How to Keep the Lord’s Day Holy
A Catholic Family Guide for Celebrating a Spiritual Communion in the Absence of Mass

Background – As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public celebration of Mass has been suspended throughout many Dioceses in the United States. Many of the faithful, particularly families with children at home, desire to fulfill their duty to God and the Third Commandment in keeping holy the Lord’s Day even in the absence of Mass; but there is little guidance on how or what to do.¹ This document is intended to serve as a guide for the spiritual father or head of the family to maintain contact with our ancient liturgical traditions in communion with the Catholic Church throughout the world today. While it should be made clear, especially to younger children, that this is not the Mass – it is intended to connect us to what is familiar in a paraliturgical manner while in these extraordinary circumstances. This guide was approved for use by the USCCB in a June 9, 2020 email.

Gather your family together; it can be around the kitchen table, in the family room, out on a porch or deck. Encourage them to remember that this is a time to rest; to give thanks to God for His love for us in Jesus Christ, and to ask him to heal our world so that we can again join with our neighbors in celebrating the Mass, the Paschal Mystery, and the source and summit of our faith.

June 14, 2020 – Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ
(_corpus Christi)

Introductory Rites
Gather the family together and begin by reading or chanting the following opening hymn or “Entrance Antiphon.” All stand.

Entrance Antiphon Leader: [Cf. Ps 81 (80):17] He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.²

Family: He fed them with the finest wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

Introduction
Invite the family to make the sign of the cross.

Leader: We gather here to celebrate the Lord’s Day. Sunday has been called the Lord’s day because it was on this day that Jesus conquered sin and death and rose to new life. Unfortunately, we are not able to celebrate Mass today because [the Coronavirus Pandemic has limited the size of our public Masses]. Let us be united in the spirit of Christ with the Church around the world and celebrate our redemption in Christ’s suffering, Death, and Resurrection.³

Leader: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Our Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God forever!⁴

Family: Blessed be God Forever!

The Penitential Act⁵

Leader: Let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate [together and keep holy the Lord’s day].

Family: I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Leader: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Family: Amen.
Gloria

The hymn of great joy is chanted or said on this special Day.6

All: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.7

Collect8

The Collect is the introductory prayer at the end of the Introductory Rites that by ancient tradition of the Church, is usually addressed to God the Father, through Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Let us pray.

All present pray in silence for a short time. Then the spiritual leader in the family says the prayer that follows, with hands extended, to implore God.

O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption.

Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.9

Family: Amen

Liturgy of the Word10

Invite the Family to sit and listen to the words of Scripture. Don’t be afraid to break out the family Bible and read the full passages for the scriptures of the day.

Reading 1: Dt 8:2-3, 14b-16a

Reader: A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

Moses said to the people:
"Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD.
"Do not forget the LORD, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery; who guided you through the vast and terrible desert with its seraph serpents and scorpions, its parched and waterless ground; who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock and fed you in the desert with manna, a food unknown to your fathers."

**Reader:** The word of the Lord

**Family:** Thanks be to God

**Responsorial Psalm** Ps 147:12-13, 14-15, 19-20.

**Reader:** Our responsorial psalm is: "Praise the Lord, Jerusalem." Or: "Alleluia."

**All:** “Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.” Or: “Alleluia.”

**Reader:**
Glorify the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; he has blessed your children within you.

**All:** “Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.” Or: “Alleluia.”

**Reader:**
He has granted peace in your borders; with the best of wheat he fills you. He sends forth his command to the earth; swiftly runs his word!

**All:** “Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.” Or: “Alleluia.”

**Reader:**
He has proclaimed his word to Jacob, his statutes and his ordinances to Israel. He has not done thus for any other nation; his ordinances he has not made known to them. Alleluia.

**All:** “Praise the Lord, Jerusalem.” Or: “Alleluia.”

**Reading 2:** 1 Cor 10:16-17

**Reader:** A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

Brothers and sisters:
The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?
The bread that we break, 
is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 
Because the loaf of bread is one, 
we, though many, are one body, 
for we all partake of the one loaf.

