



HOLY WEEK

Preparing for Holy Week at home

At the start of our Camino through Lent, Sr Susan PBVM offered us a beautiful plan for a simple Lent shrine that you can easily set up in your home, and can add to during Holy Week and at Easter. You may want to look back now at that first set of Camino reflections as you prepare for Holy Week. ([Or you can click here to download it again](#)) At the start of each day's reflections, we will remind you of the symbol you can place as we pray through Holy Week.

Palm Sunday – 28 March 2021



We now begin the most precious week of the Church's year: very often society can make us concentrate on the beauty of Christmas, because it is more convenient and easier to control. Christmas is about family, warmth, and joy, while this Holy Week makes us confront the pain and evil of this world. The week, however, begins with a celebration with the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This will be the second year when we will be under strict pandemic regulations making it impossible to share the sense of that procession in our liturgy today.

Palm Sunday celebrates the triumphant entry of Christ into the royal city of Jerusalem. This entry is highly symbolic. It demonstrates that Christ is the Davidic king that fulfilled this ancient prophecy: **'He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness...'** (Isaiah 9, 7). This Messianic King comes into

the city, the centre of Jewish faith, not in royal chariot or mighty white horse, but on the simple donkey. It is in this simplicity that the crowd can see his glory, as they cry 'Hosanna in the highest', as they spread out their palm leaves on the ground.



Bernadette Lopez via Qumran2.net

Holy Week might begin with this crowd acclaiming Jesus as their king and Lord, but by Friday the same crowd are crying '**crucify, crucify him!**' Jesus is not part of some popularity contest, but we see his fall from hero to zero within a week. In the context of the glory of his entry into Jerusalem, we also share Mark's account of the Passion; we are reminded, as we start this Week, of the reality of Passion. Humbly, the servant of God accepted all his sufferings in order to save us. He offered and lost his life in order to secure victory for us. The most important lesson from all these is that the virtues of patience, humility and obedience are important in life. Also, the readings teach us that suffering is inevitable in life. Therefore, only those who are ready to persist and endure to the end will triumph. Also, they teach us that, if we persist in our faith, we shall emerge victorious over sufferings. This past year has taught us so much about the reality of pain and suffering in our lives: we have learnt to be more patient and compassionate.

Today shows us how unfaithful and unpredictable we can be at times in our relationships with God, and others—the pressures of a pandemic can make this worst. There have been days when the least thing can set us off and ruin relationships: we are cranky or even downright rude—moods can fluctuate and we do not always know where our 'good space' is. Today, we are for Christ, tomorrow we are against him. Christ is our friend when we are in difficulty, but our enemy when we are comfortable. It also shows how we relate with one

another. Today we are friends, and tomorrow we are arch-enemies. As we show solidarity to Christ today, it is important that we ask God for the grace to remain steadfast to him at all moments of our lives. We must also extend this solidarity to others. This is because, in others, we encounter both Christ the suffering servant of God as well as, Christ the King of the world. While it is easy to point the blame at others for our pain and suffering, we need to take a good look in the mirror, as Pope Francis reminds us in his homily for this feast in an empty St Peter's last year:

If we are honest with ourselves, we will see our infidelities. How many falsehoods, hypocrisies, and duplicities! How many good intentions betrayed! How many broken promises! How many resolutions left unfulfilled! The Lord knows our hearts better than we do. He knows how weak and irresolute we are, how many times we fall, how hard it is for us to get up and how difficult it is to heal certain wounds. And what did he do in order to come to our aid and serve us? He told us through the Prophet: *'I will heal their faithlessness; I will love them deeply'* (Hos 14:5). He healed us by taking upon himself our infidelity and by taking from us our betrayals. Instead of being discouraged by the fear of failing, we can now look upon the crucifix, feel his embrace, and say: "Behold, there is my infidelity, you took it, Jesus, upon yourself. You open your arms to me, you serve me with your love, you continue to support me... And so I will keep pressing on". (05/04/2020)

Watch and reflect: Jesus' Triumphant entry into Jerusalem <https://youtu.be/rdyJO-aAv8>

Today: we place our palm (or any evergreen) cross at the centre of our homes.

We can pray: Father God, Your Word is true, and You are faithful. You promised salvation through the Messiah and today we remember that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of our promised Redeemer. We acknowledge our need for salvation from our sins and rejoice that Jesus is our Deliverer. We celebrate Him today as King and ask that His Kingdom come in our lives, too. We praise You now and will praise You throughout the coming day, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Monday of Holy Week - 29 March 2021

Place your 'tear' cut out from paper, or glass of water on your altar shrine.

