

## Holy Week

Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week in which we celebrate the Paschal Mystery – the suffering, death, and resurrection – of Our Savior Jesus Christ in a unique way. Holy Week is the high point of the liturgical year and it speaks to the heart of our faith. We celebrate our faith in Jesus Christ, who showed us the height of God’s love by emptying himself and dying on the wood of the cross for us. By his death on the cross and rising in glory, Jesus gave us the precious gift of redemption, the gift of new life.

This means that your life and faith in Christ was founded not on Easter Sunday alone, but in the entire events of this week; in Jesus’ call to love on Holy Thursday, in his suffering and death on Good Friday, in the uncertainty of Holy Saturday and in his glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday. It is because of the events of Holy Week that our Christian faith exists. This also means that the mystery of our faith is one Mass that is played out in three separate days (Triduum); Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday; and culminates with the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

As followers of Jesus Christ, let us join in his Passion – his suffering and death – and rise to new life with him. I encourage you to enter this one event that is spread out in the entire weekend not only by yourself but also with your family and friends.

Devote some time to prayer and devotion this week. Pray the Stations of the Cross, the chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Rosary, the Surrender novena, make a good Examination of Conscience, and remind your loved ones that someone who loves them so much poured his life out for them.

I also encourage you to actively participate in the liturgies of this week, for there is no greater faith formation, faith enrichment, and catechesis than the liturgies and events of Holy Week.

May the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ bring you peace. I wish you a fruitful Holy Week.

**--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule**  
**Parish Priest**

### **Triduum Explained (Briefly)**

Triduum (three days) refers to the celebrations at the close of Holy Week. It begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, continues with Good Friday and reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil. The Triduum celebrates the suffering, death, and resurrection (Paschal Mystery) of Jesus Christ and so is the highest point of the entire Church’s year, known as the liturgical year.

### **Holy Thursday**

This day is considered the anniversary of the Last Supper, at which the Eucharist, the Mass, and the priesthood is celebrated on the Thursday before Easter as part of the Sacred Triduum. It is also called Maundy Thursday from the Latin word “Mandatum,” meaning “command” for Jesus’ injunction to his apostles to love one another as he loved us. He exemplified this by the washing of their feet. At the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper, the washing of the feet takes place after the homily, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be omitted this year. At the end, harkening to Christ’s words to his apostles to keep vigil with him for an hour, we are invited to spend some time in prayer before the Altar of Repose.

### **Good Friday**

This day is also called Friday of the Passion and Death of Our Lord. It is the only day throughout the Church’s liturgical year that Mass is not celebrated because it commemorates our redemption by Christ who surrendered himself totally to his Father’s will by suffering death for us.

Good Friday’s ceremony is divided into three parts: (1) *The Liturgy of the Word* comprising of three scriptural readings related to the Passion of Christ. (2) *The Adoration of the Cross: the crucifix*, which was veiled two weeks prior to this day is unveiled with these words by the priest “This is the wood of the cross on which hung the Savior of the world,” to which the people answer “Come let us worship.” We usually adore the cross of Christ by genuflecting and kissing it, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we will adore the cross by genuflecting or making a reverent bow. (3) *The Holy Communion*: At this point, the Blessed Sacrament is brought from the tabernacle where it was reposed the previous day. After a brief prayer, the Body of Christ is distributed among the gathered assembly. At the end, everyone departs in silence in commemoration of Christ entering the tomb.

### **Easter Vigil (Holy Saturday)**

Easter Vigil is the high point of the Triduum and the greatest and most noble of all solemnities, for it celebrates the Lord's resurrection. The Roman Missal describes it as the night of keeping vigil for the Lord, in which, following the gospel admonition to stay ready (Lk 12: 35-37), the faithful, carrying lighted candles in their hands, should be like those looking for the Lord when he returns, so that at his coming he may find them awake and have them sit at his table.

“Easter Vigil usually begins with the ceremony of light outside the Church called Lucernarium and Easter proclamation (which constitutes the first part of this vigil), holy church meditates on the wonders God has done for his people from the beginning, trusting in his word and promise (the second part, that is, the Liturgy of the Word) until, as day approaches, with new members reborn in baptism (the third part), the church is called to the table the Lord has prepared for his people, the memorial of his death and resurrection until he comes again (the fourth part).”

Easter Vigil Mass, even if it is celebrated before midnight, is a Paschal Mass of the Sunday of the resurrection.