

## Family Rituals for Holy Week

The reality we are living poses challenges that theologians and liturgists never thought would be able to occur, therefore we're not prepared with liturgical guides or pastoral resources to help face them. For example, to have closed churches and chapels, but above all be locked up at home. Had we heard those prophets who insisted on us strengthening family catechesis, we would be better prepared today. Very few ministers and laity believe that each family is and should be a domestic church. Family should be where faith is celebrated, deepened in catechesis and practiced in solidarity. Family is the school of community. Possibly this is due to us not knowing our own history, in the beginning, the community preached and prayed in the homes, and the head of household was who led in prayer and liturgical rites.

However, now the circumstances offer us the opportunity to return to the father and to the mother that opportunity to preside family liturgy. With that in mind, here is a guide, that employs the suggested readings for the Lectionary of Cycle A. The majority of Bishops in California have dispensed the obligation of the obligation to participate in Holy Mass on Sundays, but they are suggesting the participation in the liturgy over the internet or on television. This guide does not pretend to substitute the opportunity to watch the rites on screen, but to reinforce that experience with a few moments of family prayer that put flesh to the presence of Jesus among the family.

### PALM SUNDAY

#### THINGS TO PREPARE

1. An altar with a cross and a candle (preferably battery operated)
2. Small twigs for the participants
3. A Bible
4. If possible three readings

#### Rite

All stand, each with their small branch in hand.

**Head of household:** My Lord come to my aid.

**All:** Lord, hurry to come to help us.

Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**All:** As it was in the beginning, and now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Brothers and Sisters let us bless the Father who allows us to gather in His name to publicly acclaim and acknowledge His Son as our Lord and King.

**All:** Blessed be God for forever.

For the following reading you may print this form or use your own Bible.

Reading according to the Gospel of Mathew **21: 1-11**

When Jesus and the disciples drew near Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them,

“Go into the village opposite you,  
and immediately you will find an ass tethered,  
and a colt with her.  
Untie them and bring them here to me.  
And if anyone should say anything to you, reply,  
‘The master has need of them.’  
Then he will send them at once.”  
This happened so that what had been spoken through the prophet  
might be fulfilled:  
*Say to daughter Zion,*  
*“Behold, your king comes to you,*  
*meek and riding on an ass,*  
*and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.”*  
The disciples went and did as Jesus had ordered them.  
They brought the ass and the colt and laid their cloaks over them,  
and he sat upon them.  
The very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road,  
while others cut branches from the trees  
and strewed them on the road.  
The crowds preceding him and those following  
kept crying out and saying:  
“Hosanna to the Son of David;  
blessed is the he who comes in the name of the Lord;  
hosanna in the highest.”  
And when he entered Jerusalem  
the whole city was shaken and asked, “Who is this?”  
And the crowds replied,  
“This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee.”

At the end of the readings consider the following ideas:

- Jesus is the humble king who shows us the power of God with gestures of poverty and simplicity, He who is the greatest makes himself the smallest.
- Jesus is the King since He is the way and the truth of life and only those who follow Him find true happiness.
- Our family should express with gestures of humility and mutual support that we have understood what Jesus taught us.

We dampen our twigs in a tray previously prepared (if we have holy water, better) and we walk towards the altar, we can do it with a hymn.

Upon arriving at our altar, we place our palms around the cross offering our promise to Jesus to help Him to carry his cross.

We can print and distribute the reading of The Passion to three lectors: C: Narrator, S: Townspeople, +: Head of Household

## Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mathew 26:14-27, 66

C - Jesus stood before the governor, Pontius Pilate, who questioned him,

S - "Are you the king of the Jews?"

C - Jesus said,

+ - "You say so."

C - And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer.

Then Pilate said to him,

S - "Do you not hear how many things they are testifying against you?"

C - But he did not answer him one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner whom they wished.

And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them

S - "Which one do you want me to release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ?"

C - For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over.