_Reader:_ The word of the Lord  
_Family:_ Thanks be to God

**Sequence:** Lauda Sion  
*On the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, as a part of the Liturgy of the Word, this special hymn of joy is sung or said rejoicing in the graces of Holy Eucharist.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laud, O Zion, your salvation,</th>
<th>What he did at supper seated,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laud with hymns of exultation,</td>
<td>Christ ordained to be repeated,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ, your king and shepherd true:</td>
<td>His memorial ne’er to cease:</td>
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<td>Bring him all the praise you know,</td>
<td>And his rule for guidance taking,</td>
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<tr>
<td>He is more than you bestow.</td>
<td>Bread and wine we hallow, making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never can you reach his due.</td>
<td>Thus our sacrifice of peace.</td>
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| Special theme for glad thanksgiving | This the truth each Christian learns, |
| Is the quick’ning and the living | Bread into his flesh he turns, |
| Bread today before you set: | To his precious blood the wine: |

| From his hands of old partaken, | Sight has fail’d, nor thought conceives, |
| As we know, by faith unshaken, | But a dauntless faith believes, |
| Where the Twelve at supper met. | Resting on a pow’r divine. |

| Full and clear ring out your chanting, | Here beneath these signs are hidden |
| Joy nor sweetest grace be wanting, | Priceless things to sense forbidden; |
| From your heart let praises burst: | Signs, not things are all we see: |

| For today the feast is holden, | Blood is poured and flesh is broken, |
| When the institution olden | Yet in either wondrous token |
| Of that supper was rehearsed. | Christ entire we know to be. |

| Here the new law’s new oblation, | Whoso of this food partakes, |
| By the new king’s revelation, | Does not rend the Lord nor breaks; |
| Ends the form of ancient rite: | Christ is whole to all that taste: |

| Now the new the old effaces, | Thousands are, as one, receivers, |
| Truth away the shadow chases, | One, as thousands of believers, |
| Light dispels the gloom of night. | Eats of him who cannot waste. |
Bad and good the feast are sharing,  
Of what divers dooms preparing,  
Endless death, or endless life.

Life to these, to those damnation,  
See how like participation  
Is with unlike issues rife.

When the sacrament is broken,  
Doubt not, but believe 'tis spoken,  
That each sever'd outward token  
doth the very whole contain.

Nought the precious gift divides,  
Breaking but the sign betides  
Jesus still the same abides,  
still unbroken does remain.

Lo! the angel’s food is given  
To the pilgrim who has striven;  
see the children’s bread from heaven,  
which on dogs may not be spent.

Truth the ancient types fulfilling,  
Isaac bound, a victim willing,  
Paschal lamb, its lifeblood spilling,  
manna to the fathers sent.

Very bread, good shepherd, tend us,  
Jesu, of your love befriend us,  
You refresh us, you defend us,  
Your eternal goodness send us  
In the land of life to see.

You who all things can and know,  
Who on earth such food bestow,  
Grant us with your saints, though lowest,  
Where the heav’nly feast you show,  
Fellow heirs and guests to be. Amen.  
Alleluia.

All stand just as you would at Mass for the Gospel acclamation.

Verse Before the Gospel: Jn 6:51

Reader: Alleluia, alleluia.

All: Alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: I am the living bread that came down from heaven, says the Lord; whoever eats this bread will live forever.

All: Alleluia, alleluia.

The Gospel should be read by the spiritual father or head of the household. The family should be reminded at this time that we are called to live the Gospel by our lives.

Gospel: Jn 6:51-58

Leader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

Family: Glory to you, O Lord!!

All should sign themselves with a cross on their forehead, their lips, and their heart saying quietly:

All: May the Lord be on my mind, and on my lips, and in my heart!

Leader: Jesus said to the Jewish crowds:  
"I am the living bread that came down from heaven;  
whoever eats this bread will live forever;
and the bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world."

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying,
"How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"
Jesus said to them,
"Amen, amen, I say to you,
unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,
you do not have life within you.
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
has eternal life,
and I will raise him on the last day.
For my flesh is true food,
and my blood is true drink.
Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood
remains in me and I in him.
Just as the living Father sent me
and I have life because of the Father,
so also the one who feeds on me
will have life because of me.
This is the bread that came down from heaven.
Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died,
whoever eats this bread will live forever.".

