

7 Churches Booklet

A Holy Thursday Tradition: Pilgrimage to Seven Churches

Holy Thursday is the Feast that marks the beginning of the Holy Triduum, which also includes Good Friday, Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. At this Mass of the Lord's Supper Catholics remember the Passover meal, when Jesus instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist by sharing bread and wine with his disciples, saying, "Do this in memory of Me."

At the end of the Holy Thursday Mass, the Eucharist is placed on a temporary "altar of repose" away from the sanctuary. It is customary for the faithful to process together to this altar and spend time in quiet prayer and adoration. In the Roman Missal, it states: "The faithful are invited to continue adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for a suitable length of time during the night, according to circumstance."

The Seven Churches Visitation is a tradition that grew out of this time of prayer and adoration. Catholics remember when Jesus asked his disciples to stay and watch with Him while they were in the garden. This tradition of mindful watching is a sort of pilgrimage to various altars of repose, in different churches that correspond to each of the seven places, or "stations," that were made by Jesus between the Last Supper in the Upper Room to His crucifixion on the cross.

The seven stations consist of: Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22: 39-46), Jesus bound and taken before Annas (John 18: 19-22), Jesus taken before the High Priest, Caiaphas (Matthew 26: 63-65), Jesus taken before Pilate (John 18, 35-37), Jesus taken before Herod (Luke 23: 8-9; 11), Jesus taken before Pilate again (Matthew 27: 22-26) and Jesus given the crown of thorns and led to his crucifixion (Matthew 27: 27-31).

Upon entering each church, pilgrims visit the altar of repose, kneel, make the sign of the cross, read the appropriate scripture for each station and engage in private prayer and adoration. Some may add other prayers as well. At the seventh station, many will close their pilgrimage by opting to observe a Holy Hour.

The origin of the Seven Churches Visitation is typically credited to St. Philip Neri and is practiced by Catholics around the world, including in Poland, Mexico, Italy and the Philippines. The devotion can also be traced back to the Station Churches of Rome, where the tradition is still practiced. More information is also available in George Weigel's book "Roman Pilgrimage: The Station Churches."

Some will argue that the Holy Thursday pilgrimage has roots in the Book of Revelation, in which the Seven Ancient Churches are visited by an angel. For those who live in an urban area with several Catholic

Churches nearby, they may want to visit seven different churches. However, those who live in a rural area can still take part in the tradition by praying all seven stations. For participating families with young ones, adaptations can be made for the sake of time and parish availability. Pilgrims may choose to say prayers for two stations at one location.

The Seven Churches Visitation is a powerful way to spend time in adoration, meditating on Christ's sacrifice of love for the salvation of souls in preparation for the joy of Easter. There is something special about visiting churches late into the night. It is not just because of the opportunity to visit other parishes, it's because of intentionally seeking Christ to spend time with Him and contemplating the gift of His love.

<https://todayscatholic.org/a-holy-thursday-tradition-pilgrimage-to-seven-churches/>

Reflections on The 7 Churches

The pilgrimage to each church corresponds to the seven “stops” or “stations” of the via crucis that were made by Jesus on his way to Calvary:

1st Visit Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22: 39-46)

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” 41 He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.[a]

45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. 46 “Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.”

Our Father

Hail Mary x10

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Oh My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell. Lead all souls into Heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.

2nd Visit: Jesus bound and taken before Annas (John 18: 19-22)

The High Priest Questions Jesus

19 Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

20 "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. 21 Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."

22 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded.

Our Father

Hail Mary x10

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3rd Visit: Jesus taken before the High Priest, Caiaphas (Matthew 26: 63-65)

63 But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

64 "You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." [a]

65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.

Our Father

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4th Visit: Jesus taken before Pilate (John 18,35-37)

35 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

5th Visit: Jesus taken before Herod (Luke 23: 8-9; 11)

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. 9 He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. 11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate

Our Father

Hail Mary x10

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6th Visit: Jesus taken before Pilate again (Matthew 27: 22-26)

22 “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked.

They all answered, “Crucify him!”

23 “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

25 All the people answered, “His blood is on us and on our children!”

26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Our Father

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**7th Visit: Jesus given the crown of thorns and led to his crucifixion
(Matthew 27: 27-31)**

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Our Father

Hail Mary x10

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Useful Links:

Spotify Playlist:

<https://open.spotify.com/user/12145091577/playlist/1GczvebAMQWq6ZEPEZlqbf?si=BxXX7PDyThexJ-PZFvUr-Q>

Useful Contacts:

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