

# LENT

## ASH WEDNESDAY

### **Blessing of the Season and of a Place of Prayer**

From Ash Wednesday to Easter, a place in the home is set aside for prayer. The family's Bible is placed there with a crucifix or cross and a candle, which is lighted when all have gathered.



All make the sign of the cross as the leader begins:

The Lord calls us to days of penance and mercy.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord.  
**R/.** Now and forever.

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the blessing:

Remember that we are but dust and ashes, yet by God's grace we have died in Baptism and have put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Each year we keep these Forty Days with prayer and penance and the practice of charity so that we

may come to the Easter festival ready to renew once more the life-giving commitment of our Baptism. Through this Lent we shall gather here to read the Scriptures and ponder them and to intercede with God for our needs and for the needs of the Church and the world.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the Prophet Isaiah:

58:5-10

Is this the manner of fasting I wish,  
of keeping a day of penance:  
That a man bow his head like a reed,  
and lie in sackcloth and ashes?  
Do you call this a fast,  
a day acceptable to the LORD?  
This, rather, is the fasting that I wish:  
releasing those bound unjustly,  
untying the thongs of the yoke;  
Setting free the oppressed,  
breaking every yoke;  
Sharing your bread with the hungry,  
sheltering the oppressed and the homeless;  
Clothing the naked when you see them,  
and not turning your back on your own.

*(continued)*

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your wound shall quickly be healed;  
Your vindication shall go before you,  
and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.  
Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer,  
you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am!  
If you remove from your midst oppression,  
false accusation and malicious speech;  
If you bestow your bread on the hungry  
and satisfy the afflicted;  
Then light shall rise for you in the darkness,  
and the gloom shall become for you like midday.

(The family's Bible may be used for an alternate reading such as  
Deuteronomy 30:15-20.)

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

**R/.** Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, members of the household offer prayers of  
intercession for the world, the Church and its catechumens, and  
themselves. The leader then invites:

Let us kneel and ask God's blessing on us and on this holy  
season.

After a short silence, the leader continues:

Merciful God,  
you called us forth from the dust of the earth;  
you claimed us for Christ in the waters of Baptism.  
Look upon us as we enter these Forty Days  
bearing the mark of ashes,  
and bless our journey through the desert of Lent  
to the font of rebirth.

May our fasting be hunger for justice;  
our alms, a making of peace;  
our prayer, the chant of humble and grateful hearts.

All that we do and pray is in the name of Jesus,  
for in his Cross you proclaim your love  
forever and ever.  
**R/.** Amen.

Each person then kisses the crucifix. All then stand, and the  
leader concludes:

All through these days let us be quiet and prayerful,  
pondering the mysteries told in the Scriptures. In the Cross,  
we have been claimed for Christ. In Christ, we make the  
prayer that fills these days of mercy:

Our Father . . .

**Leader:** Let us bless the Lord.  
**R/.** Thanks be to God.

The blessing may conclude with an appropriate song.

# LENTEN DISCIPLINES: FASTING AND ALMSGIVING

For these Forty Days we are conscious of how we must sharpen our senses and focus mind and heart on the Reign of God. We are, above all, aware of those waters in which we were baptized into Christ's death. We died to sin and evil and began a new life in Christ. The waters of Baptism wait at Lent's end for the catechumens, but we are called to renew our Baptism as well.

The Church asks us to give ourselves to prayer and to the reading of Scripture, to fasting and to giving alms. The fasting that all do together on Fridays is but a sign of the daily lenten discipline of individuals and households: fasting for certain periods of time, fasting from certain foods, but also fasting from other things and activities. Likewise, the giving of alms is some effort to share this world equally—not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and talents.



## **We Hunger and Thirst for Holiness**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:  
you make us hunger and thirst for holiness.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:  
you call us to true fasting:  
to set free the oppressed,  
to share our bread with the hungry,  
to shelter the homeless and to clothe the naked.

## **Psalm 102:5-8, 10, 13**

Withered and dried up like grass is my heart;

I forget to eat my bread.

Because of my insistent sighing

I am reduced to skin and bone.

