

Instructions for Stripping Your Home Sacred Space

Following the Maundy Thursday service, gather your household together and strip your home and sacred space. You may find it helpful to have the following materials on hand:

- Storage box or bin
- Dark cloth
- Towels/cleaning supplies

Process

1. Read together Psalm 22: 1-5 (found on next page)
2. Discuss and/or contemplate the church custom of stripping and washing the altar and what it symbolizes.
3. Gather and remove items. Go through the house to gather all icons and religious symbols that can be easily moved (crosses, statues, candles, prayer beads, etc.) Ask everyone to work silently as a sign of respect for the task. Put these items away in boxes, bins, or in a place where they will not be seen. Use dark cloth to drape any other items that are too large or permanent to pack away.
4. Finally, remove all items from your sacred space/altar and wash the space thoroughly.
5. Wait. Leave the space bare until Easter morning.

Additional Discussion

Children may wonder at how the taking away of objects in the home is meant to help us celebrate Holy Week and Easter. Typically, these actions are done only at church and in very specific ways. Help children make connections from what they are seeing (an empty shelf, an empty table, a lack of decoration) with how empty we would feel without Jesus. Remind children that though we do not see our beautiful objects and meaningful items now, they will return when we celebrate Jesus' resurrection.

Psalm 22 Deus, Deus meu

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
and are so far from my cry
and from the words of my distress?
- 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
by night as well, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are the Holy One, *
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our forefathers put their trust in you; *
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried out to you and were delivered; *
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.