The gospel today sees Jesus at his 'Bethany place'—that place where he feels comfortable and at home. He is at the home of his great friends, Martha, Mary, and Lazarus in Bethany; we all need that 'Bethany place' where we can just relax and be ourselves, the place where we never have to wear a mask. "Six days before Passover," St. John relates, "Jesus went to Bethany"; Mary and Martha each serve Jesus in their own way—they are the active ones, while others, like Lazarus, just sat at table. In those few words, we see exactly those who are actively working for the mission. We have seen that Martha is the one of active ministry,

while Mary prefers a more contemplative way of following the Messiah. Her symbolic use of the nard shows the overwhelming generosity of this women. Is it her way of showing her gratitude to the Jesus for having brought her brother back to life and for so many other benefits she had received from Him?



Image: 125ed-magdalena2bunge2bpies2bde2bjesus, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

There was no way to repay the goodness of God. Judas, present at the dinner, calculates exactly the price of the ointment; rather than praising Mary's refinement, he is harshly critical: **'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor?'** John observes the hypocrisy in the assumed indignation of Judas, as the poor were of no consequence to him; he was interested in managing the money and stealing it from the purse. How many would side with Judas! They see the good that others do, but they do not want to recognize it; they devote themselves to finding twisted intentions, criticizing, and complaining, making ill-founded judgments. They would reduce charity to something purely material-giving donations to the needy, perhaps to quiet their consciences; charity is about showing respect and real care, not about making ourselves feel good. If you are blessed to have a little extra in your bank account, thank God for your good fortune.

Jesus points to the reality that the end is close, while **'you have the poor with you always.'** In this time of Lent, many of us will be supporting various charities and good causes that seek to make the life of the poor that much better. We can all do something to help the poor that are still very much with us; the example of Captain Tom showed us deep care in the most difficult of circumstances. The pandemic and lockdown have caused real problems for charities, as their stream of income has diminished.

Today: if you can donate to your favourite charity, then do so—it can be done online. If your funds are limited, then remember the work of the charity in your prayer.

We can pray: Father God, we remember Jesus' prayer from the cross for forgiveness for those who placed Him there. Thank you for bearing our sins and forgiving us every day. Tonight, we forgive the people who have sinned against us. Fill our hearts with the love, mercy, and grace that held You on that cross for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tuesday of Holy Week 30th March 2021

Place the traced cut-out of your hand on your altar shrine.



*'Jesus and Judas dipping their hands into the water dish', James J Tissot,
Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons*

John sets the scene at the Last Supper Meal; the act of service has been done and they are gathered around the table. Jesus sets the scene dramatically claiming that **'one of you will betray me'**; after the washing of the feet, the disciples have to face that one of them is a traitor. They have to face the fact that one of their closest friends is not working with them; to be let down by those you trust and care for is, in my opinion, one of the hardest things that you have to endure. Peter is keen to know, **'who is it, Lord?'** Jesus' reply is stark: **'it is the one I give the piece of bread'**; this implies a physical closeness at table. Judas must have had a place of honour at the table, reclining near to Jesus. In the synoptic gospels, we see Jesus taking bread, blessing it, breaking it and giving it to his disciples, **'this is MY body'** he says. The bread to be used in the sharing of eucharist has become a symbol of treachery—Judas cannot enter fully into the gift of unity that is eucharist. Rather he leaves the table and makes the conscious decision to move into the darkness because **'night had fallen.'** In this new re-grouping of disciples Jesus can proclaim, **'now has the Son of Man been glorified...God..will glorify him very soon.'** Glory, for Jesus, will come in the most difficult of

ways; even Peter, that most trusted of friends, cannot seem to accept this news and talk of **'leaving'**. In the context of the treachery of Judas, Jesus can say to faithful Peter, **'before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.'** How faithful will we be today?

Today: show your friends and family that you trust them—allow them to do something for you, no matter how small.

We can pray: Lord God, the message of the cross is difficult to take. How can death give way to life? How can weakness be strength? Yet your word says that Jesus, being God, took on human flesh and suffered the worst kind of death. How can this be?

This message is indeed difficult to take. But your foolishness is wiser than our wisdom. Your weakness is greater than our strength. Help us to know that none of us can boast before you.

It is only in Christ Jesus that we can boast. In his name, we ask you to help our unbelief. Today may we love you and walk in the way Jesus taught us. In his name, Amen.