I am like a desert owl;

I have become like an owl among the ruins.

I am sleepless, and I moan;

I am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.

For I eat ashes like bread

and mingle my drink with tears.

But you, O LORD, abide forever,

and your name through all generations.

## **Before a Time of Solitude**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:  
you manifest yourself when we are silent.

## **Before Deeds of Charity**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation:  
for all the earth is yours.

# PENITENTIAL PSALMS

Lent is a time of penance and renewal. These seven psalms have traditionally been prayed in penitential times. Prayerfully reciting these psalms will help us to recognize our sinfulness, express our sorrow, and beg God for forgiveness.



## Psalm 6

O LORD, reprove me not in your anger,  
nor chastise me in your wrath.  
Have pity on me, O LORD, for I am languishing;  
heal me, O LORD, for my body is in terror;  
My soul, too, is utterly terrified;  
but you, O LORD, how long. . . ?

Return, O LORD, save my life;  
rescue me because of your kindness,  
For among the dead no one remembers you;  
in the nether world who gives you thanks?

I am wearied with sighing;  
every night I flood my bed with weeping;  
I drench my couch with my tears.  
My eyes are dimmed with sorrow;  
they have aged because of all my foes.

Depart from me, all evildoers,  
for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping;  
The LORD has heard my plea;  
the LORD has accepted my prayer.  
All my enemies shall be put to shame in utter terror;  
they shall fall back in sudden shame.

## Psalm 32

Happy is he whose fault is taken away,  
whose sin is covered.  
Happy the man to whom the LORD imputes not guilt,  
in whose spirit there is no guile.

As long as I would not speak, my bones wasted away  
with my groaning all the day,  
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.  
Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
my guilt I covered not.  
I said, "I confess my faults to the LORD,"  
and you took away the guilt of my sin.  
For this shall every faithful man pray to you  
in time of stress.  
Though deep waters overflow,  
they shall not reach him.  
You are my shelter; from distress you will preserve me;  
With glad cries of freedom you will ring me round.

*(continued)*

I will instruct you and show you the way you should walk;  
I will counsel you, keeping my eye on you.  
Be not senseless like horses or mules:  
with bit and bridle their temper must be curbed,  
else they will not come near you.

Many are the sorrows of the wicked,  
but kindness surrounds him who trusts in the LORD.  
Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you just;  
exult, all you upright of heart.

## **Psalm 38**

O LORD, in your anger punish me not,  
in your wrath chastise me not;  
For your arrows have sunk deep in me,  
and your hand has come down upon me.  
There is no health in my flesh because of your indignation;  
there is no wholeness in my bones because of my sin,  
For my iniquities have overwhelmed me;  
they are like a heavy burden, beyond my strength.

Noisome and festering are my sores  
because of my folly,  
I am stooped and bowed down profoundly;  
all the day I go in mourning,  
For my loins are filled with burning pains;  
there is no health in my flesh.  
I am numbed and severely crushed;  
I roar with anguish of heart.

O LORD, all my desire is before you;  
from you my groaning is not hid.  
My heart throbs; my strength forsakes me;  
the very light of my eyes has failed me.  
My friends and my companions stand back because  
of my affliction;  
my neighbors stand afar off.  
Men lay snares for me seeking my life;  
they look to my misfortune, they speak of ruin,  
treachery they talk of all the day.

But I am like a deaf man, hearing not,  
like a dumb man who opens not his mouth.  
I am become like a man who neither hears  
nor has in his mouth a retort.  
Because for you, O LORD, I wait;  
you, O LORD my God, will answer  
When I say, "Let them not be glad on my account  
who, when my foot slips, glory over me."

For I am very near to falling,  
and my grief is with me always.  
Indeed, I acknowledge my guilt;  
I grieve over my sin.  
But my undeserved enemies are strong;  
many are my foes without cause.  
Those who repay evil for good  
harass me for pursuing good.  
Forsake me not, O LORD;  
my God, be not far from me!  
Make haste to help me,  
O LORD my salvation!

## Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness;  
In the greatness of your compassion wipe  
out my offense.

Thoroughly wash me from my guilt  
And of my sin cleanse me.

For I acknowledge my offense,  
and my sin is before me always:  
“Against you only have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight”—  
That you may be justified in your sentence,  
vindicated when you condemn.  
Indeed, in guilt was I born,  
and in sin my mother conceived me;  
Behold, you are pleased with sincerity of heart,  
and in my inmost being you teach me wisdom.

Cleanse me of sin with hyssop, that I may be purified;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness;  
the bones you have crushed shall rejoice.  
Turn away your face from my sins  
and blot out all my guilt.

A clean heart create in me, O God,  
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.  
Cast me not out from your presence,  
and your holy spirit take not from me.  
Give back the joy of your salvation,  
and a willing spirit sustain in me.

I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners shall return to you.  
Free me from blood guilt, O God, my saving God;  
then my tongue shall proclaim your praise.  
For you are not pleased with sacrifices;  
should I offer a holocaust, you would not accept it.  
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;  
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

Be bountiful, O LORD, to Zion in your kindness  
by rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem;  
Then shall you be pleased with due sacrifices,  
burnt offerings and holocausts;  
then shall they offer up bullocks on your altar.

## **Psalm 102**

O LORD, hear my prayer,  
and let my cry come to you.  
Hide not your face from me in the day of my distress.  
Incline your ear to me;  
in the day when I call, answer me speedily.  
For my days vanish like smoke,  
and my bones burn like fire.  
Withered and dried up like grass is my heart;  
I forget to eat my bread.  
Because of my insistent sighing  
I am reduced to skin and bone.  
I am like a desert owl;  
I am become like an owl among the ruins.  
I am sleepless, and I moan;  
I am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.

*(continued)*

All the day my enemies revile me;  
in their rage against me they make a curse of me.  
For I eat ashes like bread  
and mingle my drink with tears,  
Because of your fury and your wrath;  
for you lifted me up only to cast me down.  
My days are like a lengthening shadow,  
and I wither like grass.

But you, O LORD, abide forever,  
and your name through all generations.  
You will arise and have mercy on Zion,  
for it is time to pity her,  
for the appointed time has come.  
For her stones are dear to your servants,  
and her dust moves them to pity.  
And the nations shall revere your name, O LORD,  
and all the kings of the earth your glory,  
When the LORD has rebuilt Zion  
and appeared in his glory;  
When he has regarded the prayer of the destitute,  
and not despised their prayer.

Let this be written for the generation to come,  
and let his future creatures praise the LORD:  
“The LORD looked down from his holy height,  
from heaven he beheld the earth,  
To hear the groaning of the prisoners,  
to release those doomed to die”—  
That the name of the LORD may be declared in Zion;  
and his praise, in Jerusalem,  
When the peoples gather together,  
and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

He has broken down my strength in the way;  
he has cut short my days.  
I say: O my God,  
Take me not hence in the midst of my days;  
through all generations your years endure.  
Of old you established the earth,  
and the heavens are the work of your hands.  
They shall perish, but you remain  
though all of them grow old like a garment.  
Like clothing you change them, and they are changed,  
but you are the same, and your years have no end.  
The children of your servants shall abide,  
and their posterity shall continue in your presence.

## **Psalm 130**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;  
LORD, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to my voice in supplication:

If you, O LORD, mark iniquities,  
LORD, who can stand?  
But with you is forgiveness,  
that you may be revered.

I trust in the LORD;  
my soul trusts in his word.  
My soul waits for the LORD  
more than sentinels wait for the dawn.

*(continued)*

More than sentinels wait for the dawn,  
let Israel wait for the LORD,  
For with the LORD is kindness  
and with him is plenteous redemption;  
And he will redeem Israel  
from all their iniquities.

## **Psalm 143**

O LORD, hear my prayer;  
hearken to my pleading in your faithfulness;  
in your justice answer me.  
And enter not into judgment with your servant,  
for before you no living man is just.

