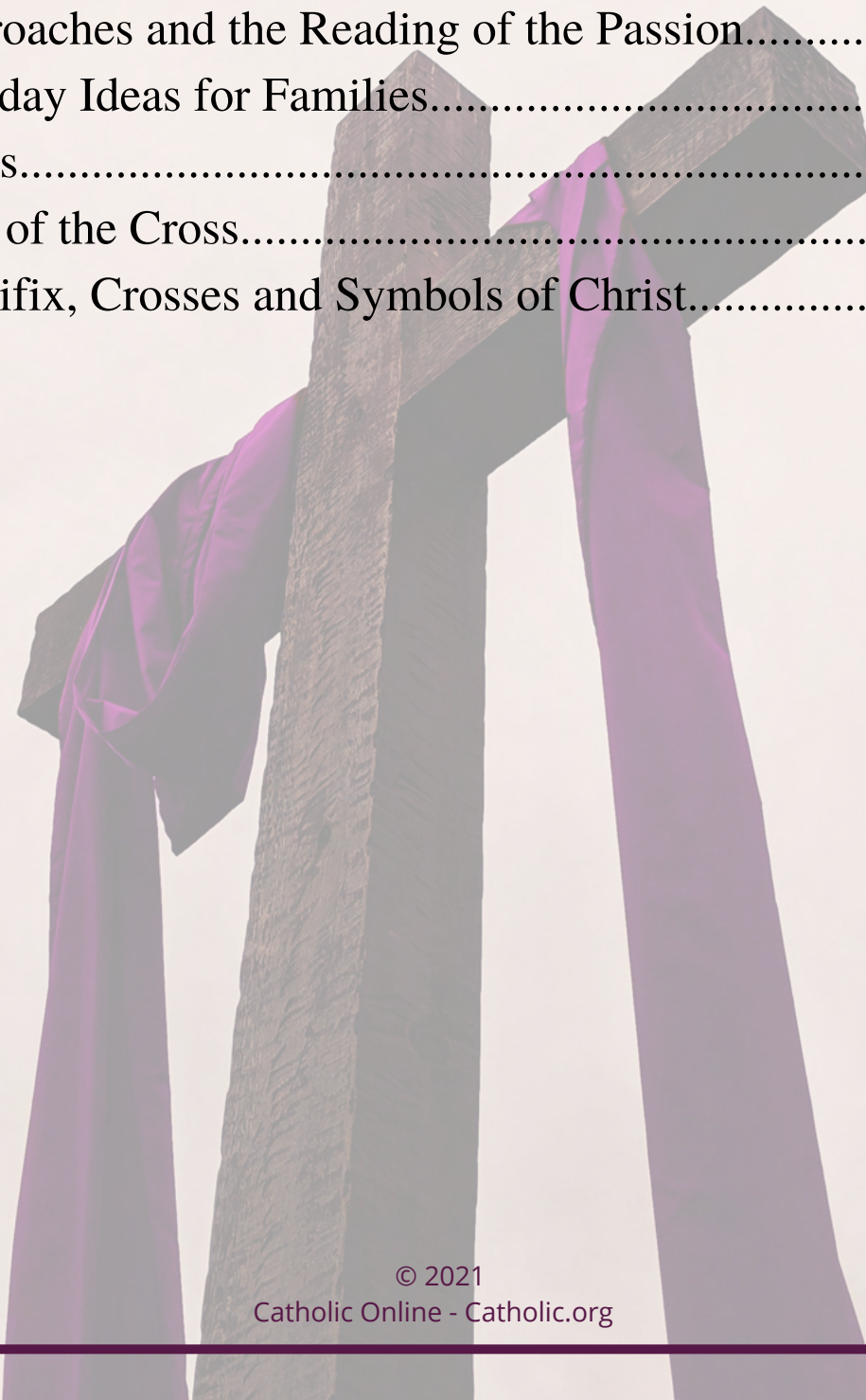


Good Friday



Index

Good Friday.....	3
Veneration of the Cross.....	5
The Reproaches and the Reading of the Passion.....	7
Good Friday Ideas for Families.....	8
The Cross.....	9
The Sign of the Cross.....	10
The Crucifix, Crosses and Symbols of Christ.....	12



Good Friday

Good Friday is the day on which Catholics commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Catholics are joined by almost all other Christians in solemn commemoration on this day. It is also a legal holiday around much of the world.

