

GOOD FRIDAY

Our Triduum liturgy continues with the solemn celebration of Good Friday. The following are suggestions in light of the central elements of this liturgy.



Gathering:

The gathering on this day is one of prayer-filled silence. The Church is stripped bare and is at its most stark. Things need to be in place well in advance of this liturgy. It is hard to create an atmosphere of silence and reverence if music ministers, readers, servers and presider are running around attending to details.

Why not invite all ministers involved in this liturgy to be in their place at 2:50 p.m. in prayerful readiness? Presider and assistants could sit among the assembly and then at 3:00 the main celebrant could bring the liturgy to a start by simply standing and coming to the sanctuary area with assistants and servers for the prostration – no fuss, obviously no greeting, just a simple take up from where we left the liturgy of last night.

Liturgy of the Word:

Today's liturgy demands and needs our best reading – from the powerful proclamation of Isaiah to the announcement of the passion. The sung psalm of Palm Sunday is reprised in this liturgy.

Proclamation of the Passion:

This is at the heart of the celebration. This is proclamation – not acting. After the greeting of the Gospel, why not invite the people to be seated until announcement of the death of Jesus – at which point the assembly kneel and then move to a standing posture until the end of the Gospel.

Why not divide the reading into sections rather than giving out roles in a drama? (Among other things, the giving out of roles in the reading makes the assembly into the crucifiers of Christ) If the passion account is broken down into sections, each section could conclude with the singing of an acclamation, i.e. “Were you there when they crucified the Lord”. *Contact the faith development office if you would like an e-mailed copy of John’s passion account divided into sections. (fds@kandle.ie)*

Universal Prayers:

The pace and proclamation of these prayers need to be considered. There is a natural rhythm to them that demands our attention. Perhaps a choir can lead in a sung acclamation to these prayers which are what they say – universal in their inclusion.

Veneration of the Cross:

Together with the proclamation of the Passion this is the central action of today’s liturgy. This fact should guide us in making decisions around its enactment. If this is a central element then it makes sense to facilitate as best you can the veneration of the cross by the assembly at this point.

The cross is the glorification of Jesus – it is not a declaration of despair or hopelessness. The three fold presentation of the cross calls us to come and worship – and our worship is in a spirit of faith and hope.



Think about the cross that you use – the Sacramentary calls for one cross, echoing the sense of one symbol – one bread, one body, one cross of Christ. A simple wooden cross seems most appropriate.

Think about where it will be placed and how it will stand.

How will people have access to it? How will people be invited to venerate? Will there be a need for the hospitality ministry of stewards at this point? What music will support and keep pace with this action?

Communion rite:

There are some that would hold that Holy Communion on Good Friday breaks the paschal fast of these days – while others hold dearly the need for communion on this day of all days. Historically the church has reflected this tension by for different periods of time prohibiting and permitting communion on this day.

The primary elements of this liturgy would suggest that this rite should be very simple – with no sign of peace or lamb of God, just a Lord's prayer and an invitation to the table, accompanied by an appropriate text of music, not a song that focuses on bread and wine but perhaps on the cross...

Leave taking

After the Amen of the congregation to the prayer the liturgy concludes in silence – the presiding priest simply leaves the sanctuary area with no words of dismissal. We continue to watch and wait, and rest until we gather around the fire of the Vigil to celebrate resurrection.