'Spy' Wednesday - 31 March 2021



Place on your altar shrine a few silver coins – a reminder of the 30 pieces of silver

In Ireland, the Wednesday before Easter is known as 'Spy Wednesday'. The name comes from the Bible passage read in church on that day, which explains the role that Judas Iscariot played in bringing about Jesus' death. Judas was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. Although Judas was not a spy in the sense in which we use the word today, spies do perform the same kinds of treacherous acts that Judas did. In exchange for a sum of money Judas betrayed Jesus' whereabouts to the religious authorities who sought his death. Then Judas returned to Jesus' side, pretending continued admiration and faithfulness. In Germany people once called the day Crooked Wednesday, while Czech folk tradition dubbed the day Black Wednesday as chimneys were traditionally cleaned on this day in preparation for the great Easter feasting. These names, too, convey a sense of something having gone wrong. In past times Polish children dragged effigies of Judas through the street on this day and threw

them off the city walls. Wherever, your tradition lies, today we remember the treachery by one who is so close to Jesus. Judas was called along with Peter and the rest of the apostles; for three years he followed Jesus so closely. To be let down and betrayed by someone in your family or close circle of friends is devastating and so hurtful. We can make all kind of excuses to help us cope with our treachery and say, with Judas, 'not I, Rabbi, surely?'

It is in this context of hurt, that Jesus begins preparing for the great feast of Passover, as 'the Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say. In some Western traditions, the fasting of Lent ended on this day, as Christians entered the Sacred Triduum: the three days of special intensity and glory through pain.



Rembrandt 'Judas Returning the Thirty Pieces of Silver', Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

Today: if you have let someone down during this past year, have the courage to apologise.

We can pray: Lord God, it is terrible to think that it was one of Jesus' own friends who betrayed him. One who sat by him, who broke bread with him.

Give us strength, we pray, to walk faithfully with Jesus, even when the road we walk is rocky, even when the message of the cross seems like foolishness and even when we feel betrayed.

You, Lord, are always faithful. We stumble, we become lost, but you are steady and sure. Give us the grace to endure our troubles and reveal to us the glory of your kingdom. Through your son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Maundy Thursday - 1st April 2021

Place on your altar shrine a small towel or flannel; in the evening add a wine glass and a little piece of bread.

Today is a day full of rich symbolism for all Christians: we have the image of service in the washing of feet—good and healthy leadership is about service in following the example of Jesus who **'got up from table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it around his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet.'**



Pope Francis washes the feet of inmates of Vallettri Prison 18th April 2019

Pandemic regulations will probably not allow such close contact and touch, but this tradition has been carried on down through the ages in our liturgy tonight. Watching the Holy Father going down on his knees to wash the feet of refugees and the marginalised is not a nice photo opportunity for the Good Friday newspapers—it is a reminder of what *we are* as a Church. John's gospel does not contain the words of eucharistic institution, instead we have this symbolic action that points us towards what Eucharist actually means. It should come as no great surprise, as the three years of public ministry showed a God fully involved in the needs, pains, and joys of humanity. Eucharist becomes our spur to action; it is not a reward for a job well done; it is food for the journey. It is the source of our unity and the goal of our unity.

On this MAUNDAY, we remember the Latin word 'mandatum', as Jesus gave his followers a living example and a new mandate, **'if I, then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet.'** Today is a challenge for us all to ensure that we are a Church of service—do not leave it to the Deacon, Priest, Monarch or Pope; we all have a personal responsibility to ensure that we do our part: **'for I was hungry and you gave me food ... a stranger and you welcomed me ... sick and you comforted me.'**

In the United Kingdom, we remember that time when the monarch would follow the example of Jesus and wash the feet of twelve of the poorest members of the kingdom.

Today the monarch follows a tradition that goes back to the Middle Ages; Queen Elizabeth maintains this by giving out 'Maundy money' to specially selected elderly members of the general public. Instead of washing the feet of her subjects, she gives out two purses to 188 elderly people. The recipients are 94 men and 94 women, reflecting the Queen's age this year. They receive one red and one white purse, containing coins with very different uses. The red purse given out by the Queen contains a selection of normal coins, but the white purse contains specially minted silver coins.

Tradition dictates the white purse as a symbolic offering, but is still legal tender, while the red purse is an allowance for food and clothing. People are chosen to receive the coins based on their Christian service to the church and their respective communities. This tradition has endured since the 13th century, and certain aspects of Maundy alms change with different monarchs. The Royal Mint explains: 'Maundy money has traditionally been made of sterling silver, apart from the brief interruptions of Henry VIII's debasement of the coinage and the general change to 50 percent silver coins in 1020.'

