THY WILL BE DONE
A PRAYER RESOURCE FOR CELEBRATING THE LITURGIES OF HOLY WEEK
“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.
Those who are able should stand at this time. This liturgy begins in silence. The celebrants will begin by kneeling and praying silently as we grieve the death of our Lord.

There is no Sign of the Cross or Welcome, as this is a continuation of the Liturgy begun at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper.

PRAYER
O God, who by the Passion of Christ your Son, our Lord, abolished the death inherited from ancient sin by every succeeding generation, grant that just as, being conformed to him, we have borne by the law of nature the image of the man of earth, so by the sanctification of grace we may bear the image of the Man of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

All may be seated.

Old Testament | Isaiah 52:13-53:12
See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him so marred was his look beyond human semblance and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man so shall he startle many nations, because of him kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.

Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by people, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom people hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins; upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed. We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the LORD laid upon him the guilt of us all.

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearer, he was silent and opened not his mouth. Oppressed and condemned, he was taken
away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, a grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. But the LORD was pleased to crush him in infirmity.

If he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.

Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days; through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked; and he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm 31
R. 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 rescue me. Into your hands I commend my spirit; you will redeem me, O LORD, O faithful God.

For all my foes I am an object of reproach, a laughingstock to my neighbors, and a dread to my friends; they who see me abroad flee from me. I am forgotten like the unremembered dead; I am like a dish that is broken.

But my trust is in you, O LORD; I say, “You are my God. In your hands is my destiny; rescue me from the clutches of my enemies and my persecutors.”

Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your kindness. Take courage and be stouthearted, all you who hope in the LORD.

Epistle | Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9
Brothers and sisters: Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

In the days when Christ was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Those who are able should stand at this time.
**Gospel Acclamation | Philippians 2:8-9**

Christ became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name.

**Gospel | John 18:1—19:42**

Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, “Whom are you looking for?” They answered him, “Jesus the Nazorean.” He said to them, “I AM.” Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, “I AM,” they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” They said, “Jesus the Nazorean.” Jesus answered, “I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.” This was to fulfill what he had said, “I have not lost any of those you gave me.” Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?”

So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter, “You are not one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.” Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. Jesus answered him, “I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing. Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. They know what I said.” When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said, “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing there keeping warm. And they said to him, “You are not one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said, “Didn’t I see you in the
“Garden with him?” Again Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.

Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and said, “What charge do you bring against this man?” They answered and said to him, “If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.” At this, Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.” The Jews answered him, “We do not have the right to execute anyone,” in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die. So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered, “Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?” Pilate answered, “I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here.” So Pilate said to him, “Then you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them, “I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” They cried out again, “Not this one but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them, “Behold, the man!” When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!”

Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.” The Jews answered, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.” Now when Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” Jesus did not answer him. So Pilate said to him, “Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?” Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.” Consequently, Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out, “If you release him, you are not a Friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.”

When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was preparation day.
for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews, “Behold, your king!” They cried out, “Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your king?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.” Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that he said, ‘I am the King of the Jews’.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be, “in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says: They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots. This is what the soldiers did. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I thirst.” There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, “It is finished.” And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe. For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled: Not a bone of it will be broken. And again another passage says: They will look upon him whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked...
Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

*All may be seated.*

**HOMILY**

**SOLEMN INTERCESSIONS**

*Those who are able are welcome to kneel during the times of silent prayer between each petition and its prayer. Alternatively, the faithful may remain kneeling or standing throughout the entire period of the prayers.*

I. FOR HOLY CHURCH

Let us pray, dearly beloved, for the holy Church of God, that our God and Lord be pleased to give her peace, to guard her and to unite her throughout the whole world and grant that, leading our life in tranquility and quiet, we may glorify God the Father almighty.

*Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:* Almighty ever-living God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, hear our humble prayer for your ministers, that, by the gift of your grace, all may serve you faithfully. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

II. FOR THE POPE

Let us pray also for our most Holy Father Pope Francis, that our God and Lord, who chose him for the Order of Bishops, may keep him safe and unharmed for the Lord’s holy Church, to govern the holy People of God.

*Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:* Almighty ever-living God, by whose decree all things are founded, look with favor on our prayers and in your kindness protect the Pope chosen for us, that, under him, the Christian people, governed by you their maker, may grow in merit by reason of their faith. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

III. FOR ALL ORDERS AND DEGREES OF THE FAITHFUL

Let us pray also for our Bishop Shelton, for all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Church and for the whole of the faithful people.

*Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:* Almighty ever-living God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, hear our humble prayer for your ministers, that, by the gift of your grace, all may serve you faithfully. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

IV. FOR CATECHUMENS

Let us pray also for our catechumens, that our God and Lord may open wide the ears of their inmost hearts and unlock the gates of his mercy, that, having received forgiveness of all their sins through the waters of rebirth, they, too, may be one with Christ Jesus our Lord.
Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, who make your Church ever fruitful with new offspring, increase the faith and understanding of our catechumens, that, reborn in the font of Baptism, they may be added to the number of your adopted children. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

V. For the unity of Christians
Let us pray also for all our brothers and sisters who believe in Christ, that our God and Lord may be pleased, as they live the truth, to gather them together and keep them in his one Church.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, who gather what is scattered and keep together what you have gathered, look kindly on the flock of your Son, that those whom one Baptism has consecrated may be joined together by integrity of faith and united in the bond of charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VI. For the Jewish people
Let us pray also for the Jewish people, to whom the Lord our God spoke first, that he may grant them to advance in love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, who bestowed your promises on Abraham and his descendants, graciously hear the prayers of your Church, that the people you first made your own may attain the fullness of redemption. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VII. For those who do not believe in Christ
Let us pray also for those who do not believe in Christ, that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they, too, may enter on the way of salvation.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, grant to those who do not confess Christ that, by walking before you with a sincere heart, they may find the truth and that we ourselves, being constant in mutual love and striving to understand more fully the mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

VIII. For those who do not believe in God
Let us pray also for those who do not acknowledge God, that, following what is right in sincerity of heart, they may find the way to God himself.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, who created all people to seek you always by desiring you and, by finding you, come to rest, grant, we pray, that, despite every harmful obstacle, all may recognize the signs of your fatherly love and the witness of the good works done by those who believe in you, and so in gladness confess you, the one true God and Father of our human race. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

IX. For those in public office
Let us pray also for those in public office, that our God and Lord may direct their minds and
hearts according to his will for the true peace and freedom of all.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, in whose hand lies every human heart and the rights of peoples, look with favor, we pray, on those who govern with authority over us, that throughout the whole world, the prosperity of peoples, the assurance of peace, and freedom of religion may through your gift be made secure. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

X. For those in tribulation

Let us pray, dearly beloved, 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 travelers safety, to pilgrims return, health to the sick, and salvation to the dying.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God, comfort of mourners, strength of all who toil, may the prayers of those who cry out 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.

XI. For an end to the current pandemic

Let us pray also for a timely end to the current pandemic plaguing the world that our God and Lord may grant healing to the sick, protection and courage for their care-givers, and constancy in faith to all believers.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty, ever-living God, source of all life and goodness, look down with mercy upon our world, stricken by the scourge of disease, and protect us in Your loving providence, that those who are sick may find healing, those who provide care may be strengthened, and those seeking the destruction of this plague may bear fruit. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Adoration of the Holy Cross

The Bishop will take up a crucifix, covered with a violet veil, and will unveil and elevate the crucifix in three parts. After each part, the following will be chanted, then all who are able kneel or genuflect and for a brief moment adore in silence, while the Bishop stands and holds the Cross raised:

Behold, the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world. Come let us adore.

The Bishop will venerate the Cross with a kiss, then place the Cross before the altar. All are encouraged to adore the Cross silently for a few moments.
The Reproaches

My people, what have I done to you? Or how have I grieved you? Answer me! Because I led you out of the land of Egypt, you have prepared a Cross for your Savior.

Hagios O Theos, Holy is God, Hagios Ischyros, Holy and Mighty, Hagios Athanatos, eleison himas. Holy and Immortal One, have mercy on us.

Because I led you out through the desert forty years and fed you with manna and brought you into a land of plenty, you have prepared a Cross for your Savior.

Hagios o Theos...

What more should I have done for you and have not done? Indeed, I planted you as my most beautiful chosen vine and you have turned very bitter for me, for in my thirst you gave me vinegar to drink and with a lance you pierced your Savior’s side.

Our Father

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

The Bishop removes the Eucharist from the ciborium and elevates it. Just as at Mass, 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.

After the faithful make their act of spiritual communion, Psalm 22 is chanted.

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.
Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you far from saving me, so far from my words of anguish? O my God, I call by day and you do not answer; I call by night and I find no reprieve.

Yet you, O God, are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our forebears put their trust; they trusted and you set them free. When they cried to you, they escaped; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm and no man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me deride me; they curl their lips, they toss their heads: “He trusted in the Lord, let him save him; let him release him, for in him he delights.”

Yes, it was you who took me from the womb, entrusted me to my mother’s breast. To you I was committed from birth; from my mother’s womb, you have been my God. Stay not far from me; trouble is near, and there is no one to help.

Many bulls have surrounded me, fierce bulls of Bashan close me in. Against me they open wide their mouths, like a lion, rending and roaring.

Like water I am poured out, disjointed are all my bones. My heart has become like wax, it is melted within my breast.

Parched as burnt clay is my throat, my tongue cleaves to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; a band of the wicked besets me. They tear holes in my hands and my feet; I can count every one of my bones. They stare at me and gloat. They divide my clothing among them, they cast lots for my robe.

But you, O Lord, do not stay afar off; my strength, make haste to help me! Rescue my soul from the sword, my life from the grip of the dog. Save my life from the jaws of the lion, my poor soul from the horns of wild bulls.

I will tell of your name to my kin, and praise you in the midst of the assembly; “You who fear the Lord, give him praise; all descendants of Jacob, give him glory; revere him, all you descendants of Israel.