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord
Family: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Reflection on the Readings

All are seated. This reflection can be an opportunity for the spiritual father or head of the family to teach and apply the scripture passages to the family’s daily life. Draw in current events. Bring the Gospel to life! Especially if there are young children present, you may consider using prudent use of dialogue (questions and answers). You can also look up and view a homily from one of the many on the web (e.g. Bishop Robert Barron or https://adw.org/coronavirus-dispensation-and-prayers/) or read one of the great homilies for the day from the Church Fathers.

Period of Silence

After the reflection, pause for a brief period of silent prayer and reflection on the scriptures.

Profession of Faith: Nicene Creed

All stand and process together:

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

*Instruct the Family to bow their heads at these words:*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful**

Encourage each member of the Family to offer in prayer their needs to their Heavenly Father who answers those who ask. The following are some suggested prayers and a guide to our intercessions. The family can reply to each: “Lord Hear Our Prayer.”

*Leader:* We hunger for the body and blood of Christ truly present in the Eucharist. As we rejoice in the source and summit of the Church’s life, we pause to acknowledge our dependence on the graces that flow from this spiritual food and to strengthen our trust in the Lord’s providence as we pray:
Reader: For our bishops and priests, who in the person of Christ provide the Eucharist for us, may our Mother Mary watch over them, protect them from spiritual doubt and provide them with comfort. We pray to the Lord...

Reader: In thanksgiving for the many ways in which our Lord has fed us, his people, throughout time. May the Lord grant us the grace to live not by bread alone, but by his very Word, Jesus Christ. May we be nourished as often as we can with his eucharistic body and blood. We pray to the Lord...

Reader: For the grace to swiftly return as a whole community to the celebration of the breaking of the bread; may we come soon together though many parts, united in the one body of Christ. We pray to the Lord...

Reader: We pray for those who struggle to see the mystery revealed in Christ’s true body and blood. May the witness of our charity towards neighbor and our adoration of his eucharistic presence help them to believe in Jesus. We pray to the Lord...

Reader: We pray for those who suffer racial prejudice and hatred, sins contrary to the dignity of the person created in God’s image. May the Holy Spirit rid our community of these sins and grant deeper conversion to each of us. We pray to the Lord...

Reader: For our brothers and sisters who have died this week believing in our eucharistic Lord, may they soon see the fulfillment of the Holy Communion they shared on earth. We pray to the Lord...

Leader: Father, we hunger and thirst for righteousness as did Jesus. We hunger and thirst for holiness. We hunger and thirst for his body and blood. Thank you for giving us this heavenly food to sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage. Please grant us the grace to worship and receive you worthily. We ask you this and all these things through the intercession of our Blessed Mother in communion with all the Saints through Christ, our Lord.

Family: Amen.

Prayer to St. Joseph, Hope of the Sick

St. Joseph is guardian of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ and patron saint of the Universal Church. In this time of great need, we implore his intercession.

All: Oh, St. Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, we place in you all our interests and desires.

Oh St. Joseph, do assist us by your powerful intercession and obtain for us from your divine son all spiritual blessings through Jesus Christ, our Lord; so that having engaged here below your heavenly power, we may offer our thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers.

Oh St. Joseph, we never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms. We dare not approach while he reposes near your heart. Press him in our name and kiss his fine head for us, and
ask him to return the kiss when we draw our dying breath. St. Joseph, patron of departing souls, pray for us. Amen.

**Rite of Spiritual Communion**

*Although without a Priest, we cannot offer the Mystery of Jesus’ Sacrifice on the Cross, on this Easter Sunday we can join with the Church throughout the world in making a Spiritual Communion until such time as we can again participate in the great Sacrifice of the Mass.*

**Lord’s Prayer**

*Leader:* The Father provides us with food for eternal life. Let us pray for nourishment and strength.

