ran
and went to Simon Peter and to the other
disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them,
“They have taken the Lord from the tomb,
and we don’t know where they put him.”
So Peter and the other disciple went out
and came to the tomb. They both ran, but
the other disciple ran faster than Peter and
arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and
saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.
When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

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

All may be seated.

Homily

All who are able should stand at this time.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Dear brothers and sisters, through the Paschal Mystery we have been buried with Christ in Baptism, so that we may walk with him in newness of life. And so, now that our Lenten observance is concluded, let us renew the promises of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and his works and promised to serve God in the holy Catholic Church. And so I ask you:

Do you renounce Satan?
R: I do.

And all his works?
R: I do.

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?
R: I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?
R: I do.

Do you 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?
R: I do.

And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins, keep us by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord, for eternal life. Amen.

The Bishop sprinkles those present with holy water.

Sprinkling Rite Antiphon

I saw water flowing from the Temple, from its right-hand side, alleluia; and all to whom this water came were saved and shall say: Alleluia, alleluia.
**Universal Prayers**

That the joy of Christ’s resurrection might not be overshadowed by the trials and difficulties we face, we pray to the Lord: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

That faith in Christ’s resurrection may inspire those who are struggling to find hope, we pray to the Lord: **Lord hear our prayer.**

That our lives might always reflect the new persons we became as we passed through the waters of baptism, we pray to the Lord: **Lord hear our prayer.**

That patience, tolerance, compassion and kindness may be afforded to those who have lost the sources of their livelihoods during this pandemic, we pray to the Lord: **Lord hear our prayer.**

That those who have died during this pandemic may be united to the risen Lord and enjoy eternal life, we pray to the Lord: **Lord hear our prayer.**

All may be seated. During the Offertory, it is a noble practice for the faithful to call to mind those prayers, works, joys, and sufferings that are close to their hearts, and to lay them on the altar with the gifts of bread and wine.

**Offertory**

**Offertory Antiphon**

*All who are able should stand at this point.*

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father. **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

**Prayer Over the Offerings**

Exultant with paschal gladness, O Lord, we offer the sacrifice by which your Church is wondrously reborn and nourished. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Preface**

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right and just.**

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, at all times to acclaim you, O Lord, but on this night above all to laud you yet more gloriously, when Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. For he is the true Lamb who has taken away the sins of the world; by dying he has destroyed our death, and by rising, restored our life. Therefore, overcome with paschal joy, every land, every people exults in your praise and even the heavenly Powers, with the angelic hosts, sing together the unending hymn of your glory, as they acclaim:

**Offertory Antiphon**

*Terra tremuit, et quievit, dum resurgeret in iudicio Deus, alleluia.*

*English Translation:*

The earth trembled and was still when God arose in judgement, alleluia.
Sanctus
Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

All who are able are encouraged to kneel as the
Eucharistic Prayer is continued.

Memorial Acclamation
The mystery of faith:
Save us, Savior of the world, for by your
cross and resurrection, you have set us free.

Doxology
Through him, and with him, and in him, O
God Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy
Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, for ever
and ever. Amen.

Those who were kneeling may stand.

Our Father
At the Savior’s command and informed by
divine teaching, we dare to say: Our Father...

Angus Dei
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the
world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the
world, grant us peace.

All who are able are encouraged to kneel at this
point in adoration.

Ecce Agnus Dei
Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who
takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are
those called to the supper of the Lamb.
Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter
under my roof, but only say the word and
my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
Pascha nostrum immolatus est
Christus, alleluia; itaque epulemur
in azymis sinceritatis et veritatis,
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

English Translation:
Christ our Passover has been
sacrificed, alleluia; therefore let us
keep the feast with the unleavened
bread of purity and truth, alleluia,
alleluia, alleluia.

Prayer of Spiritual Communion
My Jesus, I believe that you are present in
the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above
all things and I desire to receive you in my
soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive
you sacramentally, come at least spiritually
into my heart. I embrace you as if you were
already there and unite myself wholly to
you. Never permit me to be separated from
you. Amen.
**Prayer after Communion**

Grant, almighty God, that, just as we are renewed by the Supper of your Son in this present age, so we may enjoy his banquet for all eternity. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord be with you.
**And with your spirit.**
BOW down for the blessing.

*All here bow.*

May almighty God bless you through today’s Easter Solemnity and, in his compassion, defend you from every assault of sin. Amen.

And may he, who restores you to eternal life in the Resurrection of his Only Begotten, endow you with the prize of immortality. Amen.

Now that the days of the Lord’s Passion have drawn to a close, may you who celebrate the gladness of the Paschal Feast come with Christ’s help, and exulting in spirit, to those feasts that are celebrated in eternal joy. Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, X and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever. The faithful make the sign of the cross. Amen.

Go in peace, alleluia, alleluia!
**Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia!**

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**Regina Caeli**

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

*English Translation:*

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
The Son you merited to bear, alleluia,
Has risen as he said, alleluia.
Pray to God for us, alleluia.

**Jesus Christ is Risen Today**

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!
Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; nor allow thy holy one to see corruption. (Ps 15: 10)

I have risen up, because the Lord hath protected me. (Psalm 3: 6)

The angel came again: and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep. (Zachariah 4: 1)

The third day He will raise us up, to live in His sight. (Hosea 6: 3)

Reflected. Discuss. Be Joyous.

