

HOLY THURSDAY 

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# 7

## CHURCHES PILGRIMAGE GUIDE & REFLECTIONS



*Hosted by the Catholic Parishes of Sandusky  
Reflections used with permission from the Diocese of Arlington*

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# WELCOME TO THE GARDEN

On this evening some 2000 years ago, Jesus of Nazareth went out into a garden in the dead of night. In agony he prayed, knowing what he was about to endure. He was utterly alone, even though he had asked for the accompaniment of his friends. As Catholics, we believe that Christ is alive in the Scripture and the Eucharist. So tonight, we join him in the garden, through Word and Sacrament. Thank you for being with him. This guide provides you with Scriptures verses, reflections, and tools to make the most of this time in prayer. Please use these however you wish—what is most important is that you be with Jesus.

After Mass on Holy Thursday, the Blessed Sacrament is placed on an Altar of Repose for Adoration by the faithful. The tradition of visiting seven churches is typically credited to St. Philip Neri. The faithful are encouraged to visit seven parishes and adore the Lord in the Eucharist. There is something powerful about making a late-night pilgrimage to our Eucharistic Lord, especially on Holy Thursday: the Institution of the Eucharist and the Sacred Priesthood.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This pilgrimage weaves together passages from all four Gospels to take you through the narrative of Jesus' time in the Garden of Gethsemane. It is broken into seven reflections which we recommend you pray through at seven different churches. You can do it with a group or on your own. If you are unable to travel, you may still use this guide to pray anywhere! We recommend you spend 10-15 minutes in prayer with each passage but go at a pace that is natural for you.

There are 10 participating churches you can pray at this evening. Select the route that works best for you/ your group.

# THE JOURNEY

After Mass ends, begin your self-led pilgrimage by choosing 7 churches to visit and pray at. Please note that start times for the Altar of Repose are approximate.

- **Holy Angels (428 Tiffin Ave, Sandusky)**
  - Mass: 7 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8-11 PM
- **St. Mary's (429 Central Ave, Sandusky)**
  - Mass: 7 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8-11 PM
- **Sts. Peter and Paul (510 Columbus Ave, Sandusky)**
  - Mass: 7 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8-11 PM
- **St. Peter (430 Main St, Huron)**
  - Mass: 7 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8-10 PM
- **St. Mary (731 Exchange St, Vermilion)**
  - Mass: 7 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8-10 PM
- **Immaculate Conception (231 E. Center St, Bellevue)**
  - Mass: 6 PM
  - Altar of Repose 7:30-11 PM
- **St. Joseph (66 Chapel Street, Monroeville)**
  - Mass: 7 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8-11 PM
- **St. Alphonsus (1322 Settlement Road, Norwalk)**
  - NO MASS
  - Altar of Repose 8:30 PM-12 Midnight
- **St. Paul (91 E. Main St, Norwalk)**
  - Mass: 7:30 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8:30 PM-12 Midnight
- **St. Anthony (145 S. Center St, Milan)**
  - Mass: 7 PM
  - Altar of Repose 8-11 PM

# PLENARY INDULGENCE

*"An indulgence is obtained through the Church who, by virtue of the power of binding and loosing granted her by Christ Jesus, intervenes in favor of individual Christians and opens for them the treasury of the merits of Christ and the saints to obtain from the Father of mercies the remission of the temporal punishment due for their sins." The Church does this not just to aid Christians, "but also to spur them to works of devotion, penance, and charity" (CCC 1478).*

To be capable of gaining an indulgence for oneself, it is required that one be baptized, not excommunicated, in the state of grace at least at the completion of the prescribed works, and a subject of the one granting the indulgence. You can gain a Plenary Indulgence for yourself or for a deceased person. But not for another living person, they have to get it for themselves.

The individual must be in the state of grace, at least at the time the pilgrimage is completed;

- participate in the pilgrimage, spending time at each location in prayer;
  - *For those who are unable to undertake the pilgrimage due to illness, advanced age or circumstance, they may fulfill the work of the pilgrimage by piously reciting the verses of the "Tantum ergo" after the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday during the solemn reposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament.*
- must have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin;
- must have sacramentally confessed his/her sins, that is, receive the Sacrament of Penance (preferably one week before or after the pilgrimage);
- must receive the Holy Eucharist (preferably at Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper);
- must pray for the intentions of the Holy Father.
  - Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...

# PRAY

Consider using this process of engaging in silent prayer for each reflection:

**ACKNOWLEDGE** – As you begin prayer, acknowledge the presence of God. Invite him to be present to you.

**RELATE** – Take a personal inventory of your thoughts, emotions, and desires. Share them with God.

**RECEIVE** – Pause and ask God what he thinks/feels. Listen for him. Open yourself to receive from him – be it words, ideas, feelings, or more questions.

**RESPOND** – Engage in dialogue with God and seek resolutions (be they large or small) wherever possible. Offer your resolutions to God and ask for him to accomplish them in you.



Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done.