For the enemy pursues me;  
he has crushed me life to the ground;  
he has left me dwelling in the dark, like those long dead.  
And my spirit is faint within me,  
my heart within me is appalled.  
I remember the days of old;  
I meditate on all your doings,  
the works of your hands I ponder.  
I stretch out my hands to you;  
my soul thirsts for you like parched land.

Hasten to answer me, O LORD,  
for my spirit fails me.  
Hide not your face from me  
lest I become like those who go down into the pit.  
At dawn let me hear of your kindness,  
for in you I trust.  
Show me the way in which I should walk,  
for to you I lift up my soul.  
Rescue me from my enemies, O LORD,  
for in you I hope.

Teach me to do your will,  
for you are my God.  
May your good spirit guide me  
on level ground.  
For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve me;  
in your justice free me from distress,  
And in your kindness destroy my enemies;  
bring to nought all my foes  
for I am your servant.

# PASSION SUNDAY

## (THE BEGINNING OF HOLY WEEK)

### **Placing of Branches in the Home**

The branches that are blessed and brought home on Passion (Palm) Sunday are placed near the crucifix or the family Bible. They remind us that Lent is the slow coming of spring to the earth, the renewal of life. They are like the great “Hosanna” with which we hail the crucified and risen Lord.



After dinner or at another time on Palm Sunday, the household gathers where the palms have been placed.

All make the sign of the cross. The leader begins:

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**R/. Hosanna in the highest!**

The leader may use these or similar words to introduce the prayer:

We have come to the last days of Lent. Today we heard the reading of the Passion. That story will remain with us as we leave Lent behind on Holy Thursday and enter into the Three Days when we celebrate the mystery of Christ’s passing through suffering and death to life at God’s right hand.

Then the Scripture is read:

Listen to the words of the second Letter of St. Paul  
to the Corinthians:

4:10-11

[We are] always carrying about in the body  
the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may  
also be manifested in our body. For we who  
live are constantly being given up to death for  
the sake of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may  
be manifested in our mortal flesh.

**Reader:** The Word of the Lord.

**R/.** Thanks be to God.

After a time of silence, members of the household join in prayers  
of intercession. Or the Litany of the Most Precious Blood, in  
Part VII: Litanies, may be prayed. The intercessions or litany are  
followed by the Lord's Prayer. The leader continues:

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, God of Israel,  
so rich in love and mercy.

Let these branches ever remind us of Christ's triumph.

May we who bear them rejoice in his Cross  
and sing your praise forever and ever.

**R/.** Amen.

Together all take the palms to the place where they will be kept  
through the coming year. When all have returned to the starting  
point, the leader concludes:

Let us bless the Lord.

All respond, making the sign of the cross:

Thanks be to God.

## HOLY WEEK (DURING THE WEEK)

In the final days of Lent, our preparation intensifies. We give more freely, live more simply, and pray constantly. We take time to reflect on the abundant love of God, who gave his Son to open for us the way to eternal life. We strive to follow the path of Jesus, who humbled himself to save us. In these days, it is particularly appropriate to reflect on the four Songs of the Suffering Servant. The Church has interpreted these hymns, found in the Book of the prophet Isaiah, as speaking of Jesus, who suffered for our salvation.



### **Isaiah 42:1-7**

Here is my servant whom I uphold,  
my chosen one with whom I am pleased,  
Upon whom I have put my Spirit;  
he shall bring forth justice to the nations,  
Not crying out, not shouting,  
not making his voice heard in the street.  
A bruised reed he shall not break,  
and a smoldering wick he shall not quench,  
Until he establishes justice on the earth;  
the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the LORD,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spreads out the earth with its crops,  
Who gives breath to its people  
and spirit to those who walk on it:  
I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice,  
I have grasped you by the hand;

I formed you, and set you  
as a covenant of the people,  
a light for the nations,  
To open the eyes of the blind,  
to bring out prisoners from confinement,  
and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

## **Isaiah 49:1-6**

Hear me, O islands,  
listen, O distant peoples.  
The LORD called me from birth,  
from my mother's womb he gave me my name.  
He made of me a sharp-edged sword  
and concealed me in the shadow of his arm.  
He made me a polished arrow,  
in his quiver he hid me.  
You are my servant, he said to me,  
Israel, through whom I show my glory.

