



# Franciscan Action Network

Transforming the World in the Spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare

P.O. Box 29053 • Washington, DC 20017 • 202-527-7575 • 1-888-364-3388 (toll free) • 202-527-7576 (fax)

---

## **Triduum: Sealed with Christ**

### **Reflecting on the Readings**

*Holy Thursday, Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper* (<http://www.usccb.org/nab/040110b.shtml>)

*Good Friday of the Lord's Passion* (<http://www.usccb.org/nab/040210.shtml>)

*Easter Vigil Mass* (<http://www.usccb.org/nab/040310.shtml>)

*Easter Sunday Mass* (<http://www.usccb.org/nab/040410.shtml>)

As we enter these sacred days leading to Easter, our Lenten journey culminates in an intense focus on Christ's greatest act of love. We remember God's deliverance of the Hebrew people from death and slavery in the Passover of the Lord. We hear of Christ's gift of self in Body and Blood at the Last Supper and his example of service in washing the disciples' feet. We observe his agonizing struggle with the task before him and walk the trail of suffering caused by broken relationships with God, with each other, and with creation. We recall Christ's ultimate sacrifice for our salvation and descend with him into the grave.

These are the days when Christ's disciples scattered, when only John, Mary Magdalene, and the Blessed Virgin Mary remained faithful at the foot of the Cross. Now is the time to strengthen our individual fidelity as we anticipate the event that would bring the dispersed followers together to form the Christian community, the Church.

The catechumens who will enter the Church at the Vigil Mass this weekend receive the seal of Christ through their baptism. In these days of quiet reflection, let us be sealed in the tomb with Christ and the relationships we have considered over the past six weeks. Let us allow God to transform us from within that silent space. Then as we renew and celebrate our own baptism, may we rise again with Christ to live differently in the new creation.

### **PRAYER**

*In these words of Scripture, let us pray for fidelity to our faith, confidence in seeking grace to persevere in our commitments, and obedience in our sacrifices.*

Brothers and sisters:

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens,  
Jesus, the Son of God,

let us hold fast to our confession.

For we do not have a high priest

who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,

but one who has similarly been tested in every way,

yet without sin.

So let us confidently approach the throne of grace  
to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

In the days when Christ was in the flesh,  
he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears  
to the one who was able to save him from death,  
and he was heard because of his reverence.  
Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered;  
and when he was made perfect,  
he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.  
(Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:5-7)

### **FASTING** *from excuses*

Over the past six weeks, we have fasted from petroleum products, factory-farmed animal products, bottled water, foods produced outside our region, waste and packaging, and transportation excesses. Rather than condemning these items, our fasting has called us to examine our relationship with them and how our behavior and attitudes might better reflect God's will for creation.

In these final moments of discipline, let us fast from excuses. Let us dwell in possibility and allow ourselves to dream and believe that God *can* bring death to life and make all things new. Let us begin to imagine how our lives might change without the limitations we usually accept.

### **ALMSGIVING**

The witness of Franciscan and Franciscan-hearted communities has strengthened our fasting and inspired our almsgiving this Lent. These examples demonstrate God's power to free us from habits and lifestyles that threaten right relationship with the numerous interconnected members of creation.

In freedom from excuses, let us allow new convictions and commitments to be born in our hearts as we discern how this Lenten journey of reflection and penance might lead to newness of life in our ways of caring for creation.

Beginning on Easter Monday, FAN's contribution to our common efforts to care for creation will transition to bi-weekly resources featuring spiritual reflections, suggestions for communal action, and opportunities to share our message with policymakers during the Easter Season.