While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent him a message,

S - "Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I suffered much in a dream today because of him."

C - The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus.

The governor said to them in reply,

S - "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

C - They answered,

S - "Barabbas!"

C - Pilate said to them,

S - "Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?"

C - They all said,

S - "Let him be crucified!"

C - But he said,

S - "Why? What evil has he done?"

C - They only shouted the louder,

S - "Let him be crucified!"

C - When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands in the sight of the crowd, saying,

S - "I am innocent of this man's blood. Look to it yourselves."

C - And the whole people said in reply,

S - "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

C - Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet military cloak about him.

Weaving a crown out of thorns, they placed it on his head, and a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying,

S - "Hail, King of the Jews!"

C - They spat upon him and took the reed and kept striking him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha — which means Place of the Skull —, they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall. But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink. After they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there.

And they placed over his head the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.

Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and the other on his left.

Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying,

S - "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, if you are the Son of God, and come down from the cross!"

C - Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him and said,

S - "He saved others; he cannot save himself. So he is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the

cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

**C** - The revolutionaries who were crucified with him also kept abusing him in the same way. From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

**+ -** "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"

**C** - which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Some of the bystanders who heard it said,

**S** - "This one is calling for Elijah."

**C** - Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said,

**S** - "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him."

**C** - But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit.

**(Everyone kneels here and keeps silence for a few moments)**

**C** - And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said,

**S** - "Truly, this was the Son of God!"

**C** - Word of the Lord

**All** - Glory to you Lord

**At the end of the reading the Head of Household can make the following questions for dialogue:**

- What impresses you about this reading?
- Have you thought that Jesus did this all for his love for you, for love for me and for love of all?
- Jesus did not ask for anything in return, but how can we respond to so much love?

**Together we recite the Nicene Creed**

**Then we pray the following prayer as a family**

Jesus left in Peter a firm rock to sustain the Church, we pray for Pope Francis, may He grant him a long life and much health to continue to guide the Church with the spirit of simplicity, humility, love for the sick and the poor, we pray to the Lord.

**All:** United as a family we pray to you Lord

Jesus chose his apostles and his disciples to continue his work we ask pray for our bishops for our priests, for our deacons, so that the tests that they are going through at this time of crisis due to the pandemic, strengthen their faith, their hope and their love for the communities entrusted to them, we pray to the Lord.

**All:** United as a family we pray to the Lord

Jesus was condemned by unjust authorities, we pray for our civic leaders so that they are defenders of the weak, of the most abandoned, that they are not just moved by economic interests and the struggle for power, we pray to the Lord.

**All:** United as a family we pray to the Lord

Jesus is the way, the truth and life, may He also be the safe support to all medical personnel who is risking their own life in this struggle against the pandemic of coronavirus, we pray to the Lord.

**All:** United as a family we pray to the Lord

Jesus agonized and suffered the pain of death, we pray for those who have passed, so that they find in the home of the Father, true joy that cannot be bought with gold nor silver, and for those who are going through illness so that they place all their trust in the healing love of Jesus, we pray to the Lord.

**All:** United as family we pray to the Lord

Jesus sacrificed his life out of love for us and gave us an example of humility, simplicity and true love, we pray that our family can be an example of simplicity, humility, and mutual service, so that we remain joyful and we take the love of God to our school, job, and our neighbors, we pray to the Lord.

**All:** United as a family we pray to the Lord

Jesus was born in a family and his mother was with him in the most difficult moments of his life, we pray for our family, may we not lack our daily bread, may we not lack love or unity, may we not lack faith to overcome this adversity, we pray to the Lord.

**All:** United as a family we pray to the Lord

**Together we recite:** Our Father

We end with this blessing

**Head of Household** – May the Lord bless us, keep us from every evil and lead us to eternal life.

**R.** Amen

**We can conclude with a hymn**

**You may place your twig, branch or palm on your door or at your home's entrance as a symbol and motivation of Christian household.**