

PASTOR'S CORNER

Countdown to Holy Week



We are one week away from Holy Week – the culmination of our Lenten journey. Holy Week is an intense liturgical celebration of the great mysteries of our salvation. We didn't get to celebrate Holy Week publicly last year because of Covid. Hundreds of people tuned in for our videotaped celebrations of last year's Holy Week services. This leads me to believe that this year, there will be keen interest in attending the public liturgies.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday (also called Passion Sunday), which recalls Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem with waving palm branches, followed by his rejection, arrest, torture and crucifixion. At the end of Holy Week, we celebrate the Triduum or great "Three Days" of our faith – Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil.

On Holy Thursday, we remember Jesus' institution of the priesthood and the Eucharist, and his command of brotherly love through the washing of his disciples' feet. On Good Friday, we mark the actual day of Jesus' death, listening to the Passion Account of Jesus according to John and venerating a cross that recalls the cross of Jesus. On Holy Saturday night, at the Easter Vigil, we remember the story of our salvation history through Scripture and light; we rejoice at Jesus' resurrection and administer the sacraments of initiation to candidates for the faith. On Easter Sunday, we proclaim Jesus' resurrection from the dead and our redemption with great joy.

Because Holy Week is the culmination of Lent and includes the greatest liturgical celebrations of our faith, we should circle Holy Week on our calendar and plan to participate in as many of the services as we can. We need to reject the secular notion that Holy Week is holiday time and Good Friday is crawfish boil day. Rather, these are days for prayer, reflection, fasting and mourning over Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, which then leads us to a joyous celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

With a week to go before Holy Week, we remember the real reason for Lent, we prepare ourselves for the coming Feast Days of our redemption, and we pray for an abundant outpouring of God's grace in the coming week.

God bless,
Fr. Joe