Though I thought I had toiled in vain,  
and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength,  
Yet my reward is with the LORD,  
my recompense is with my God.  
For now the LORD has spoken  
who formed me as his servant from the womb,  
That Jacob may be brought back to him  
and Israel gathered to him;  
And I am made glorious in the sight of the LORD,  
and my God is now my strength!

*(continued)*

It is too little, he says, for you to be my servant,  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob,  
and restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will make you a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.

### **Isaiah 50:4-9a**

The Lord GOD has given me  
a well-trained tongue,  
That I might know how to speak to the weary  
a word that will rouse them.  
Morning after morning  
he opens my ear that I may hear;  
And I have not rebelled,  
have not turned back.  
I gave my back to those who beat me,  
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;  
My face I did not shield  
from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help,  
therefore I am not disgraced;  
I have set my face like flint,  
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.  
He is near who upholds my right;  
if anyone wishes to oppose me,  
let us appear together.  
Who disputes my right?  
Let him confront me.  
See, the Lord GOD is my help;  
who will prove me wrong?

## Isaiah 52:13–53:12

See, my servant shall prosper,  
    he shall be raised high and greatly exalted.  
Even as many were amazed at him—  
    so marred was his look beyond that of man,  
    and his appearance beyond that of mortals—  
So shall he startle many nations,  
    because of him kings shall stand speechless;  
For those who have not been told shall see,  
    those who have not heard shall ponder it.  
Who would believe what we have heard?  
    To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?  
He grew up like a sapling before him,  
    like a shoot from the parched earth;  
There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him,  
    nor appearance that would attract us to him.  
He was spurned and avoided by men,  
    a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity,  
One of those from whom men hide their faces,  
    spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore,  
    our sufferings that he endured,  
While we thought of him as stricken,  
    as one smitten by God and afflicted.  
But he was pierced for our offenses,  
    crushed for our sins,  
Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,  
    by his stripes we were healed.  
We had all gone astray like sheep,  
    each following his own way;  
But the LORD laid upon him  
    the guilt of us all.

*(continued)*

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted  
and opened not his mouth;  
Like a lamb led to the slaughter  
or a sheep before the shearers,  
he was silent and opened not his mouth.  
Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away,  
and who would have thought any more of his destiny?  
When he was cut off from the land of the living,  
and smitten for the sin of his people,  
A grave was assigned him among the wicked  
and a burial place with evildoers,  
Though he had done no wrong  
nor spoken any falsehood.  
[But the LORD was pleased  
to crush him in infirmity.]

If he gives his life as an offering for sin,  
he shall see his descendants in a long life,  
and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.  
Because of his affliction  
he shall see the light in fullness of days;  
Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many,  
and their guilt he shall bear.  
Therefore I will give him his portion among the great,  
and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty,  
Because he surrendered himself to death  
and was counted among the wicked;  
And he shall take away the sins of many,  
and win pardon for their offenses.

# EASTER TRIDUUM

“Christ redeemed us all and gave perfect glory to God principally through his paschal mystery: dying he destroyed our death and rising he restored our life. Therefore the Easter Triduum of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ is the culmination of the entire liturgical year. . . . The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper (on Holy Thursday), reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday. On Good Friday and, if possible, also on Holy Saturday until the Easter Vigil, the Easter fast is observed everywhere.”

—*General Norms for the Liturgical Year*, nos. 18-19

Thus does the Church’s calendar speak of these Three Days. Lent ends on Holy Thursday. Friday and Saturday are days of private and communal prayer. We fast from food, work, and entertainment in anticipation of the great Vigil. We hold in special prayer the elect who will be baptized, be confirmed, and join in the eucharistic banquet. Thus are the death and Resurrection of Christ proclaimed in our midst. At various moments from Thursday evening until Sunday, the community gathers for prayer and vigil. In the times between these communal celebrations, we pray at home, as individuals and as a family. The following texts come from the liturgies of these days and are offered to help families prepare for fuller participation in these special liturgies.



