

Dearly Beloved,

"I'll be home for Christmas". Those are words from an old Christmas song which, with the change of a few words, seems appropriate for today. "We'll be home for Easter" and Holy Week and a while longer. Since that's the case we'll have to make adjustments in how we celebrate the important days before us and I believe we can. There are many resources being made available to help us do that.

Sally Crenshaw has sent you an email of all the on line Episcopal Services that we know of for you to explore and to help you celebrate and participate in Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter with others doing the same thing. Next, I am going to make some suggestions for ways to engage these Holy Days beyond the Services you choose.

THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY

This Sunday has two parts: Welcome (the entrance into Jerusalem) and Rejection (the crucifixion).

Read Matthew 21:1-11 and after a moment of silence, read Matthew 27:1-66.

Think of yourself as Jerusalem and how and when you welcome Jesus into your life. Is it all of your life, or sometimes? Share if you want to.

Starting at the front door of your home carrying a lit candle representing the Light of Christ, imagine that Jesus is knocking. Do you let him in?

1. If you let him in, say, "Jesus you are welcome in my (our) home".
2. Process to each room of your home repeating the same, if he is welcome there.
3. Return to front door and decide, is Jesus a visitor who is welcome visit now and then, or at certain times, or do you ask him to move in and be a permanent part of your family and your life?
4. Do same exercise with yourself; do you welcome him into your mind, your heart, your body to dwell in you, or do you exclude him?

You may realize from this Sunday that as important as how we treat Jesus is, more important is how he treats you, how far he is willing to go in loving you whether welcomed or rejected.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Try to focus this day on being a Servant of Christ.

Designate a place in your home to celebrate this day. Have the lit candle there, a bowl of water large enough for a foot, a towel, a Bible, and a Prayer Book, or if you don't have one you can find it on line.

Gather at this place as a family, or if you live alone, and have someone read John 13:1-15. Give thanks to God for water and think about/share what water means to you. You began in water, were baptized in water, bathe in water, need water for life like all living things. What else?

Ask God to bless the water in your bowl. Wash each other's feet making the sign of the cross on each foot as you ask God to love and bless the one before whom you are kneeling to do this. If you live alone, do this as an act of loving yourself as Jesus loves you.

Play "The Servant Song" which you can find on U Tube.

Read the bottom of page 274-275 in the Book of Common Prayer.

Pray the Lord's Prayer. Pray the Mission Prayer, top of page 101, Book of Common Prayer.

GOOD FRIDAY

Try to focus this day on the Cross and why we call this day "good". Have a big cross in the place you have designated for celebrating these days. It can be a drawn cross, a cross you may already have, but much larger than one worn, a cross made with sticks, or wood pieces, a picture.

Start with the Good Friday Liturgy, pages 276-282, Book of Common Prayer. Read the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ from John 19:1-37 when you come to that place in the Liturgy. Take some time with these questions and share if you want:

Where are you in relationship to the outstretched arms of Jesus?

Who else do you want to see with you if you are within his loving and saving (healing, making whole) embrace? Why?

Who do you not want to see with you there? Why?

Continue with the Solemn Collects, taking turns with reading the various parts.

At the conclusion, pray the Confession on page 360 of the Prayer Book, the Lord's Prayer, and the prayer at the bottom of page 280.

I will send you another email next week with suggestions for Easter, The Day of Resurrection. Remember the Grace Moment video from Holy Trinity, Sunday at 9:30am.

Allow what you do on the days of Holy Week to help you be more and more open to and aware of God's Presence with you and his Love for you. Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in mutual love.

In Christ's Love, Fr. Bob