According to the gospels, Jesus was betrayed by Judas on the night of the Last Supper, commemorated on Holy Thursday. The morning following Christ's arrest, he was brought before Annas, a powerful Jewish cleric. Annas condemned Jesus for blasphemy for refusing to repudiate Annas' words that He was the Son of God. From there, Jesus was sent to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of the province.

Pontius Pilate questioned Jesus but found no reason to condemn Him. Instead, he suggested Jewish leaders deal with Jesus according to their own law. But under Roman law, they could not execute Jesus, so they appealed to Pilate to issue the order to kill Jesus.

Pilate appealed to King Herod, who found no guilt in Jesus and sent Him back to Pilate once again. Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent, and washed his hands to show that he wanted nothing to do with Jesus, but the crowds were enraged. To prevent a riot and to protect his station, Pilate reluctantly agreed to execute Jesus and sentenced him to crucifixion. Jesus was convicted of proclaiming himself to be the King of the Jews.

Before his execution, Jesus was flogged, which was a customary practice intended to weaken a victim before crucifixion. Crucifixion was an especially painful method of execution and was perfected by the Romans as such. It was reserved for the worst criminals, and generally Roman citizens, women, and soldiers were exempt in most cases.

During his flogging, the soldiers tormented Jesus, crowning Him with thorns and ridicule.

Following his flogging, Jesus was compelled to carry his cross to the place of His execution, at Calvary. During his walk to the site of His execution, Jesus fell three times and the Roman guards randomly selected Simon, a Cyrene, to help Jesus.

After arrival at Calvary, Jesus was nailed to the cross and crucified between two thieves. One of the thieves repented of his sins and accepted Christ while on the cross beside Him. A titulus, or sign, was posted above Christ to indicate His supposed crime. The titulus read, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." It is commonly abbreviated in Latin as "INRI" (Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum).

Good Friday

During Christ's last few hours on the cross, darkness fell over the whole land. Jesus was given a sponge with sour wine mixed with gall, a weak, bitter painkiller often given to crucified victims.

Prior to death, Jesus spoke His last words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This line is the opening of Psalm 22, and it may have been common practice to recite lines of songs to deliver a greater message. Properly understood, the last words of Christ were triumphant. Guards then lanced Jesus' side to ensure He was dead.

At the moment of Christ's death, an earthquake occurred, powerful enough to open tombs. The long, thick curtain at the Temple was said to have torn from top to bottom.

Following the incredible events of the day, the body of Christ was removed from the cross and laid in a donated tomb, buried according to custom.

The events of Good Friday are commemorated in the Stations of the Cross, a 14-step devotion often performed by Catholics during Lent and especially on Good Friday. The Stations of the Cross are commonly recited on Wednesdays and Fridays during Lent. Another devotional, the Acts of Reparation, may also be prayed.

Good Friday is a day of fasting within the Church. Traditionally, there is no Mass and no celebration of the Eucharist on Good Friday. A liturgy may still be performed and communion, if taken, comes from hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday. Baptism, penance, and anointing of the sick may be performed, but only in unusual circumstances. Church bells are silent. Altars are left bare.

The solemn, muted atmosphere is preserved until the Easter Vigil.

Veneration of the Cross

From The Reproaches

- The Cross - The Sign of the Cross - The Crucifix, Crosses and Symbols of Christ
- On Good Friday, the entire Church fixes her gaze on the Cross at Calvary. Each member of the Church tries to understand at what cost Christ has won our redemption. In the solemn ceremonies of Good Friday, in the Adoration of the Cross, in the chanting of the 'Reproaches', in the reading of the Passion, and in receiving the pre-consecrated Host, we unite ourselves to our Savior, and we contemplate our own death to sin in the Death of our Lord.
- The Church - stripped of its ornaments, the altar bare, and with the door of the empty tabernacle standing open - is as if in mourning. In the fourth century the Apostolic Constitutions described this day as a 'day of mourning, not a day of festive joy,' and this day was called the 'Pasch (passage) of the Crucifixion.'

The liturgical observance of this day of Christ's suffering, crucifixion and death evidently has been in existence from the earliest days of the Church. No Mass is celebrated on this day, but the service of Good Friday is called the Mass of the Presanctified because Communion (in the species of bread) which had already been consecrated on Holy Thursday is given to the people.

