

How can we live Holy Week from home?

Next week will be a very strange Holy Week. This year there will be no public Chrism Mass or washing of feet on Maundy Thursday, no public veneration of the cross on Good Friday, no public Easter Vigil. But what we can do is live Holy Week at home. We can live-stream Masses and the Good Friday liturgy, perhaps Stations of the Cross too or we can watch them on Youtube and Fr Gerry is doing what he can with Skype for those who wish to join interactively from one of our Churches. See the Covid-19 Supplementary Information/newsletter for further details.

Here are some tips on how to enter into the spirit of the week from home:

Not being physically at Mass can be incredibly distressing, particularly during Holy Week and yes, reading the readings at home is not the same as being at Mass. But this is such an important week for the Church that it's vital we read them ourselves to recall what Jesus went through for us. It will also give us some semblance of normality.

You can find each days readings at the bottom of the home page of our website gloucesteremaoc.com

For those of you who do not have internet access but do have a bible at home here are the Gospel reading references for everyday of Holy Week and Easter Sunday.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord Matthew 26:14-27:66

Holy Monday John 12:1-11

Holy Tuesday John 13:21-33 and 36-38

Holy Wednesday Matthew 26:14-25

Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Last Supper John 13:1-15

Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion John 18:1-19:42

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil Matthew 28:1-10

Easter Sunday Mass of the Day John 20:1-9

With all this extra time, we can draw closer to God by meditating on the readings. You can find helpful reflections by Scripture in various places if you have internet access or you can just read it over a few times yourself

prayerfully. Is there a particular theme, word, or sentence that strikes you? What is God trying to tell you? What must Jesus have felt?

Most of us would pray the Stations of the Cross at church with our parish, but now that's not possible we can still do it at home. This is a really important devotion for Holy Week because then more than ever we need to meditate on Jesus' Passion. The Catholic Truth Society will be praying two Stations every day throughout Holy Week from St John Henry Newman on the Hozana prayer platform at <https://hozana.org/t/nu7nR> and Fr Gerry recommends Bishop Robert Barron's Youtube Stations

Most of us don't have Confession available to us right now, but we can still examine our consciences at home and beg God's forgiveness for them. Jesus died for our sins so the least we can do in return is be aware of them and come to him asking for mercy. It should be noted that this does not mean that mortal sins will be forgiven, however, and they should still be confessed to a priest in the sacrament of reconciliation at the soonest available opportunity. Watch Cardinal Nichols video on this see <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/> or

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=jMqeXLKT8hE&feature=emb_logo

Whether you're live-streaming at home or not, why not observe the rituals of the Triduum as part of a liturgy at home?

On Maundy Thursday, someone can volunteer to have their feet washed and another to wash them, to emulate the humility of Jesus at the Last Supper.

On Good Friday, gather together at 3 pm, the time Jesus died, and using a crucifix you have at home, venerate it yourselves. When the Passion is read aloud on Good Friday, each part is often read by different people and this is something that can easily be done at home.

You might like to gather together everyone in your household on the evening of Holy Saturday to read all or some of the readings. If you have multiple candles in your home, everyone could light their own candle from the main one to imitate lighting candles from the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil. Later, ring a bell if you have one. Listen to the Exsultet.

You may not find livestreaming Mass or watching one on YouTube on a Sunday helpful, but we recommend doing it during Holy Week because the

Masses and Good Friday service are so different and special. It's helpful when live-streaming to set up some kind of "altar" e.g. with a crucifix and a Missal in front of the screen you'll be streaming it on. Rather than sitting on the sofa, consider sitting on a hardback chair and using cushions as kneelers, to enter more prayerfully into Mass. Try not to do anything through it that you wouldn't normally do in Mass – so don't chat to your family, use your phone, eat, or come in your pyjamas.

You might prefer livestreaming with a religious order, so there is a congregation rather than just a priest. This makes it feel a bit more like Mass. Or try coming together with others from our parishes on the EMAOC Parishioners Skype Group.

As with Mass, you can go to adoration online, for example at the Walsingham Shrine or at Tyburn Convent where they have perpetual adoration. We really recommend spending some time in adoration this Holy Week, perhaps by yourself or with your household, and behave as you would during adoration at church, for example praying silently or reading Scripture. You can also sit there and talk to Jesus about how you feel about the lockdown, or about the pain of not being able to get to Mass in Holy Week, or ask Him to help you understand His Passion.

Jesus may not be physically present in your room in the same way, but He is physically present there behind the camera and He will not let the physical distance between you be a physical barrier.

Easter during lockdown can still be full of celebration. While times may be tough, there is a great cause for celebration on Easter day. Even if we were told on Easter Sunday that coronavirus had miraculously disappeared overnight and that the lockdown was over, that celebration – while immense and an example of God's glory – would still not be as wonderful as the celebration of our redemption on the day of resurrection.

Read the Easter Sunday Gospel, eat a special meal if possible, wear something special, give out Easter eggs if you normally do, and try to live joyfully on that day, in spite of whatever else is going on. If you're struggling to find Easter joy, ask God to help you and He will surely oblige.