The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed.
You have prepared, you have prayed, and now it’s time to process. As a reminder, here are the three steps of processing the Mass after you have joined in the celebration:

1. **Read the reflections.**
   If you want to, save the reflections for after Mass and use them to guide your further meditation on the liturgy. Do they speak to you in a particular way? What movements do they cause in your heart?

2. **Discuss with your family. Discuss with the Lord.**
   It’s okay if you and your family are new to discussing Scripture or the liturgy. Start slow. Offer what beauty you saw, or what part of the prayer struck you most. Dive deeper as you feel comfortable. If you desire to go deeper with the Lord, consider spending time journaling about what you read, heard, and felt during the liturgy. Journaling can be a simple exercise, but can have beautiful results.

3. **Encourage silence after the liturgy.**
   Silence is a difficulty in this day-and-age. Even in a time of staying in our homes, there is still much fodder for distraction. Take deliberate time to foster silence after the liturgy. Just 5 minutes can give you the time to absorb the magnitude of what your prayer has provided. Cultivating silence is well worth the effort, and can lead to deeper prayer and deeper understanding of God and his mysteries.

**Reflection on Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43**

It is true that we know a lot in our day-and-age. We have solved many of the puzzles that surround us in the universe. Of course, we also know there are billions more to be solved. The Jews and Gentiles of Christ’s time probably felt the same: whether by trial-and-error, or by scientific deduction, they knew quite a bit already about the world around them. And yet, there was one thing that they did not have a grasp on, and that is what Peter comes to speak to them about: Jesus Christ, Messiah, King, and God. Who was he? What had he done to have men speak about him with such conviction in their hearts? The truth of who Christ was, is, and ever shall be cannot be known fully through deduction, or through pieces of datum. Christ is not a puzzle to be solved; he is the Lord, and he is to be loved. Peter knew that, and knew that he must speak to the people and help them to believe in something that they could not see. So how did he do it, to the point where he, Paul and all of the other Apostles helped to establish a Church that has stood the test of time and malignency? Conviction, yes, but conviction in charity. Peter did not simply shove Christ down the throats of the people he spoke to; Christ radiated through him, Christ who is God Himself, the God who is love itself. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI’s work *Caritas in Veritate* tells us that charity only blooms in the light of truth. Truth, also, is not the truth if it is not presented in charity, for both are deeply intertwined.

Our hearts need truth in charity in these days. We need Christ. We need to be as united to him as we can be, and strive to deepen that unity in all that we do. The Easter season is a time when we can strive in joy to do just that: to come closer to the God who desires only the best for us, and who desires to shower us with the truth that will free us, and the love that comes with it.
Reflection on the Epistle | 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians here asks for something that, at first blush, seems very simple: he asks that Christians “throw away the old leaven” and live in sincerity and truth. Seems easy enough! But we know, as weak humans, prone to sin, that it isn’t, in fact, so easy to live sincerity and truth in every moment of every day. Sometimes it is especially difficult when the people around you are not also living sincerely or truthfully. So how do we do it?

We must try, every single day, to be just a little bit better. Slightly more sincere. Somewhat more truthful. If you’re a baker, you know that most types of bread require kneading, proving, in short, hours of work! You wear your arms out sometimes kneading the dough to perfection. You peek into the oven every few hours to see if the dough is rising properly. You also don’t get a perfectly beautiful loaf every time you go to make one! It’s the same in the spiritual life. We don’t always get it right the first time...or the second...or the third...or...you can see where this is going. But the most beautiful thing that you can do is continue to strive toward holiness. Keep throwing out the “old leaven” (a symbol of our favorite sins and past transgressions of the Lord) and trying again. Come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, be washed clean, and go out and try living the Christian life again. Surround yourself with people who will help you to do it, who will pick you up when you fall, and who will love you through everything. A very wise woman once said “Real change is not sweeping or fast. Real change is slow, quiet. It is not a tide turning, but rather a few grains of sand moving along the beach.” So keep moving slowly along, fighting for the person you want to be in God’s eyes!

Reflection on the Gospel | John 20:1-9

Mary Magdalene was likely guilty of grave sin. She was possessed by seven demons (Mark 16:9) before Jesus came and cast them out. The life that she lived before Christ entered in was not one to be proud of. And yet she is now called saint! Apostle to the Apostles! In the Gospels, we see Jesus appear first to Mary, before we see him appear to anyone else! How is that possible?

It is possible because of how Mary responded to Christ: with a willingness and obedience to change, to turn away from sin. Jesus Christ raises many a sinner from the depths of their sinfulness and makes them new. Mary Magdalene is a prime example of this. She is so changed by Christ that she goes to visit his tomb after he has died, perhaps to mourn him further. When she sees that he is gone, she does not understand yet. Neither do the Apostles who come to see what she has told them. But in the very next lines of John’s Gospel, Mary sees the angels in the tomb, who tell her of the Resurrection, and then Christ himself moments later! She sees that the one she loves is living still, and so she takes that news to the Apostles: the one who has redeemed us all is living still! She flees the dead and empty tomb, proclaiming life. She leaves the dust and death of her old life, of her favorite sins, and runs into the light of new life.

Am I willing to see the risen Lord and give him my whole heart? Am I willing to put down those sins I hold so close so that he can change me for the better, even if it will be painful? Am I willing to get up out of my sin, see it for what it truly is, and leave it behind? It is nothing but our own free choices that pull us away from the Lord! So let us choose Christ; let us choose life; let us choose to rejoice in the Resurrection and live as children of the light!