Traditionally, the organ is silent from Holy Thursday until the Alleluia at the Easter Vigil , as are all bells or other instruments, the only music during this period being unaccompanied chant.

The omission of the prayer of consecration deepens our sense of loss because Mass throughout the year reminds us of the Lord's triumph over death, the source of our joy and blessing. The desolate quality of the rites of this day reminds us of Christ's humiliation and suffering during his Passion. We can see that the parts of the Good Friday service correspond to the divisions of Mass:

- Liturgy of the Word - reading of the Passion.
- Intercessory prayers for the Church and the entire world, Christian and non-Christian.
- Veneration of the Cross
- Communion, or the 'Mass of the Pre-Sanctified.'

Veneration of the Cross

In the seventh century, the Church in Rome adopted the practice of Adoration of the Cross from the Church in Jerusalem, where a fragment of wood believed to be the Lord's cross had been venerated every year on Good Friday since the fourth century. According to tradition, a part of the Holy Cross was discovered by the mother of the emperor Constantine, St. Helen, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 326. A fifth century account describes this service in Jerusalem. A coffer of gold-plated silver containing the wood of the cross was brought forward. The bishop placed the relic on the a table in the chapel of the Crucifixion and the faithful approached it, touching brow and eyes and lips to the wood as the priest said (as every priest has done ever since): 'Behold, the Wood of the Cross.'

Adoration or veneration of an image or representation of Christ's cross does not mean that we are actually adoring the material image, of course, but rather what it represents. In kneeling before the crucifix and kissing it we are paying the highest honor to the our Lord's cross as the instrument of our salvation. Because the Cross is inseparable from His sacrifice, in reverencing His Cross we are, in effect, adoring Christ. Thus we affirm: 'We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has Redeemed the World.'

The Reproaches and the Reading of the Passion

The Reproaches (Improperia), are often chanted by a priest during the Good Friday service as the people are venerating the Cross. In this haunting and poignant poem-like chant of very ancient origin, Christ himself 'reproaches' us, making us more deeply aware of how our sinfulness and hardness of heart caused such agony for our sinless and loving Savior. A modern translation of the some of the Reproaches, originally in Latin follows:

My people, What have I done to you? How have I offended you? Answer me!
I led you out of Egypt; but you led your Savior to the Cross.
For forty years I led you safely through the desert,
I fed you with manna from heaven,
and brought you to the land of plenty; But you led your Savior to the Cross.
O, My people! What have I done to you that you should testify against me?

Holy God. Holy God. Holy Mighty One. Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us.

Three times during Holy Week the Passion is read - on Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday. By very ancient tradition, three clergy read the three principal parts from the sanctuary: Jesus (always read by a priest), Narrator, and all the other individual parts. The people also have a role in this - we are those who condemn the Lord to death. Hearing our own voices say 'Away with Him! Crucify him!' heightens our consciousness of our complicity by our personal sinfulness in causing His death.

Good Friday Ideas for Families

Catholic schools will be closed on Good Friday so the children will be able to participate in family observances of this solemn day. If possible, the entire family should attend Good-Friday services together, or at least make a trip to Church to make the Stations of the Cross (see section on Stations). Following are a few other suggestions.

Hot Cross Buns. The familiar hot cross buns are sweet rolls with the sign of the cross cut into it, and they are one of several traditional European breads marked with a cross for Good Friday. According to tradition, these buns originated at St Alban's Abbey in 1361, where the monks gave them to the poor people who came there. (You may have your own recipe for sweet-rolls to which you can add currants or raisins before shaping and cut a cross in the top before baking; or you can buy them.) These Good Friday buns were very popular, and were sold by vendors who cried, Hot cross buns, Hot cross buns! One a-penny two a-penny, Hot cross buns! If you have no daughters, give 'em to your sons! One a-penny two a-penny, Hot cross buns!

