

Lesson 23: Holy Week

Please click twice to watch the video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu8_Zt5ir2o

Holy means “set apart.” Christians set apart an entire week - Holy Week - to recall the events surrounding the suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

What Happened During Holy Week

- **Palm Sunday:** Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem, the people wave palm branches at him shouting “Hosanna”.
- **Holy Monday:** Jesus and his disciples go into the temple, and Jesus overturns the tables since people are selling things rather than praying there.
- **Holy Tuesday:** Jesus and the disciples return to the temple and teach the people many things with parables and give the people the new commandment.
- **Holy Wednesday (a.k.a. Spy Wednesday):** Judas agrees to hand over Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
- **Holy Thursday** Jesus has the Last Supper, which is the institution of the Eucharist and also the first Mass. He also washes the feet of his disciples. Jesus asks his disciples to pray in the garden with him all night, and they fall asleep.
- **Good Friday:** Jesus dies on the cross. All the things from the stations of the cross happen this day.
- **Holy Saturday:** Jesus is dead in the tomb. The evening of Holy Saturday is considered the “vigil”, and Easter celebrating can begin.

What Is the Triduum?

The three days of the Triduum are counted as the Hebrews counted their days, from dusk to dusk. Lent officially ends and the Triduum begins at dusk on Holy Thursday and continues through dusk on Easter Sunday. Because we cannot separate Jesus’ death from his resurrection, the Church teaches that the Triduum is really one celebration that lasts for three days. However, in the liturgy, each day has its unique qualities and different focuses.

Holy Thursday

So when he had washed their feet [and] put his garments back on and reclined at table again, he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you?” ~ John 13:12

The evening Mass on Holy Thursday begins the Sacred Triduum. On this night we remember the Last Supper and celebrate the institution of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Holy Orders. At

the end of the liturgy, the sanctuary is stripped clean in preparation for the most somber of feasts, Good Friday.

The [Mass on Holy Thursday](#) is commonly known as the **Feast of the Lord's Supper**. This Mass is a time for Catholics to remember the **Last Supper** where Jesus and his apostles gathered to celebrate Passover. In the [Holy Thursday celebration](#), two ritual actions stand out among the rest:

- **The Washing of the Feet:** At the Last Supper, Jesus took a basin and a towel, got down on his hands and knees and [washed the feet of all of his apostles](#). After this action, he commanded the apostles, "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do" (John 13:15). This is Jesus' commandment: Just as Jesus has been a servant to his apostles, so the apostles must go out into the world and be servants to everyone around them.
- We are called to do the same in our daily lives. We are not called literally to wash each other's feet. The action of washing one another's feet reminds us of the call to humble servitude. Foot washing is not a re-enactment or re-creation of a past event, but rather, it is a commemorative action that reminds us that God calls us first and foremost to be servants to others in our daily lives.
- **The Celebration of the Eucharist and the Eucharistic Procession:** At the very first Last Supper, Jesus also instituted the Eucharist for the Church. At this Holy Thursday celebration, we are reminded of who we are in Jesus Christ and that, through the sacrament of the Eucharist, we are and we become even more the Body of Christ together.
- At the conclusion of the Holy Thursday celebration, there is no concluding prayer. Once the celebration of the Eucharist is completed, there is a Eucharistic Procession (where the Eucharist that is left from Communion is processed to a Chapel of Reservation). This procession to the Chapel of Reservation reminds us of Jesus' time in the garden of [Gethsemane](#) when he prayed so fervently through the night. The entire community is invited to join in this procession and then join in the silent prayer and adoration until the Eucharist is put in the Tabernacle. The gathered community leaves in silence only to return in prayer the next day for the Good Friday celebration.

Good Friday

He said, "It is finished." And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit. ~ John 19:30

Good Friday is a somber remembrance of Jesus' crucifixion and death on the cross. It is a day of fasting and penance and a time to examine all of the places in our lives where we fail to follow Christ and fall into sin. Good Friday is not merely a commemoration of a historical event; rather, Christ's sacrificial death on the cross, along with his glorious resurrection, comprise the heart of the Christian faith.

Good Friday is not a Mass; Holy Communion that is distributed had been consecrated on Holy Thursday and kept in the tabernacle for adoration. Also, many parishes offer Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion: In this solemn celebration, we remember the passion and death of our Lord. The [service](#) is marked by several important [rituals](#) including the [proclaiming of the Passion according to John](#), the veneration of the Cross, an extended form of general intercessions, and finally, the distribution of Communion (reserved from the Holy Thursday celebration of the Eucharist).

- **The Veneration of the Cross:** It seems strange that in the [Good Friday](#) liturgy Catholics choose to venerate, or show reverence to, the very instrument that was used to crucify Jesus. The Veneration of the Cross reminds us that through this Cross, the Glory of the resurrection emerges. So, on Good Friday, we come forward to show our great reverence and respect for the Cross. People have various traditions when they approach the Cross. Sometimes they kiss the Cross, kneel before the Cross, or even just touch it in some fashion. As you participate in this ritual, venerate the Cross in whatever way feels most normal. And most of all, just take in the experience of the gathered community coming so close to such a tragic, but integral, event in our faith.
- **The General Intercessions:** In this expanded form of General Intercessions, the presider and the deacon work together to pray 10 intercessions. These intercessions are the same intercessions the entire Church prays on Good Friday, and they include praying for the Holy Church, praying for the unity of all Christians, praying for the Jewish people, praying for people who do not believe in Christ or in God, praying for people in public office, and praying for people who are suffering or facing difficult times. These prayers recognize how universal our Church is and that we should be aware of all of the faiths and traditions in the world that are different from our own.

Easter Vigil

Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there. ~ John 19:41-42

The Easter vigil is the restoration of the early Church's tradition as the great celebration of adult baptism and confirmation.

- It is the high point in the liturgical year.
- The vigil begins in darkness (usually outside) and the long procession of candlelight that enlivens the church reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world who has conquered all darkness and death.

- The Paschal Candle that is lit at the Easter vigil will remain in the church throughout the year as a sign of Christ's death and resurrection.

Easter Sunday

Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is celebrated on Sunday, and marks the end of Holy Week, the end of Lent, the last day of the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday), and is the beginning of the Easter season of the liturgical year.

As we know from the Gospels, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day following his crucifixion, which would be Sunday. His resurrection marks the triumph of good over evil, sin and death. It is the singular event which proves that those who trust in God and accept Christ will be raised from the dead.

Since Easter represents the fulfillment of God's promises to mankind, it is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar.

Easter celebrates the beginning and foundation of Christianity. Jesus was raised from the dead, and it goes to show that he conquered sin and death. He is the only Son of God, who through this amazing resurrection, brings us closer to God and our faith.

Many people didn't believe in the teachings and things that Jesus would speak about 2000 years ago, but right after he was resurrected from the dead, many turned their eyes to see that he is our Lord. Jesus' resurrection during Easter not only renews our faith, but also gives us peace, restores our souls, mends our brokenness and helps us to conquer our struggles, especially when we are overwhelmed.