

The Readings for Good Friday:

1st Reading: Isaiah 52: 13-53: 12;

Psalm: 31: 2+6, 12-13, 15-16, 17+25;

2nd Reading: Hebrews 4: 14-16; 5: 7-9;

Gospel: John 18: 1-19: 42.

Praying with Good Friday at Home

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"Into your hands I commend my spirit."

The Good Friday Liturgy is not a Mass. We don't celebrate the Eucharist on Good Friday. We gather for a liturgy with a number of parts. We begin with a silent ritual, in which the priest and deacon lay face down on the floor in silence. Then, we have an Opening Prayer. The Liturgy of the Word includes the proclamation of the Passion from John's Gospel. Following the Gospel and homily, we pray the General Intercessions - one of the oldest prayers in the Church. The Veneration of the Cross is done with all the people, followed by a reception of the Eucharist, from the Eucharist which was consecrated and reserved from Holy Thursday's Mass. Finally, after the Prayer After Communion, we depart in silence and the altar and sanctuary are stripped until the celebration of the Easter Vigil Saturday evening. A full account of this liturgy can be found on our page, [Preparing for Good Friday](#), including all the readings and prayers.

During this time of social distancing, we won't be able to celebrate this liturgy in person - though celebrating it on TV or online will be wonderful. We will miss the opportunity to venerate the cross and to receive the Eucharist. We can pray with the veneration of the cross at home.

This will involve our using our imaginations to enter into this Good Friday very personally. Praying the [Stations of the Cross](#) can help us get there. In the end, our desire and goal is to place ourselves at the foot of the cross on that day when our Savior hung there for our salvation.

We might pray with the beautiful hymn written by Dan Schutte: [Behold the Wood of the Cross](#). We might use anything, perhaps a beloved crucifix in our home, which will help us arrive there at the foot of that cross, that day.

We behold the wood of that cross and we are moved to venerate it. There, on that cross, on that altar, on that instrument of our Savior's death, is the crucified one, Jesus, our Lord. He paid the price of our sin, for us all. Paul says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the

righteousness of God in him." [2 Corinthians 5:21] God dealt with our sin and death by nailing it to this cross. [Colossians 2:14]

I can let imaging him nailed to the cross, seeing the wounds of his unjust torture and execution, seeing Mary, John, and Mary of Magdala there, and listening to the mockery, fill my heart with emotion for this one who has become my friend and daily companion on my life journey. I say what spontaneously comes to my heart. I let myself experience his death. I can rest there in that moment. This is no ordinary death, but it enters into solidarity with every single death. I let myself experience the emotion associated with this death being for me. I let deep gratitude well up within me.

Then, I step up and embrace that cross. I throw my arms around it and feel its roughness against me, but I hold on to it all the more tightly, and I let myself say "thank you." I let myself venerate that cross, as I have never venerated it before. I kiss it and know that this cross is the sign of the mystery of Jesus' love and mercy for me, and the sign of his victory over sin and death - my sin, all sin; my death, all death.

The refrain of the Stations echoes in my ears. "We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you. Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world." I compose myself and say that, in my own words, deeply.

Then, I can step back and imagine all my brothers and sisters - in my family, my parish community, my friends and neighbors, the people in my country and the people around the world - standing there at the foot of that cross together. All our sin is forgiven there. All death is offered eternal life. This death made us one in him, now and for all eternity. At this special time of tremendous suffering and fear and death, I let myself let his death on this cross redeem the world around me.

I can let this experience wash over me, over and over again, in the day ahead, as I long to celebrate the Resurrection. As I let this saving grace sink in, I grow in freedom and peace, in the midst of all that tempts me to discouragement and fear.

I can pray like this alone, myself, on Good Friday. I can encourage others in my family, or dear friends from whom I am separated, to do it on their own. I can also adapt this so that my family can make this time of prayer together. Children have great imaginations. We can guide them to express gratitude and love for Jesus and what it means to venerate the cross, on this very special day we call "Good."

The Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O Good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds hide me.

Permit me not to be separated from you.

From the wicked foe, defend me.

At the hour of my death,

call me and bid me come to you

That with your saints I may praise you

For ever and ever. Amen.

~~ By St. Ignatius of Loyola ~~

*The Anima Christi During Holy Week*By [Marina McCoy](#)<https://graceinmidlife.wordpress.com/>

From Ignatian Spirituality.com, a service of Loyola Press

Among my favorite prayers to pray during Holy Week is the Anima Christi or “Soul of Christ.” Many of the lines are resonant with Passion Week, as the poem reflects on Christ’s body and spirit. Among my favorite lines are those at the center: “Within your wounds hide me. / Permit me not to be separated from you.” In the Passion, God unites himself to us so that we are never alone in our own suffering. In the Passion, we find our shelter and “hiding place” in Christ.

About six years ago, I undertook the 19th Annotation version of the [Spiritual Exercises](#) (the Exercises in daily life). I remember praying imaginatively with the scene of Jesus in the garden at Gethsemane. Initially, I imagined myself among Jesus’ friends who waited outside the garden as he had asked. Suddenly, I realized that I did not want Jesus to be alone in his time of suffering, and so I ran to kneel next to him in the garden. I felt completely powerless to prevent his sorrow, suffering, and fear, but desperately wanted to be near to him in all that he was experiencing. I embraced him, wept with him, and held him, hoping to provide some comfort.

As I prayed, I discovered that my desire to be intimately with Jesus, and not to leave him alone in his time of need, was a mirror reflection of Jesus’ first choosing to be with me in my own suffering. God came to be a human being and to suffer so that we would never be alone in our own suffering, anxieties, fears, and sorrows. “Permit me not to be separated

from you” are words that each one of us can pray to God because God said them to us first.

Jesus’ wounds also serve as a resting place for us. “Within your wounds hide me” speaks of uniting our own wounds to those of Jesus. By placing ourselves within his wounded side, hands, and feet, our own wounds become known, transformed, and healed. When I prayed with the image of Jesus being scourged, part of me desired to take a blow so that Jesus would not have to take so many. But Jesus was insistent that he cover me with his own body and take the suffering upon himself. We might want to shelter Jesus, but it is Jesus who takes on human suffering, and so shelters us from suffering and the consequences of sin.

Knowing that God comes to be with us in our suffering is also what allows us to go and to be with other people in theirs. We cannot always alleviate others’ pain by removing it from them, but we can faithfully remain present to them so that they are not alone. What Jesus does for us becomes mirrored in what we can then go out and do for others. What we receive in love, we can then go on to give.

Holy Week Online Resources:

[THE EASTER TRIDIUM](#) (Dan Schutte, composer & musician, St. Louis Jesuits)

[STATIONS OF THE CROSS](#) (from the Central & Southern Jesuit Province)

[ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE HOLY WEEK](#)
[America Magazine | The Jesuit Review](#)

Where you can live-stream Jesuit Masses every day of the week: <https://americamagazine.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=638077ef72a53c785713d1aa2&id=80c496c060&e=a78cfd72ee>

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Coronavirus ethics begins with a recognition of our limitations: <https://americamagazine.us6.list-manage.com/track/click?u=638077ef72a53c785713d1aa2&id=c1c4ac2021&e=a78cfd72ee>

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