- **The Three Hours.** Some churches hold prayer services during the three hours of Christ's suffering on the Cross. It would be appropriate to observe a period of silence at home, for devotional reading and private prayer (e.g., no radio, television, etc.), especially between the hours of noon and 3 o'clock in the afternoon.
- Each member of the family might choose a particularly unpleasant job which has been put off for a long time - like cleaning the garage or a closet, or scrubbing the bathrooms (we're sure you can think of something!)- to emphasize the dreariness appropriate to the day.
- Good Friday was thought to be a good day for planting seeds (a reference to the Gospel about the seeds which must be planted in the ground to bear fruit as a metaphor for Christ's necessary death and His burial on this day) so if the weather permits, this could be a worthwhile activity with children. (Don't forget to explain the symbolism.)
- With very young children keeping silence during the Three Hours is virtually impossible. You might help them make a miniature Garden of Joseph of Arimathea in the yard. Mother or Father can teach children about the circumstances of Christ's burial and resurrection from the tomb by telling the the story of Joseph, Christ's friend who donated the new tomb where Jesus' body was buried after He was taken down from the Cross. Children can gather small stones, sticks, acorns, etc., for the little garden.
- Older children can be given a drawing or coloring project. Perhaps they could draw one or more of the Stations of the Cross. (See also sections on the Cross and Christ symbols).

The Cross

'Lord, by thy Cross and Resurrection thou hast redeemed the world'

In the symbol of the Cross we can see the magnitude of the human tragedy, the ravages of original sin, and the infinite love of God. Lent is a particularly appropriate time to attempt to penetrate the true meaning of this sacred image represents through prayerful contemplation; and to study the traditions surrounding the Christian symbol of the Cross.

Looking at the Cross in prayer helps us to truly see it. Most Christians have crosses in their homes. Many wear a cross around their necks. Some of these are very beautiful, perhaps made of precious metal and embellished with jewels. The beauty of these devotional objects may emphasize the glory and the victory of Our Lord's Cross; but too often representations of this central symbol of our faith are regarded primarily as decorative, and its true message is lost.

It is fitting that Christians glorify the Cross as a sign of Christ's resurrection and victory over sin and death, of course. But we should remember each time we see a cross that the Cross of Jesus' crucifixion was an emblem of physical anguish and personal defilement, not triumph-of debasement and humiliation, not glory-of degradation and shame, not beauty. It was a means of execution, like a gallows or a gas chamber. What the Son of God endured for us was the depth of ugliness and humiliation. We need to be reminded of the tremendous personal cost of love.

As Lent advances we contemplate the redeeming Mystery of the Cross which aids the Church in her pursuit of the renewal of the faithful. The image of the Cross may help each of us to learn more fully the meaning of Christ's sacrifice, and how we are to imitate His example. We can hope that our prayers which focus on the Crucifixion of our Lord will help atone for our own sins and the many grave sins of our society.

The Sign of the Cross

'The season of Lent is a most appropriate time for children of all ages to learn more about one of the most distinctively Catholic prayers: the sign of the cross. It is a visible sign (a sacramental) of one's belief in Christ and of one's hope in the redemption which flows from His Cross. Accompanied by the invocation of the Trinity (Doxology), 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit', making a sign of the cross is a simple and beautiful form of Christian devotion. By making this sign both in public and in private we affirm our faith in Christ crucified and ask for His blessing and protection. It is also a gesture of reverence to the Blessed Sacrament.

This Christian sign is a very ancient one, mentioned by the early Fathers of the Church as being a habitual practice by the second century. Tertullian recounts that 'in all our travels in all our coming in and going out, in putting on our shoes, at the bath, at the table, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross.' This sign or mark on the forehead of consecration to Christ has an antecedent in Ezekiel's prophetic vision of judgment, in which the Lord commands that a 'mark be set upon the foreheads' of the Israelites who cry out against the evil which surrounds them, so that by this mark God's people were identified as belonging to Him and saved from annihilation (Ezekiel: 9:4-6). Other biblical references to 'sealing' God's people with a sign on their heads are found in the Apocalypse (or Revelations) 7:4, 9:4.

This sacramental 'mark' is important to Catholic people to this day. We are anointed, at baptism and at confirmation, by the priest making the sign of the cross on our foreheads with the Oil of Chrism (the oil blessed by bishops at the Mass of Chrism on Holy Thursday). The sign and the chrism are also used at the ordination of a priest or bishop. In administering the sacrament of the sick the priest anoints the person with the sign of the cross made with blessed oil. Also, on Ash Wednesday, our foreheads are marked by the priest with the sign of the cross made with blessed palm ashes.

