



One Home at a **Time**



**Realizing and Living out
Our Domestic Church**

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NOVALIS





Easter Triduum

The Triduum is the central celebration of our salvation. These holy three days challenge us to home in on our religious and spiritual commitment. We are called to focus all of our attention on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are urged to participate deeply in the Church's liturgical celebrations of the Paschal Mystery. How do you hold these days holy? Parents with young children face a challenge in keeping their children engaged throughout the myriad of church celebrations during the Triduum. How do we ensure our children know this is the central time of our faith tradition? How do we prepare young children physically, mentally and spiritually before each Mass? Make sure young children and the elderly are well fed and hydrated prior to the lengthy Triduum liturgies. You may want to bring religious books for children to leaf through. Books that correspond with the scriptures are easy to find, and they can





help children stay focused. You may also donate religious books to your church to help with this situation for families with young children. Sunday missals for young Catholics can also facilitate their deeper participation. In November 2015, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops published a document – *Criteria for Catechesis* – to give catechists age-appropriate suggestions for helping the young enter into the mystery of our faith.¹⁸ It is laid out, both in hard copy and online, in an easy-to-read fashion to assist with our role as catechists in the domestic church.

This special period is a busy and taxing time for priests, deacons and all who serve the church. Perhaps our domestic church can support this group through prayer or by participating in some form of lay ministry. Lay ministry can assume many forms at various times in your life; it can be a profound experience. Holy Thursday is a great time to start. Having your feet washed by your pastor is a humbling and touching experience. What do you do for Holy Week in your home? What symbols, signs and actions does your domestic church use to prepare for the celebration of Christ's resurrection?

Another rich experience during Lent might be for your family to participate in or learn about the Seder meal of our Jewish brothers and sisters. The Seder is the sacred meal Jesus would have ritually practised from the time he was a boy. Have you ever been to a Seder meal? Does your community offer an opportunity to participate in one? Your family may also create something akin to the Seder with Jesus Christ at the centre of your celebration. Save a place for Elijah and pour a cup of wine during your Good Friday meal, or if you are fasting for the whole day, save this act for Easter Sunday.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Hang a purple ribbon on your front door on Holy Thursday.
- Hang a red ribbon on your front door on Good Friday.
- Detach from personal electronic devices, music, TV, electronics.
- Wash the feet of those in your domestic church and re-enact the Last Supper.
- Abstain from a large meal on Good Friday.

¹⁸ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Criteria for Catechesis*, November 2015.



- Invite someone who perhaps doesn't have plans for Easter to share a meal.
- Leave an empty seat and place setting for Elijah, pour a glass of wine and open the door. (These all have symbolic meaning around trusting in God and the promise of redemption.)
- Participate in a Seder or learn about the tradition of the Seder meal.

Notable Feast Days During Lent

- Saint Peter Damian, February 21
- Saint Polycarp, February 23
- Saint Katharine Drexel, March 3
- Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity, March 7
- Saint Patrick, March 17
- Solemnity of Saint Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, March 19
- Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, March 25

Easter

As the stores in the mall are putting away their Easter displays, Christians all over the world are just beginning their celebration. The Easter season is fifty days long and *begins* with the resurrection of Christ on Easter morning. Often, neighbours will ask why bunnies and eggs are still strewn across the lawn weeks after shopping malls have emptied their shelves of Easter items. Our response often gives them food for thought about the dichotomy between the sacred celebration of Easter and the secular sale of Easter items. What are your Easter rituals? How do you share the Easter joy with your community for the fifty days? Who do you visit? What do you eat, and who is invited to eat with you? What does your first meal after Easter Mass look like? Will the food and people around your table receive a blessing? Has your family created a special prayer for Easter?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Buy a Paschal candle for your home and light it.
- Change decorations in and around your home to note the importance of the day.
- Create an Easter tree with eggs.
- Open your family Bible to Easter scripture.
- Bless the Easter basket. In some cultures, people bring their Easter eggs, bread or items to church to have them blessed.
- Add Easter scripture to Easter eggs for your hunt, or add an LED tea light if you attend evening Mass and do your Easter egg hunt at night.
- If you are really dedicated, prepare 12 plastic eggs (the type that come apart), with each one containing one of the following: three nickels, dimes or quarters (pieces of silver), a piece of bread, a cup, a rope, soap (Jesus is clean and free of sin), purple cloth, nail, vine, three different lengths of straws (casting lots), soil and rocks, piece of cheese cloth or white material, spices or essential oil. Hide the 12 eggs as well as a 13th egg that is empty (the empty tomb). Do not open the eggs until they are all returned to a central place. Then, explain each symbol as the eggs are opened.
- Buy or make hot cross buns or Easter bread, and explain their significance to those in your family and community. Better yet, make the bread together.
- Highlight the importance of women in the Easter account, and call to mind the role of women in our lives and in our faith tradition.

Notable Feast Days During the Easter Season

- Divine Mercy Sunday (Second Sunday of Easter)
- Ascension of the Lord (40 days after Easter)
- Pentecost Sunday (50 days after Easter)