# HOLY THURSDAY EVENING

Lent ends quietly on this evening as the Paschal Triduum begins. The liturgy of this night proclaims that we find glory in the Cross.



## **From Galatians 6:14**

We should glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he is our salvation, our life, and our resurrection; through him we are saved and made free.



At the Holy Thursday liturgy, we recall Jesus' command to love each other as he has loved us. We embrace his call to become one with him in the Eucharist and to offer ourselves in loving service to all God's children.

## **From John 13:4, 5, 15**

The Lord Jesus,  
when he had eaten with his disciples,  
poured water into a basin  
and began to wash their feet, saying:  
This example I leave you.

## **From John 13:14**

If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet,  
then surely you must wash one another's feet.

## **From John 13:34**

I give you a new commandment:  
love one another as I have loved you, says the Lord.



After the evening liturgy, it is customary to spend time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Appropriate prayers for this time can be found elsewhere in this Part (Prayers for Corpus Christi) and also in Part I: Basic Prayers (Prayers Before the Holy Eucharist).

During the time of individual reflection and prayer during the Triduum, the following Scripture readings are especially appropriate for reading and meditation: John 14–17, Psalm 22, and the Book of Lamentations.

# GOOD FRIDAY

Today and tomorrow the Church takes on the Paschal Fast, the Easter Fast. This is a fast not of penance but of anticipation. We fast also from work and from all the usual distractions. Our minds and hearts grow hungry for God's Word. Our lives are filled with the mystery of Jesus' death and Resurrection and with how we ourselves take on that dying and rising, little by little becoming the image of Christ in this world. On Friday afternoon or evening, the parish community gathers to read the Passion, to pray, and to venerate the holy cross. These are prayers and songs of Good Friday.



## **Lord, Send Your Abundant Blessing**

Lord, send your abundant blessing upon your people  
who devoutly recall the death of your Son  
in the sure hope of the Resurrection.  
Grant us pardon; bring us comfort.  
May our faith grow stronger  
and our eternal salvation be assured.

## **We Worship You, Lord**

We worship you, Lord,  
we venerate your Cross,  
we praise your Resurrection.  
Through the Cross you brought joy to the world.

## **Holy Is God!**

Holy is God!  
Holy and strong!  
Holy immortal One,  
have mercy on us!

## **The Wood of the Cross**

This is the wood of the Cross,  
on which hung the Savior of the world.  
Come, let us worship.

# HOLY SATURDAY

The Paschal Fast begun on Thursday night continues today. The Church puts aside work and food to continue watching and praying. Some prayers for Holy Saturday are given here. The first text is from a centuries-old homily for Holy Saturday. The final prayer, next page, is for those who are to be baptized this night.



## **Ancient Homily for Holy Saturday**

He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, he who is both God and the son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the Cross, the weapon that had won him the victory. At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone: “My Lord be with you all.” Christ answered him: “And with your spirit.” He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying, “Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”

Rise, let us leave this place. The enemy led you out of the earthly paradise. I will not restore you to that paradise, but I will enthrone you in heaven. I forbade you the tree that was only a symbol of life, but see, I who am life itself am now one with you. I appointed cherubim to guard you as slaves are guarded, but now I make them worship you as God. The

throne formed by cherubim awaits you, its bearers swift and eager. The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open. The Kingdom of Heaven has been prepared for you from all eternity.

## **Baptism Prayer for Holy Saturday**

O Christ,  
you slept a life-giving sleep in the grave,  
and did awaken humankind from the heavy sleep of sin.  
All-powerful and ever-living God,  
your only Son went down among the dead  
and rose again in glory.  
In your goodness raise up your faithful people  
buried with him in Baptism,  
to be one with him  
in the eternal life of heaven.