Another form of the sign of the cross is made by the priest several times during the celebration of Mass and when he grants absolution and gives other priestly blessings, by making an invisible cross with the the first two fingers and thumb of his right hand extended. A similar gesture of blessing is made when a priest blesses religious objects (these objects used in worship are also called sacramentals), such as rosaries, medals, vestments and articles used used in connection with Mass.

Parents find that even infants can learn to make the sign of the cross, and try to imitate what they see family members doing at the blessing before meals even before they can talk. Try to encourage use of this sign at bedtime prayers, too, when you can explain what it means.

The Sign of the Cross

The two forms of the sign of the cross used by most Catholics are:

- The Great Sign of the Cross: (This is the one most people think of, and the one people use most often.) A cross is traced with the right hand, touching the forehead, the chest, then the left and right shoulder. [In Orthodox churches, from right to left.] The Doxology is said aloud or silently as the sign is made.
- The Little Sign of the Cross: A cross is made on the forehead with the thumb or index finger (this form is used by the priest when anointing or administering ashes). Or a cross is traced with the thumb on one's own head, lips and heart, a gesture which asks Christ to instruct our minds, aid us in our witness, and renew our hearts. (This sign is made at the reading of the Gospel by both priest and people.)

Some suggestions for helping to increase children's awareness of this devotion are:

- Give your children a new medal, and ask the priest to bless it for them while they are present.
- Have holy water at home for making this sign 'in all our coming in and going out.'
- Before going to Mass, ask the children to notice the different forms of the sign of the cross used during the celebration by the priest and by the people.

The Crucifix, Crosses and Symbols of Christ

- The most quintessentially Catholic object of devotion is a crucifix—a cross (Latin: crux) with the image of Christ's body nailed to it. Crucifixes are always found in Catholic churches and chapels over the altar and are always carried in liturgical processions. This image is venerated by the faithful in a special ceremony on Good Friday. They are a customary fixture in every room and office of Catholic institutions (schools, hospitals), and on the walls of Catholic homes. This form of representing the Cross of our Lord adorns Rosaries, prayer-books, private altars, vestments, and many other devotional articles; also the Pectoral Cross worn by a bishop as a sign of office. The Pope's ceremonial staff has a crucifix attached to it (unlike an ordinary bishop's staff, which is formed like a shepherd's crook.) A crucifix is frequently worn by Catholics on a neck-chain. A less common form of the crucifix bears an image of Christ glorified, wearing the vestments of a priest and with his arms extended in blessing.

One way to help increase children's reverence and love for Christ and his cross is to introduce them to traditional Christian symbols. Help them draw several kinds of crosses in addition to the Crucifix (with Christ's body, or 'corpus') -- such as the Chi Rho, the first two Greek letters in 'Christ' (looks like a capital P with an X through the elongated tail), the Latin Cross, the Jerusalem Cross, the Greek Cross, the St. Andrew Cross (an X shape). You might look for various types of crosses in churches, on vestments, and in other places.

Introduce children to New Testament symbols of Christ such as the Lamb, the door, the lamp, etc., Ask them to draw these symbols themselves and then color them. Display them on the refrigerator or in their rooms after they have finished.

- **THE LAMB**

John 1: 29: The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him, and he said: 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'

- **THE DOOR**

John 10: 1-2, 7-9 : 'Amen, amen, I say to you, he who enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up another way, is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. Those others who have come are thieves and robbers. I am the door. If anyone enter by me he shall find salvation, and shall go in and out, and shall find pastures.'



The Crucifix, Crosses and Symbols of Christ

- **THE LAMP**

Isaiah 62: 1: 'For Sion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest till her Just One come forth as brightness , and her Saviour be lighted as a lamp.'

John 8: 12 : 'I am the light of the world.'

- **THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE**

John 19: 33-34 'When they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead they did not break his legs; but one of the soldiers opened his side with a lance, and immediately blood and water flowed out.'

- **THE TRUE VINE**

John 15: 1-3, 5 : 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away; and every branch that bears fruit he trims clean, that it may bear more fruit. I am the vine, you are the branches; He that abides in me brings forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing.

- **THE BREAD OF LIFE**

John 6:35, 48: Jesus said unto them, 'I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger. I am that bread of life.'