

## GOOD FRIDAY

On this day, when Christ our Paschal Lamb was sacrificed, the Church contemplates and adores the Cross of her Lord and Spouse, commemorating her own coming forth from the side of Christ as he slept on the cross, and interceding for the salvation of the world. According to a most ancient tradition the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist today.

**Liturgy of the Hours:** It is recommended that there be a solemn liturgical celebration of the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer on both Good Friday and Holy Saturday so that the Christian community may meditate more fully on the Passion, in expectation of the Resurrection. Evening Prayer is not recited by those who take part in the celebration of the Lord's Passion. Night Prayer is celebrated as after Evening Prayer II of Sunday.

**Celebration of the Lord's Passion:** The celebration of the Lord's Passion should take place about 3pm, though for pastoral reasons may be at a later hour, but not before noon and not after 9pm. The altar should be bare and devoid of cloths, cross and candlesticks. The priest and deacon wear red chasuble and dalmatic. The clergy enter in silence and prostrate or kneel before the altar, signifying abasement and also the grief and sorrow of the Church. The priest then prays the opening prayer from the Chair.

For the reading of the Passion see the guidelines in the section on Passion Sunday above. The General Intercessions are prayed following the wording and form handed down by ancient tradition. A homily is given after which the faithful may be invited to spend a short time in prayer.

**Veneration of the Cross:** The ritual speaks of the veneration of the cross, not necessarily a crucifix. Wood should be the operative sign for the veneration, not a figure. The cross (more precisely the wood of the cross) can better suggest the tree of life, whose power is present now, and transcends any particular moment in human history.

The Ceremonial of Bishops directs that only one cross should be used in the veneration. It should be sizeable and of a certain beauty. The formula for the showing of the cross and the people's response should be sung. The personal adoration of the cross is an important feature in this celebration and every effort should be made to achieve it. If the numbers are so great that all cannot come forward, the priest, after some of the clergy and faithful have adored the Cross, can take the cross and stand in the centre before the altar. In a few words he invites the people to adore the Cross. He then elevates the cross higher for a brief period of time while the faithful adore it in silence. Pastorally, it should be kept in mind that when a sufficiently large cross is used even a large community can reverence it in due time. The foot of the cross as well as the right and left arm can be approached and venerated. Co-ordination with ushers and planning the flow of people beforehand can allow for this part of the liturgy to be celebrated with decorum and devotion. Veneration may take the form of a reverential bow or genuflection, a simple touch or some other sign such as kissing the Cross.

After the veneration, the Cross is positioned near the altar and candles are placed near it. The cross will remain there and the candles may remain lit for a period of time following the liturgy to allow the faithful to spend some additional time in prayer before the cross.

**Holy Communion:** Communion is distributed only within the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, but may be taken to the sick at any time this day.

**After Communion:** The Celebrant says the Prayer over the People from the Missal. After genuflecting to the Cross all depart in silence.

## HOLY SATURDAY

On Holy Saturday the Church waits at the Lord's tomb, meditating upon his passion, death and descent into Hell, awaiting in prayer and fasting his Resurrection. According to the Church's ancient tradition, the sacraments are not celebrated today. The altar is bare and the Mass is never celebrated. Holy Communion may be given on this day only as Viaticum. The celebration of marriage is forbidden.

Rites for the preparation of the elect for initiation may be celebrated this day, as described in the RCIA, within the context of the gathered community.

If it is not possible to celebrate the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer with the people's participation there should be a celebration of the Word of God or some other devotional exercise appropriate to today's mystery, especially one that honours the Blessed Virgin Mary for her sharing in the Passion of her Son.

An image of Christ crucified or laid in the tomb may be set up in the church for veneration, or else a portrayal of his descent into Hell, such as to cast light upon the mystery commemorated by Holy Saturday, or else an image of Our Lady of Sorrows.