

*The Episcopal Conference and individual dioceses
will see to it that resources are provided to support
family and personal prayer.*

Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments
Rome. 19 March 2020



This resource includes a set of five leaflets which parishes may use for their parishioners to help them celebrate Holy Week at home when public liturgy has been suspended. A copy of the leaflets is required for each member of the household. They should be printed in two-sided horizontal format.

The idea is to encourage families to pray together and provide resources for them, while at the same time keeping a concrete link to the parish church over the holy days. It also provides some opportunities for pastoral contact between priest and people.

Parishes might use the resource in various ways:

- The whole set can be sent by email to parishioners in advance (with invitations to come to the church each day).
- An email can be sent each day with a copy of a single leaflet attached.
- Invitations may be sent by email, with the printed leaflets made available when parishioners come to the parish.
- Any combination of the above!

1. PALM SUNDAY

Baskets of blessed palms are placed at each church door (with the prayer brochure). At any time during the day, a parishioner is invited to come to take palms for their family (and a prayer leaflet to use at home). Holding the palm branches, the family prays together at home.

2. THE END OF LENT

The Lenten penance of prayer, fasting and almsgiving normally comes to its culmination with a rite of reconciliation. On Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday of Holy Week, parishioners are invited to bring their Project Compassion boxes or another gift for the poor to the parish office (and receive the liturgy leaflet). Then at home with the family a liturgy for the forgiveness of sins is celebrated.

3. HOLY THURSDAY

After the Mass of the Lord's Supper which the priest celebrates privately in the church, a member of each family is invited to go to the church to receive the bread which has just been consecrated. This would be carried to the home folded in a purifier for a domestic communion service.

For example, the private Mass might take place at 4pm, and parishioners would be invited to come one by one between 5pm and 7pm. The priest would remain at the altar dressed in an alb. From the ciborium – on the altar between lighted candles – he would give each person the required number of hosts (and the leaflet with the communion liturgy).

4. GOOD FRIDAY

A large cross is erected at the entry to the church. Parishioners are invited to come to venerate the cross during the day (and take home the family leaflet). The family reflection is centred on reading the story of the Passion of Christ.

5. EASTER SUNDAY

At the Easter Vigil, celebrated by the priest simply and privately, he blesses water. This could be put into small containers or into a large vessel with a tap. Parishioners are invited to come to the church on Easter Sunday to take some Easter water to their homes (together with the prayer leaflet). The prayer focuses on a baptismal renewal and the water is used for family members to bless themselves.