For he has never despised nor scorned the poverty of the poor. From him he has not hidden his face, but he heard him whenever he cried.”

You are my praise in the great assembly. My vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and shall have their fill. They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him. May their hearts live on forever and ever!

All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord, all families of the nations worship before him, for the kingdom is the Lord’s, he is ruler of the nations. They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust.

And my soul shall live for him, my descendants serve him. They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come, declare his saving justice to peoples yet unborn: “These are the things the Lord has done.”

REMEMBER...

REFLECT.

DISCUSS.

BE SILENT.
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 the Old Testament Reading | Isaiah 52:13-53:12**

The first reading is the fourth of four “Servant Songs” found in Isaiah 40-55. The song speaks very generally about a devoted servant of the Lord, who did not achieve his status because of attributes human beings would usually see as impressive. The servant’s great devotion to the Lord leads him into suffering, a suffering he freely accepts, and yet he does not fight back against his persecutors. That the Lord’s servant would suffer does not reflect the general Old Testament association of suffering with dishonor or even sinfulness. In his suffering he accepts the consequence the wicked should endure. The idea that God’s servant “gives his life as an offering for sin” is also not a common concept in the Old Testament. What is meant here is not that he makes up for the guilt of others by his suffering. Rather, his startling example of enduring great affliction while remaining faithful to serving the Lord inspires others to follow his example and be themselves true servants of the Lord. At the end of the song, God bestows favor and honor upon him for his faithfulness. Christians have seen Jesus in his suffering as the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy. Unlike the servant in the original sense of the song, Jesus, by his suffering, does more than encourage others to follow his example, for he in fact takes upon himself the sins of the guilty and makes atonement for them.

It is human nature to avoid suffering; our world advocates running from it. But the servant in Isaiah 52:13-53:12 faces it in order to remain faithful to God. Jesus does this to an even greater extent. It is important for us to remember that the inconveniences and perhaps even hardships of this pandemic are no reason to ignore or abandon our faith. Suffering, which is repulsive to the world, has been given meaning by Jesus Christ, because by his suffering he brought redemption to the world.
Reflection on the Epistle | Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

The author of Hebrews resumes an image of Jesus he introduced earlier in the letter, that of Jesus as “High Priest.” Though Jesus is the God’s Son, he is not a High Priest who is out-of-touch with our human struggles with sin, because, being fully human, he endured temptation. However, he drew on the strength provided by his faithfulness and obedience to the Father’s will to overcome it. Jesus does not look upon us simply as rebellious people who in our sins “should have known better.” Rather, his experience of human life gave him first-hand knowledge of how hard it is for us. So, at once as priest and sacrifice, he offers himself back to the Father and atones for our sins once-and-for-all. The author tells us that Jesus was made perfect by suffering. He means to say that, while suffering could have led him away from God’s will, rather by accepting suffering to remain faithful to God’s will he made the offering of a perfectly obedient life to God.

God gives us life and the freedom to choose how we will use it. Ultimately the life we are given will have to be offered back to God. The question is, “What kind of person will we offer to God when the time comes to hand over our lives to God? That offering is being shaped every day, every moment by the choices we make. If we unite ourselves fully to Jesus in faith, then the offering of our lives will be combined with his perfect offering.

Reflection on the Gospel | John 18:28-19:42

John presents to us a Jesus who, even in the midst of his passion and death is orchestrating God’s plan to re-create the world. Throughout John’s Passion Narrative Jesus is in control of events. In John 12:27 Jesus declares that his “hour” (the moment of his most significant act in the process of saving the world from sin and darkness) has come, as his passion is about to be set in motion. During his interrogation by Pilate, the governor can find nothing with which to charge him. In addition, when Pilate questions Jesus’ assertion that he had come into the world to bear witness to the truth, Jesus turns the tables on him and puts him in a place to consider whether he embraces the truth. Therefore Pilate ends up on trial! John does not depict Jesus questioning whether or not God has forsaken him (Mark 15:34), because earlier Jesus declared that the Father is always with him (16:32). Jesus is executed, but earlier he declared that he himself has control over laying down his life and taking it up again (10:17-18). Jesus’ final words, “It is finished” (more precisely, “It has come to completion”) indicate that the plan of salvation that the Divine Word was sent by the Father to carry out has been accomplished. Jesus’ death is part of that predetermined plan.

John makes a case that, although Jesus may have appeared to have been overwhelmed and defeated in his passion, the opposite is true. In perfect union with the Father and the Father’s will, Jesus turns the situation to the advantage of God’s plan. This pandemic seems to have taken over our lives, and we might feel out-of-control or that the situation is overwhelming. If we embrace John’s message that in the midst of his passion Jesus, united to the Father, remains in control of the situation, we through faith in him can believe he is also in control of our situation.

Now can be a time of discussion with your family, and of furthering your prayer through silence and journaling. As we continue into the celebration of the Sacred Triduum, more resources will be made available to aid you in prayer.