On this day in 2019, I remember a woman coming into our church, obviously very distressed: she had seen the lights on and wanted comfort and support—she felt totally unloved and that she had let her family down. I said all the usual things, as I tried to offer comfort; however, I realised that these were just words. Then I remembered that I had an Easter card in my bag; one of our younger parishioners had made them for distribution to our elderly and housebound members of the parish. I told her that the card had been made with love and effort by a ten year old who wanted to share the glory of Easter. That lady returned to church for Good Friday and shared the great Easter Vigil with us—not because of my words, but because of the efforts of a ten year old child whom she would never meet. I am sure that the now-twelve-year-old is still spreading the gospel today in any way that she can; I invite you to share her wonderful vision and faith.

At the end of the mass tonight, the mood changes as we remember Jesus going to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray that '**this cup pass him by.**' We move into a mood of prayerful reflection, as we face the reality of what Jesus, our Messiah and King must do; I urge you to pray with Pope Francis on this great feast:

And so, with this awareness of the need to be washed, to be great forgivers. Forgive. A great heart has generosity in forgiveness. It is the measure by which we will be measured. As you have forgiven, you will be forgiven: the same measure. Do not be afraid to forgive. Sometimes there are doubts ... Look at Christ [look at the Crucifix]. There is everyone's forgiveness.

9th April 2020-Homily in St Peter's Basilica

Today: can you not spend one hour in prayer with me?

Watch and reflect: a simple telling of Jesus' night in the garden, created for children

<https://youtu.be/9y2p0CAUfUw>

We can pray: Lord God, You sent your Son into the world, and before his hour had come, He washed his disciples' feet.

You had given all things into his hands. He had come from you, and was going to you, and what did he do? He knelt down on the floor and washed his friends' feet. He was their teacher and their Lord, yet he washed their feet. Lord God help us learn from his example; help us to do as he has done for us.

The world will know we are his disciples if we love one another. Strengthen our hands and our wills for love and for service. Keep before our eyes the image of your Son, who, being God, became a Servant for our sake. All glory be to him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, now and forever. Amen.

Good Friday – 2 April 2021

On your altar shrine, place a padlock or a bit of chain, and at midday, a crucifix

On this day of pain and suffering, Christians are reminded that this day is still 'GOOD'; our great liturgy today is based on centuries of tradition centred on the cross. In the Roman Catholic tradition, no mass is celebrated, instead we take part in a beautiful liturgy that shares the Passion from John's Gospel, a veneration of the cross and a Holy Communion service.

'The Old Rugged Cross' is the title of a well-known song written by George Bennard more than a century ago. Afterwards, various famous artists, including Jim Reeves and Elvis Presley, recorded it. The lyrics are a valuable resource for reflection on an important event such as 'Good Friday.'

In the midst of economic hardship, physical suffering, spiritual persecution, excruciating pain, deep sorrows, existential troubles and this pandemic, the cross becomes a symbol of hope. Bennard translated his profound reflection about life and the glory of the cross into music.



Image by Marcello Cerrato via Qumran2.net

**So, I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down.
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.**

The cross, a symbol of persecution and death, becomes our Christian symbol of glory; you can wear it with pride around your neck and on your lapel. All those problems that have been presented to us over this past year are a chance to join with the sufferings of Jesus.

The cross is that eternal symbol of what we stand for as a Church: we are a Church rooted in reality. The Cross is the principal symbol of Christianity and this is so because it reminds the world of the sacrificial love of Christ which he expressed to humankind through his passion and death. **'As for us, we proclaim the crucified Christ,'** (1 Corinthians 1:23). In addition, Paul tells us, **'the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but for those who are being saved it is God's power'** (1 Corinthians 1:18). He addressed this message to the Jewish people of his time, who saw the cross as a burden for criminals and suffering as punishment for sinners (Deuteronomy 21:20-23). Therefore, they thought it was out of place to believe in someone who was crucified. On the other hand, the Greeks, renowned thinkers and philosophers of the time, saw the cross as a sign of foolishness. Despite all their knowledge, they could not understand how God uses **'foolish things'** to express his greatness.