– Luke 22:42

# REMAIN

*Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me." – Matthew 26: 36-38*

## REFLECTION

In the times of our greatest sufferings, the only people we want around us are those that are our closest, most intimate family and friends. When Jesus was “sorrowful even unto death,” he asked his disciples, his students who became his friends, to remain with him. We, too, are his disciples, his students and friends. As he asked his disciples then, he asks us to remain with him now.

St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that “action reveals essence.” What does this action of asking us to remain with him reveal of Jesus? Jesus desires to be close to us. God entered into time and took on human flesh to redeem us so we could be with him always. Tradition says that the sorrow and distress that Jesus felt in the agony of the garden was not only the weight of our sins but also the anguish we feel in the midst of that sin. Jesus experiences the weight that we feel of being separated from him by our sin. The One whose only desire at his most sorrowful moment is that we remain with him only feels the anguish of our choice of our separation. Sin separates us from God and does not allow us to remain with him, the God who so desperately wants to be close to us that he is willing to suffer and die.

Thankfully, the story doesn’t end there. He asks us to remain, and then he even provides the way. He knows our frail humanity and that we separate ourselves from him, fearing the Love that invites us to remain, and he gives us his very self through the Sacraments as a remedy. After the Resurrection but before the Ascension, in his last words of Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus told his disciples, “*Behold, I am with you until the end of the age*” (Matthew 28:20). He gives us his very self in the Eucharist—his body, blood, soul and divinity. He remains with us in Adoration, and you remain with him this holy night, watching and praying.

# SURRENDER

*He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will." - Mark 14: 35-36*

## REFLECTION

Jesus, in his intense moment of suffering, in the shadows of the anticipated suffering to come, surrenders his will to his Father. He shows us how to pray in surrender. He asks the Father to take his suffering away, but then surrenders to whatever the Father wills. God only wills our good, and surrender is ultimately a cry of trust in God's goodness. Surrender is ultimately opening up to whatever comes, to give up control, to say "Thy will be done." It's not a frustrated resignation but a pure gift of self. Surrender is an act of deep communion.

He surrenders his cup: *"This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my Blood"* (Luke 22:20). Although rare, sweat-ing blood can occur when one is under extreme stress. Jesus' blood poured forth in agony, here, and later in his scourging and final sacrifice on the Cross. Recent scientific studies on various Eucharistic miracles and the burial cloth of the Shroud of Turin have all typed the blood AB+. AB+ is known as the universal receiver, meaning that a person who has AB+ blood can receive any other blood type and then makes that blood their own. Jesus would be able to receive all blood types and make them his own.

*"Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27-28).* His Blood is poured forth for us in the Eucharist as well. The God of the Universe surrenders himself in becoming a small white host to come into communion with you. When we receive the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ in the Eucharist, we abide in him, and enter more deeply his body, the Church. The encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist, whether at Mass or here in Adoration, is the perfect moment for surrender. For we know Jesus will receive us.

# VIGILANT

*When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. He returned a third time and said to them, Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up let us go. See my betrayer is at hand." - Mark 14: 37-42*

## REFLECTION

Jesus invites his disciples to pray with him during his agony, and finds them asleep. Later, he invites them again to vigilance. Jesus knew the darkness and struggle that was coming. He knew his disciples, facing the Cross of Jesus ahead of them, would be tempted to run away. He was teaching his disciples and us that "such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer" (CCC 2849).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines vigilance as "custody of the heart." The best way to keep custody of the heart is to dwell in his Sacred Heart through prayer. Yet, each time he invites the disciples into prayer, he finds them asleep. How often are we in that same situation? When facing difficulty, we often fall asleep tightly clutching our fear and worry. The Lord invites us to prayer, and we avoid and ignore the invitation or say we are too busy. We isolate ourselves from the Lord out of shame or fear. It is interesting to note here that even though Jesus prayed, the Cross did not go away. Even though the disciples did not pray, the cross they were facing did not go away. "Get up, let us go." Jesus wants to walk with you in your cross. He desires to be with us in the midst of our brokenness and offers himself as our remedy. St Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 10:13, "*No testing has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your strength, but with temptation will also provide the way of escape, so that you may be able to endure it.*" Time in prayer with Jesus in the Eucharist will give us the grace to remain vigilant in our communion with his Heart.



# IDENTITY

*Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, "Whom are you looking for?" They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean." he said to them, "I AM." Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, "I AM," they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazorean." Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." This was to fulfill what he had said, "I have not lost any of those you gave me." - John 18: 4-9*

## REFLECTION

Names express our identity and mission. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus had identified himself as "I am the Bread of Life," "I am the Vine," "I am the light of the world," among others. Yet here, at point of his arrest, he identifies himself as "I AM." Those arresting him would have recognized this "I AM" statement as the expression of his identity as God, connecting Jesus to the words told to Moses "I am who I am" (Ex. 3:14). God's name "I AM" resists unraveling; it is mysterious and we can never fully comprehend him, but we come to know a little more about God through Jesus' name which means "God Saves." His very identity is that he comes to save us.