*Family:* Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

**Invitation to [Spiritual] Communion**

*Invite the family to kneel, if practical. The following formula of prayers can be prayed together as a family, inviting Jesus spiritually into our hearts.*

*Leader:* Let us make acts of faith, hope and love to prepare ourselves to make our Spiritual Communion to unite ourselves with all the Masses our priests our celebrating in our absence and on our behalf:

**Act of Faith**

*All:* O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I believe that your divine Son became man and died for our sins and that he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches because you have revealed them who are eternal truth and wisdom, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. In this faith I intend to live and die. Amen.

*Leader:* Longing for the kingdom of heaven, we place our trust in Christ’s promise relying on the grace of the Holy Spirit. Let us now make our own act of hope as we pray:

**Act of Hope**

*All:* Lord God, I hope by your grace for the pardon of all my sins and after life here to gain eternal happiness because you have promised it who are infinitely powerful, faithful, kind, and merciful. In this hope I intend to live and die. Amen.

*Leader:* Through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus made the ultimate act of love by offering himself as expiation for our sins. Let us now make our own act of love as we pray:

**Act of Love**

*All:* O Lord God, I love you above all things and I love my neighbor for your sake because you are the highest, infinite and perfect good, worthy of all my love. In this love I intend to live and die. Amen.
Leader: With a humble and contrite heart, we ask the Lord to come to us just as He would if we were able to receive Him in Holy Communion at Mass:

St. Alphonsus’ Act of Spiritual Communion
All: My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire you in my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.  

[Spiritual] Communion Antiphon

All: [Jn 6:57] Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him, says the Lord.

Act of Thanksgiving
Leader: Let us together pray an Act of Thanksgiving

All [Psalm 100]: Cry out with joy to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before him, singing for joy. Know that he, the Lord, is God. He made us, we belong to him, we are His people the sheep of his flock.

Go within his gates, giving thanks. Enter his courts with songs of praise. Give thanks to him and bless his name.

Indeed, how good is the Lord, eternal his merciful love. He is faithful from age to age.

Another Psalm of Thanksgiving would also be suitable, e.g. Ps. 23, Ps. 27, Ps. 98, Ps. 137, etc. Perhaps add prayers dear to the family to give thanks to God for faith in the Holy Eucharist and ever long to receive Him in Holy Communion at Mass.

Concluding Rite
All stand.

Invitation to Pray [for the world]

Pope Francis’ prayer to Mary during the Coronavirus Pandemic

All: O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus’ pain, keeping your faith firm. You, Oh Lady of Guadalupe and Patroness of the Americas, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
we may return to joy and to feasting
after this time of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform to the will of the Father
and to do as we are told by Jesus,
who has taken upon himself our sufferings
and carried our sorrows
to lead us, through the cross,
to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.
Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Blessing²⁸

Leader: May the Lord bless [us] and keep [us].

Family: Amen.

Leader: May he let his face shine upon [us] and show [us] his mercy.

Family: Amen.

Leader: May he turn his countenance towards [us] and give [us] his peace.²⁹

Family: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.³⁰

Family: Amen.

Sign of Peace³¹

Leader: Let us offer other [an appropriate] sign of peace.

Closing Hymn³²

Choose a family favorite hymn and sing to the Glory of the Lord!

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¹ Pope St. John Paul II offered abundant material for reflection about the importance of the Lord’s Day in his 1998 Letter “Dies Domini,” available online. What is included below is one option families may find helpful to keep the Lord’s Day holy especially in our current circumstances.


⁴ USCCB, Sunday Celebrations, §188.


⁶ The Roman Missal, 387.

⁷ The Roman Missal, 522.
Family Sunday Liturgy in the Absence of a Priest

USCCB, *Sunday Celebrations*, §189.

9 *The Roman Missal*, 499.


12 USCCB, *Sunday Celebrations*, §196.


14 USCCB, *Sunday Celebrations*, §197.

15 USCCB, *Sunday Celebrations*, §199.

16 *The Roman Missal*, §20, 384.


18 Cf. USCCB, *Sunday Celebrations*, §204ff.


21 Cf. *CCC* 1817.


24 *The Roman Missal*, 501.

25 USCCB, *Sunday Celebrations*, §211.


29 *The Roman Missal*, 679.


32 USCCB, *Sunday Celebrations*, §216.