The life, teaching and practical ministry of Jesus has prepared us for this day: glory is not handed to us on a plate. To achieve glory, we must be prepared to enter into the pain, heartache and problems that evil brings to our world. Jesus, our Lord and Saviour enters into the depths of pain. Good Friday is a day to pause and think of the meaning of the passion and death of Jesus Christ. It is also a time to reflect on how his wounds bring healing to many and how his death offers a ticket of salvation to everyone. The cross has pride of place in Christianity, just as the incarnation and resurrection are important landmarks in the economy of Christian salvation.

The hope of resurrection gives meaning to the passion and death which is commemorated on Good Friday. The cross then becomes a symbol of hope, which blares out the message: No crown without a cross; no cross without a crown; no pain, no gain. David Rhoads offers this simple reflection for today:

Solemn music
Driven by a plaintive oboe
Shatters the afternoon's quiet

Grey clouds
Driven by a stiff breeze
Shatter the blue sky

Music and clouds
Cover the earth
With their pain

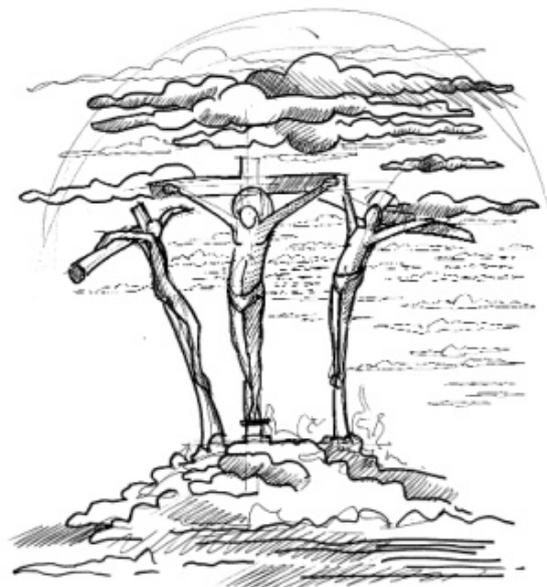


Image: Don Enrico Banchini via Qumran2.net

Good Friday by David Rhoads

Today: make the Way of the Cross either in Church or in your home—wherever you feel safe.

Watch and reflect on this Way of the Cross for children: <https://youtu.be/H86KVT4rzP8>



The Crucifixion by Anthony van Dyck, [CC BY 3.0](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Crucifixion_by_Antony_van_Dyck.jpg), via Wikimedia Commons

We can pray:

Jesus, you are my Lord and my God,
you endured such pain and suffering for me,
you died for love of me.

I kneel beneath your cross
and beg for mercy.

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

O blood and water flowing from your side,
sanctify and cleanse me.

Lord, I love you with all my heart
and place all my trust in you. AMEN

Diana Ng-Sutherland/CAFOD



Image: Concetta Basile via Qumran2.net

Good Friday offers us a chance to see where we stand in our Church: are we part of the mob that wants to cry, “crucify him”, or do you want to be brave and be more like Simon of Cyrene or Veronica?

Holy Saturday - 3 April 2021



Most of our day today is quiet and peaceful, as we recount that final station of the cross: Jesus is laid into the peace of the tomb. Today I urge you to listen to the silence of this day: what is that silence asking you to do? Perhaps take time to listen to the song, *The Sound of Silence*:

<https://youtu.be/nkUOACGtGfA>

Simon and Garfunkel's *Sound Of Silence* is one of my all-time favourites, and was inspired by Sanford 'Sandy' Greenberg, Art Garfunkel's room-mate and best friend, who lost his sight. In his memoir, 'Hello Darkness My Old Friend', Greenberg recounts how the music of his friend kept him going through that early darkness and helped him in coming to terms with his blindness. As teenage friends, they had made a pact to be there for each other, especially in the most difficult times; Greenberg's sudden blindness made him leave college and refuse to meet anyone, but Garfunkel went to him to assure him that he did have friends in these days of deep pain—and he would ensure he would get to lectures. He tells of the time when Garfunkel 'abandoned' him at Grand Central Station in New York; he felt both humiliated and terrified as he made his way back to the university flat they shared. He did make it home, with Garfunkel silently in the background all the time, making sure he was safe, and ready to intervene if necessary. It was a harsh lesson, but Garfunkel proved to his friend that he could make it in life, even with a significant disability. Greenberg went on to achieve academic success at both Harvard and Oxford.