The Resurrection proves Jesus is who Jesus says he is, and that all that he says is true. So when Jesus says "This is my body" and "This is my blood" and commands his Apostles to repeat his actions and words "until the end of time," he means it. The Eucharist is not a symbol or metaphor but the way he remains with us sacramentally, since he promised to love us "to the end" (John 13:1).

When Moses is before God in the burning bush, he veils his face and takes off his sandals. Peter, seeing Jesus work the miracle of the catch of fish, exclaims, "*Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man*" (Luke 5:8). Face to face before God, we, too, discover our own insignificance. Yet the Lord does not see us as insignificant. He makes himself close to us and remains with us in the Eucharist. This is our identity. Our identity is not in what the world says we must be, feel, look like, do or accomplish, but it is in who Christ says we are. He says that we are so loved by him that not only does he save, but he stays.

# ABANDONED

*His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him." Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and he kissed him. - Matthew 26: 48-49*

## REFLECTION

The Eucharist and the Cross are stumbling blocks. Neither the Cross nor the Eucharist can be understood without faith. In a crisis of faith, we may run, as the disciples did at the cross. We may respond like the disciples, who upon hearing the Bread of Life discourse, say "This saying is hard, who can accept it?" (John 6:60). Th is reply echoes throughout the Christian life in response to Jesus' call. Forgiveness is hard, who can accept it? Loving faithfulness is hard, who can accept it? Perseverance is hard, who can accept it? Belief in the Real Presence is hard, who can accept it? Suffering is hard, who can accept it?

Yet Jesus does not change his mind and decide to make things easier. He does not erase difficulties. He does not say we misunderstood his words. Instead he responds, "Will you also go away?"

We see in this Holy Thursday night how easy it is to go away. Peter follows, but remains distant, and denies knowing Jesus when questioned. Judas betrays him for thirty pieces of silver, the amount that was paid to compensate for the death of a slave. There are times in our lives where we too betray Jesus, where we treat him as slave who had to die for us. Yet even in this hour of darkness, Jesus calls the one who betrays him "friend." Even in our moments of darkness, Jesus calls us friend, and reminds us that "*no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends*" (John 15:13). St. Thomas Aquinas tells us that "*Christ did not lay down his life for us to remain his enemies, but that he might make us his friends. That is to say, even if we were not friends as those loving him, nonetheless we were his friends as loved by him.*"

# HEALED

*His disciples realized what was about to happen, and they asked, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" And one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said in reply, "Stop, no more of this!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him. (Luke 22: 49-51)*

## REFLECTION

At the moment of his salvific self-offering, Jesus reaches down and heals the servant with his touch. This moment echoes who Jesus is throughout the Gospels, Christ the Divine Physician who heals the blind, the woman with the hemorrhages, and countless others, fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah: *"He took our infirmities and bore our diseases"* (Mt 8:17).

He heals the servant's ear. Our ears too need healing. We listen to the lies of the world, the lies we tell ourselves, or the lies we believe about God. Our words and actions can be this same sword the disciples wanted to use, which we justify on the basis of perceived injustice, anger or hurt. We need Jesus to touch our ears and tell our hearts "Stop! No more of this!" when we spiral into thoughts, words and actions that are not of his image and likeness.

We need Jesus to touch our ears and our hearts. The Good News is that he wants to heal us, as he told Moses in Marah: *"For I am the Lord, your healer"* (Ex 15:26). Christ continues to heal us and restore our dignity through his touch in the sacraments.

We do not have record of the servant's response to Jesus. This moment of encounter lasted less than a minute, but the servant could never be the same. There would always be the life before Christ healed him, and then life after he met Jesus' healing touch. Jesus saw the one who needed to be healed. He sees us, and we too are never the same.

# FULFILLED

*Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the scriptures be fulfilled which say that it must come to pass in this way?" At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me. But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples left him and fled. - Matthew 26: 52-56*

## REFLECTION

The whole of the prophets and the Old Testament point to the great work of salvation God wants to accomplish. Jesus' redemptive passion is the whole reason for the Incarnation. Throughout his ministry, Jesus points out that 'for this purpose have I come' (Jn. 12:27).

Peter, after witnessing the events of the passion (albeit from afar) and the Resurrection (beating the other disciples to be first inside the empty tomb), declared, "*This Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God*" (Acts 2:23). Peter knew that Jesus had accomplished his mission and was true God and true Man. Peter's life had been changed by his relationship with Christ, and he went to share the Good News with the whole world.

His Paschal sacrifice redeems us and restores us to communion with himself. Yet Jesus did not just die for our sins, resurrect, and then leave us on our own. He promised to love us to the end (John 13:1). He fulfills that promise by staying with us in the Eucharist. Mysteriously, the sacrifice of the Cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are the same sacrifice, for Jesus gives us his same body and blood that was poured out on the cross. The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Church's life and we draw our life from the Eucharist. This is the purpose for which he came – not only that we receive him, but that he receives us as well. "*I [Jesus] came that they might have life, and have it abundantly*" (John 10:10). Like Peter, our lives are changed by knowing Christ.