Lord,  
we pray to you for the elect,  
who have now accepted for themselves  
the loving purpose and the mysteries  
that you revealed in the life of your Son.  
May they have faith in their hearts  
and accomplish your will in their lives.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
**R/. Amen.**

# THE EASTER VIGIL

Tonight, the Church gathers in the darkness and blesses a candle that symbolizes the Risen Christ, our Morning Star. We keep vigil, listening to the Scriptures unfold their stories of creation and freedom, their prophecies of God's bounty and love, their demand that we acknowledge our Baptism into the death of Christ. We sing the alleluia and listen to the Gospel of Jesus' Resurrection. Then the Church calls on all the saints and processes to the font. There, the elect reject evil and profess their faith in Father, Son, and Spirit. They are baptized and anointed with chrism. The whole Church rejoices. New Christians and old then join in the Eucharist. The texts below reflect various moments in the liturgy of this night.



## **Prayer for the Lighting of the Paschal Candle**

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,  
dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

## **Excerpts from the *Exsultet***

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!  
Exult, all creation around God's throne!  
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!  
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,  
radiant in the brightness of your King!  
Christ has conquered! Glory fill you!  
Darkness vanishes forever!

O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam,  
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!

The power of this holy night  
dispels all evil, washes guilt away,  
restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy;  
it casts out hatred, brings us peace, and humbles earthy pride.

Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded to earth  
and we are reconciled with God!

### **From the Blessing of Water**

May all who are buried with Christ  
in the death of Baptism  
rise also with him to newness of life.

# EASTER SUNDAY AND EASTER SEASON

The Three Days of the Easter Triduum continue until the evening of Sunday. At the same time, the Church begins the Fifty Days of Easter, the time of rejoicing that ends on Pentecost. Here are songs and greetings for Easter Sunday and the Easter season.



## **This Is the Day the Lord Has Made**

**V/.** This is the day the Lord has made;

**R/.** let us rejoice and be glad. Alleluia.

## **Christ Is Risen, Alleluia!**

**V/.** Christ is risen, alleluia!

**R/.** Christ is truly risen, alleluia!

## **Easter Sequence: *Victimae Paschali Laudes***

Christians, to the Paschal Victim  
offer your thankful praises!

A Lamb the sheep redeems;

Christ, who only is sinless,  
reconciles sinners to the Father.

Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous:  
the Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.

Speak, Mary, declaring  
what you saw, wayfaring.  
“The tomb of Christ, who is living,  
the glory of Jesus’ Resurrection;  
bright angels attesting,  
the shroud and napkin resting.  
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;  
to Galilee he goes before you.”  
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.  
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!  
Amen. Alleluia.

## Blessing of Easter Foods

[1701]

The custom of blessing food for Easter arose from the discipline of fasting throughout Lent and the special Easter Fast during the Easter Triduum. Easter was the first day when meat, eggs, and other foods could again be eaten.

[1702]

According to custom, food may be blessed before or after the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday or on Easter Sunday morning for consumption at the first meal of Easter, when fasting is ended and the Church is filled with joy.



[1708]

The leader greets those present in the following or other suitable words.

Before the Easter Vigil:

For our sake Christ became obedient, accepting even death, death on a Cross. Therefore God raised him on high and gave him the name above all other names. Blessed be God forever.

**R/.** Blessed be God forever.

After the Easter Vigil:

Christ is risen. Alleluia.

**R/.** He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

[1710]

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture: Deuteronomy 16:1-8—*The passover of the Lord*; or Isaiah 55:1-11—*Come all you who are thirsty*; or Luke 24:13-35—*They knew Christ in the breaking of the bread.*

[1716]

The leader says the prayer of blessing with hands joined.

God of glory,  
the eyes of all turn to you  
as we celebrate Christ's victory over sin and death.

Bless us and this food of our (first) Easter meal.  
May we who gather at the Lord's table  
continue to celebrate the joy of his Resurrection  
and be admitted finally to his heavenly banquet.

Grant this through Christ our Lord.

**R/.** Amen.

—From Book of Blessings

# The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy: Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)

You may wish to pray this chaplet today or on any Friday. To pray the chaplet, you use rosary beads. After making the sign of the cross, pray an Our Father, three Hail Marys, and the Apostles' Creed.