In 1964, Garfunkel had teamed up with another friend, Paul Simon to produce a new album of songs; it was Sandy Greenberg who gave them the \$400 they needed to produce *Wednesday Morning 3am*. While the album was a flop, a track from it was released as a single, and in 1965, *The Sound of Silence* became a commercial hit, occupying the number one spot across the globe. Garfunkel used the blindness of his friend to explore our connectivity and the need we all have to hear what is really going on in 'the sound of silence':

**In the naked light, I saw
Ten thousand people, maybe more
People talking without speaking
People hearing without listening
People writing songs that voices never share
And no one dared
Disturb the sound of silence.**

Sandy carried on having extraordinary success as an inventor, entrepreneur, investor, presidential adviser, and philanthropist. He is the father of three and launched a \$3million prize to find a cure for blindness. He always refused to use a white cane or guide dog. 'I don't want to be the blind guy. I wanted to be Sandy Greenberg, the human being.' That is a good lesson for each of us—to see beyond the wheelchair, the white cane, or hearing aids. We all share some level of disability, but we are all able to be what God has called us to be. They remain best friends and this song is a homage to lives that have been transformed.

In the silence of the tomb, new life and transformation can begin—in this silence we witness change. Art Garfunkel could say of his friend, 'With Sandy, real life emerged. I became a

better guy in my own eyes and began to see who I was – somebody who gives to a friend. I blush to find myself within his dimension. My friend is the gold standard of decency.'

Today: enjoy the silence of friendship—listen to what the silence is saying to you.

We can pray:

Lord God,
On the Sabbath,
Jesus rested.
He was in the grave.
He had finished his work.

To most people's eyes,
It looked as if it were all over.
He was dead and buried.

But only as a seed dies when it is planted in the earth,
Not to decay, but to spring to new life.
Teach us to take refuge in you when we are afraid
Teach us that death is not our end

Teach us to hope always in you
And in the resurrection, the making of all things
New.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.



The Entombment of Christ by Antonio Ciseri, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

For Children:



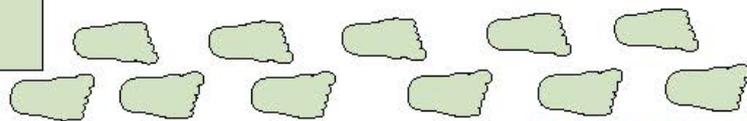
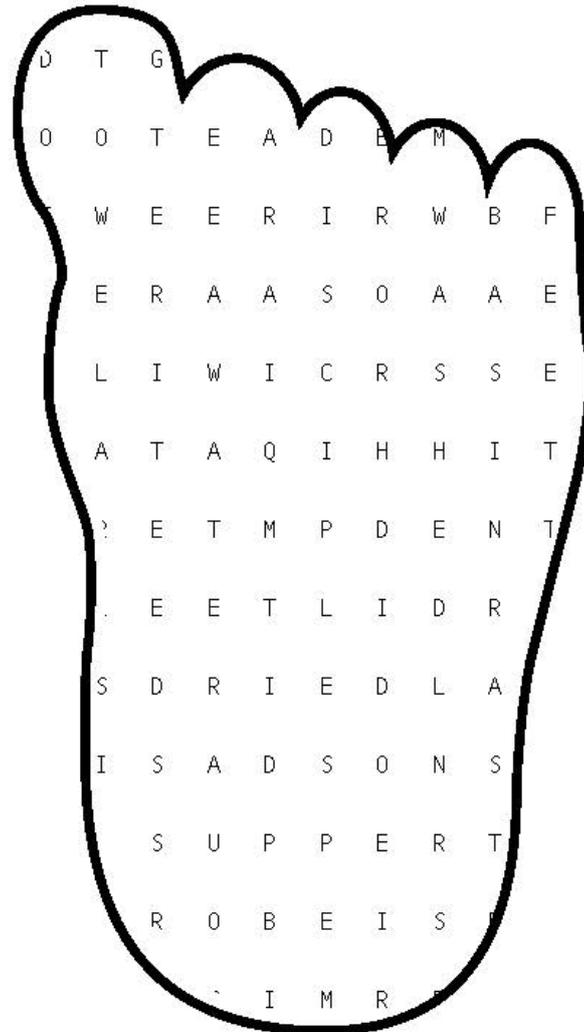
By Las Melli from Qumran2.net

Jesus Washed the Disciples' Feet Word Search

Find the words on the list that are hidden in the puzzle. The words can be left to right, up and down, or diagonally.



BASIN
DISCIPLES
DRIED
FEET
ROBE
SUPPER
TEACHER
TOWEL
WASHED
WATER



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