

Good Friday 2021

A Resource for Families



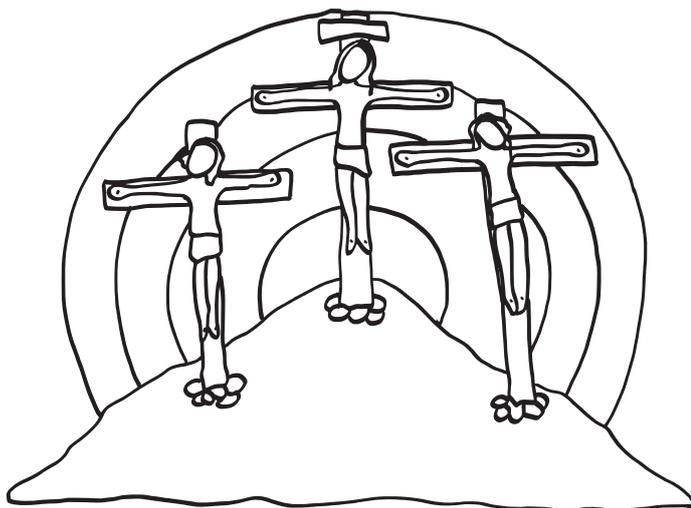
Families are invited to use whatever parts of this resource are helpful for your family prayer. It would be useful if a family member can look over the resource in advance of using it.

Introduction

On this most solemn of days in our Church year, many will miss coming together in our churches for the traditional ceremonies. We are grateful for the technology which enables us to follow these religious ceremonies online and to the people who have made it possible.

To help families pray together on Good Friday the Diocesan Liturgy Commission offers this family prayer resource which includes the Stations of the Cross. Through these Stations we follow in Jesus' footsteps from Pilate's palace, to Calvary. We reflect on Jesus' suffering and on his act of supreme love which won for us eternal life.

For those who have young children in their families the stories of Jesus' suffering and death are probably the Bible stories we least want to tell children. We want to shield children from the ugly story of how people turned on Jesus and killed him. When we pray the Stations of the Cross with children, we can expect questions e.g., about why some people wanted Jesus killed. We can give answers suited to a child's understanding and age e.g. the leaders did not like what Jesus said about their unfair rules; he told people that they were to forgive those who hurt them. Thus, we can lead children to some understanding of the story, an understanding which, God willing, will deepen as they develop, and even now will help them appreciate the joy and miracle of Easter morning.



For adults, as Pope Francis has reminded us, Jesus' cross, is the anchor that has saved us, the rudder that has redeemed us, and our hope, because "by His cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from His redeeming love."

Family Prayer Service

Before the opening prayer some quiet music can help create a prayerful atmosphere.

Music Suggestion: 'Were You There, When They Crucified My Lord?'

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit....

Opening Prayer

We bow our heads in silence
for words are too difficult to speak when we think about today.
We bow our heads in silence,
in shame at the cruelty that exists in our world.
We bow our heads in silence
to enable you to speak to us.
We bow our heads in silence before you.
God of the still, small voice,
speak to us on this special day,
Speak to our hearts with the silence of your love.
Amen.

Pause for silence

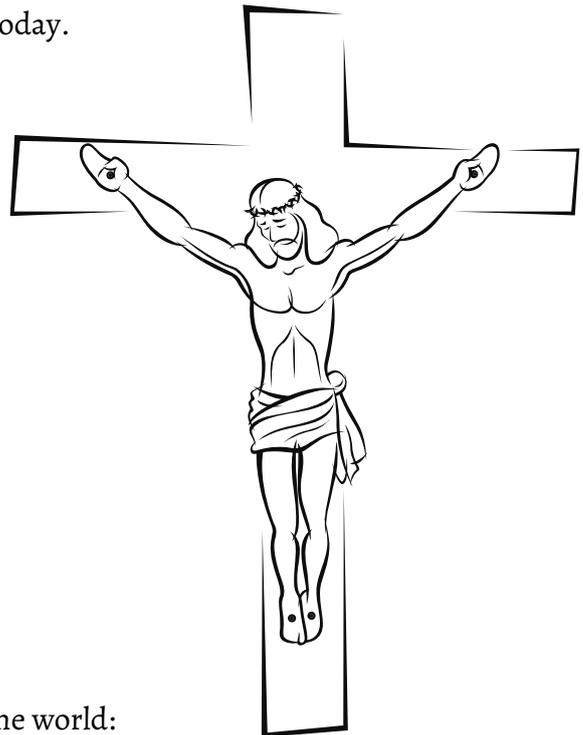
Reflection *(to follow Stations of the Cross)*

Lord Jesus, help us to see in your Cross all the crosses of the world:

- The cross of those who hunger for bread and for love;
- The cross of those who are alone or abandoned even by their own children and family members;
- The cross of the little ones, wounded in their innocence;
- The cross of the elderly who are bowed down under the weight of years and loneliness;
- The cross of those who thirst for justice and peace;
- The cross of those who do not have the comfort of the faith;
- The cross of migrants who find doors closed because of fear and suspicion;
- The cross of humanity that wanders in the darkness of uncertainty;
- The cross of dedicated religious who sometimes feel rejected, mocked and humiliated;
- The cross of your Church which struggles to carry your love even to its own members;
- The cross of the earth, our common home, damaged by our carelessness and greed;
- The cross of our weaknesses, our betrayals, our sins and our many broken promises.

Lord Jesus, rekindle in us the hope of the resurrection
and of your final victory against all evil and all death.

Amen.



Together we say the prayer which Jesus taught us:

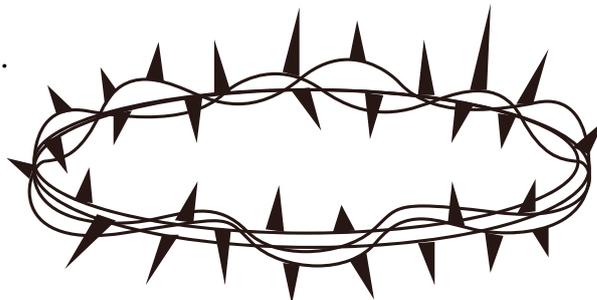
Our Father...

(The prayer which follows was added to the Good Friday liturgy for the time of pandemic.)

Let us pray for all who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic,
that God the Father may grant health to the sick,
strength to those who care for them,
comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

A moment of silent prayer.

Almighty ever-living God, only support of our human weakness,
look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children who suffer because of this
pandemic; relieve the pain of the sick,
give strength to those who care for them, welcome into your peace those who have died and,
throughout this time of tribulation,
grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Concluding Prayers

Crucified Jesus, teach us that the cross is the way to resurrection.
Teach us that Good Friday is the path towards the Easter of light.
Teach us that God never forgets any of his children and he never tires of forgiving us
and embracing us with his infinite mercy.
But also teach us to not get tired of asking Him for forgiveness
and to believe in the Father's limitless mercy.
Amen.

At the foot of the Cross, we find Mary the faithful and sorrowing Mother of Jesus.
Let us ask her this Good Friday to give us her love and her strength,
so that we too can remain faithful to Jesus.

Hail Mary...

Music Suggestion: 'Jesus, Remember Me' Taizé Community



*Prayers and reflections are based on Good Friday
meditations and prayers by Pope Francis.*