On the large bead before each decade pray the following:

**Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.**

On the ten small beads of each decade:

**For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.**

After five decades, pray the concluding doxology three times:

**Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world.**

# Blessing of Homes During Eastertime

The Easter season is a traditional time for the blessing of homes.

[1597]



When all have gathered, a suitable song may be sung. The leader makes the sign of the cross, and all reply, “Amen.”

[1601]

The leader greets those present in the following words:

[1603]

**Let us praise God, who fills our hearts and homes  
with peace.**

**Blessed be God forever.**

**R/. Blessed be God forever.**

In the following or similar words, the leader prepares those present for the blessing:

[1604]

**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling place among us. It is Christ, risen from the dead, who is our source of hope, joy, and comfort. May all who enter this home find Christ’s light and love.**

One of those present or the leader reads a text of sacred Scripture, for example:

[1605]

Listen to the words of the holy Gospel according to Luke:

24:28-32

As the disciples approached the village to which they were going, Jesus gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?”

[1610]

The intercessions are then said:

**Leader:** The Son of God made his home among us. With thanks and praise let us call upon him.

**R/.** Stay with us, Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, through you every dwelling is a temple of holiness: build those who live in this house into the dwelling place of God in the Holy Spirit. We pray: **R/.**

Lord Jesus Christ, the disciples recognized you in the breaking of the bread: grant that the members of this family may be open always to the presence of Christ in Word and sacrament. We pray: **R/.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you appeared to the frightened Apostles and said, “Peace be with you”: grant that your abiding peace may remain with the members of this family. We pray: **R/**.

After the intercessions the leader invites all present to say the Lord’s Prayer.

[1611]

The leader says the prayer of blessing with hands joined:

[1612]

Lord,  
we rejoice in the victory of your Son over death:  
by rising from the tomb to new life  
he gives us new hope and promise.

Bless all the members of this household  
and surround them with your protection,  
that they may find comfort and peace  
in Jesus Christ, the Paschal Lamb,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, forever and ever.  
**R/**. Amen.

The leader may sprinkle those present and the home with holy water brought from the church. During the sprinkling the leader may say:

[1613]

Let this water call to mind our Baptism in Christ, who by his death and Resurrection has redeemed us.

[1615]

The leader concludes the rite by signing himself or herself with the sign of the cross and saying:

May Christ Jesus dwell with us,  
keep us from all harm,  
and make us one in mind and heart,  
now and forever.  
R/. Amen.

[1616]

The blessing may conclude with a suitable song.

—From Book of Blessings

## **Ascension Blessing over the People**

May almighty God bless you on this day  
when his only Son ascended into heaven  
to prepare a place for you.

After his Resurrection, Christ was seen by his disciples.  
When he appears as judge  
may you be pleasing forever in his sight.

You believe that Jesus has taken his seat in majesty  
at the right hand of the Father.  
May you have the joy of experiencing  
that he is also with you to the end of time.  
according to his promise.

## **Pentecost Sequence: *Veni, Sancte Spiritus***

Come, Holy Spirit, come!  
And from your celestial home  
    shed a ray of light divine!  
Come, Father of the poor!  
Come, source of all our store!  
    Come, within our bosoms shine.  
You, of comforters the best;  
you, the soul's most welcome guest;  
    sweet refreshment here below;  
in our labor, rest most sweet;  
grateful coolness in the heat;  
    solace in the midst of woe.  
O most blessed light divine,  
shine within these hearts of yours,  
    and our inmost being fill!  
Where you are not, we have naught,  
nothing good in deed or thought,  
    nothing free from taint of ill.  
Heal our wounds, our strength renew;  
on our dryness pour your dew;  
    wash the stains of guilt away;  
bend the stubborn heart and will;  
melt the frozen, warm the chill;  
    guide the steps that go astray.  
On the faithful, who adore  
and confess you, evermore  
    in your sevenfold gift descend;  
give them virtue's sure reward;  
give them your salvation, Lord;  
    give them joys that never end. Amen.  
Alleluia.