

The Easter Triduum

This coming Sunday will be the Fifth Sunday in Lent. The following Sunday (March 28) is Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday, when we will process with palms into the church and hear the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the evangelist Mark. Palm Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week, during which you are invited to journey with Christ, from the Garden of Gethsemane, to the Cross of Calvary, and beyond to the day of Resurrection, which we celebrate every year on Easter Day. .

On Maundy Thursday (April 1), the church will have reached a three-day period known as the “Triduum.” Derived from the Latin for “three days”, the Triduum sets the three holy days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day apart from the rest of Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday at 7 pm commemorates the institution of the Lord’s Supper and remembers Christ’s example of loving service (due to Covid, there will be no foot washing this year). After the Eucharist is given, the altar is stripped and the church is darkened, reminding us that Jesus is forsaken even by those closest to him. Also known as the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, the liturgy concludes with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the “altar of repose”, (at the back of the church), where the consecrated host is kept until Good Friday. After the church is stripped, members of the congregation are invited to remain in church before the altar of repose, which is adorned with flowers and candles, and spend time with Jesus in prayer. A prayer vigil is kept until midnight.

On **Good Friday**, the Church enters the painful darkness of Christ crucified. Our solemn liturgy includes a reading of the Passion Gospel and powerful prayers for the Church and for the world. We will commemorate the events of Good Friday on April 2 at 3 pm.

Holy Saturday is a time of emptiness. We face a world where God is dead, and all hope is extinguished. The forces of evil have won, and we are left to stew in our sin, mortal and unredeemed.

At dawn on **Easter Day**, (April 4) we will gather for the **Great Vigil of Easter** at 6:00 am outside the church (weather permitting), just as Mary Magdalene came to the tomb while it was still dark. We will light the Easter

fire and the Paschal candle and we will be led into the darkened church by the lit candle. We will tell the story of our salvation to one another. We will renew our baptismal vows, recalling that we have died to sin and been raised to newness of life. Finally, we will celebrate the first Eucharist of Easter, commemorating Christ's victory over death. This celebration of Christ's resurrection will conclude with a champagne breakfast in the Parish Hall.

On **Easter Day** there will be two more services of the Holy Eucharist, at 9 am and 11 am. (Due to expected demand, if you wish to attend the 9 am service, please register with Jaclyn at the office. On the day, your name will be checked from our register).

The liturgies of the **Triduum** flow inexorably towards the **Easter** celebration. After the opening greeting of the Maundy Thursday liturgy, there is no final blessing until the Great Vigil and the first Eucharist of Easter. In this sense, the Triduum is more than a mere commemoration of Jesus' death and resurrection. It is a time when we are called to be fully present to God's work of redemption. To paraphrase the words of the *Exsultet*, the ancient hymn traditionally sung by the deacon at the Easter Vigil, the Triduum is the moment when earth and heaven are joined and we are reconciled to God.

You are invited to participate in the whole drama of these three sacred days and experience Christ's journey from death to life.

With every blessing,

Father David