

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Columba's,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all!

We have now entered the three most sacred days of this season – the Holy Triduum – and so I wanted to touch base with you, to assure you of my continuing prayerful support for you all, and to offer you some spiritual and liturgical resources to help you enter ever more deeply into the beauty of these three days.

### **Preparation**

Given that we cannot make our Confession, as we would normally do, why not attend the virtual Penitential Service at St. Joseph's? You can do so here, on our diocesan website –

<https://www.rcda.scot/penitential-service-3/#more-15907>

Children can join in too! See the attached activity sheet, entitled “Lenten Reconciliation”.

One way to focus more intensely on these days is to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. If you have never done so, now is an ideal time to start! You will find these included for you as an attachment.

Bishop Hugh has produced a video, helping us to celebrate the Triduum at home: you can find it here (<https://youtu.be/prgWRdaYdPI>)

### **Holy Thursday: Mass of the Lord's Supper**

For us, as priests, today is particularly significant. It is the day of the Institution of the Holy Priesthood – our feast day. Usually in the morning, each diocese will celebrate the Chrism Mass, during which the sacramental oils used throughout the year are blessed by the bishop. All priests attend this Mass if they possibly can; we come together as a brotherhood, united in our office as local shepherds of the Church, and during the Mass we make a public renewal of our Priestly Promises. This cannot happen today. It will be strange not to enjoy a celebratory meal with brother priests. Rather than being together for our liturgy, we are all separated, though united in spirit.

As you know, this evening's Mass takes us to the Upper Room, to join with Christ and his closest disciples at that last fateful meal. “Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you”. Words that every priest says, in his own language, at every single Mass celebrated

throughout the world. Words that I will say this evening. As I do so, I will be thinking of each of you, deprived of the Eucharist, hungry for the Lord, yet trusting that when this is all over, our sacramental famine will be also be ended, and we will feast once more on the Bread of Life.

### **How will you celebrate Holy Thursday?**

Why not offer up prayers for Bishop Hugh, and for all the priests of the Diocese of Aberdeen? – retired and active, young and old, and for those in training: Christopher, Malachy, and Aidan.

Why not spend some quiet time after the Mass, adoring the Lord at a virtual Altar of Repose?

[See here](#) for more ideas on how to celebrate Holy Thursday at home.

### **Good Friday**

The most solemn day on which our Lord was tortured, ridiculed, crucified, and died on Mount Calvary. The day when Love Incarnate died for you and me; when the Sinless One gave His life for us, taking upon Himself all our sins, that we might live. This is the supreme sacrifice offered by the great High Priest, as the Letter to the Hebrews tells us.

The Paschal Lamb, without blemish, has been offered in our stead.

This is the one day of the year when a Mass is not actually celebrated: the liturgy comprises three elements:

- the reading of the Passion – on Palm Sunday, we read from Matthew's Gospel account (Year A); on Good Friday, we always read from John's Gospel.
- the Veneration of the Cross.
- the distribution of Holy Communion, from the tabernacle on the Altar of Repose.

### **How will you celebrate Good Friday?**

Why not read John's account of the Passion: Chapter 18, verse 1 to Chapter 19, verse 42? You can do this aloud, and if you have other family members, you can all sit quietly and listen to the reading together. Then spend five minutes in silent reflection, and discuss it together, if you wish. This is good preparation for the liturgy of Good Friday, which is being live streamed at 3.00pm.

During the live-streaming of the liturgy, why not hold a crucifix in your hands, and at the moment of veneration, hold the crucifix up and kiss it reverently.

Then make a Spiritual Communion with the Lord:

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,

and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there  
and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

[Click here](#) for more ideas on how to celebrate Good Friday at home.

### **Easter Vigil**

The most holy night of the year, with a liturgy that is rich in theological meaning:

The Paschal candle, echoing the pillar of fire by night that led the Israelites through the desert, and now represents the light of Christ coming in to our disordered world to “banish the darkness of sin” (*Exsultet*).

The Old Testament readings and associated psalms and canticles, chronicling the relationship between God and His chosen people – the salvation history of our ancestors in faith.

The Baptismal liturgy: water representing purification, freshness, and renewal, and also symbolising our incorporation into the Church, as her members.

We bless the water, sprinkle it on ourselves, and renew our Baptismal Promises.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist: receiving the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord, now in glory.

### **How will you celebrate the Easter Vigil?**

Why not light a candle and place it on your windowsill, or on a saucer or suitable plate, as you watch the Easter Vigil Mass online?

Why not follow the Readings online, using the resources on the Magnificat website, or via the Universalis site?

Do you know the date of your own baptism?! If not, why not find out before the Vigil? If you have any holy water in the house (bottle), why not use it to bless yourself at the moment of the Baptismal liturgy.

### **Easter Sunday of the Resurrection**

“They saw and they believed.” – The empty tomb and the graveclothes are signs to the incredulous disciples of the central belief of our faith: He is Risen!!!

Hopefully, you will be able to follow the liturgy from one of the live-streamed Masses.

### **How will you celebrate Easter Sunday?**

Do try to take part in a live-streamed Mass, and as you do, please pray for each other and for all our parishioners.

Why not tell your children about the idea of the egg – a sign of new life, but also a sign (the hollow shell) of the empty tomb. The one who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, is no longer there!

Have your children made decorated eggs? You can roll them in the garden.