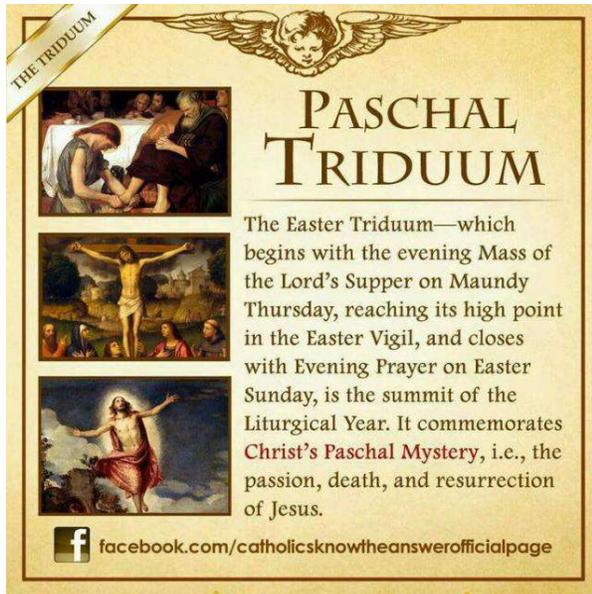


A GUIDE TO THE TRIDUUM

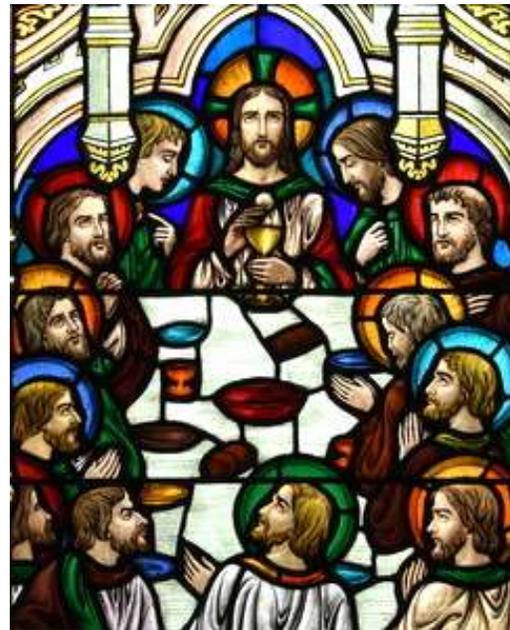


The Paschal Triduum is that important time of the Church year when we celebrate the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This three-day celebration begins with the Holy Thursday Mass and continues on Good Friday with the Liturgy of the Lord’s Passion. At the end of this liturgy, we leave the church in silence, waiting to celebrate the glory of our Lord’s resurrection. Then, on Saturday at sundown, the Church re-gathers to celebrate the final, and most grand moment of the Triduum: the Resurrection of our Lord.

The Triduum is somewhat like a three-day prayer marathon, and if you are a novice there may be some rituals that are unfamiliar to you. This guide will help you walk and pray through the liturgies of the Triduum.

Holy Thursday

On Holy Thursday we celebrate the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper. This is when we recall what Jesus did on the evening before he died on the cross. According to the gospel of John (which we hear read at Mass on this evening), at the Last Supper, Jesus took a basin and a towel, got down on his hands and knees to wash the feet of his disciples. After this action, he commanded those gathered with him, “I have given you an example 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 disciples, so disciples must go out into the world and be servants to everyone around them.



We are called to do the same in our daily lives. Well, we are not called literally to wash each other's feet (though sometimes that may be the case). 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.

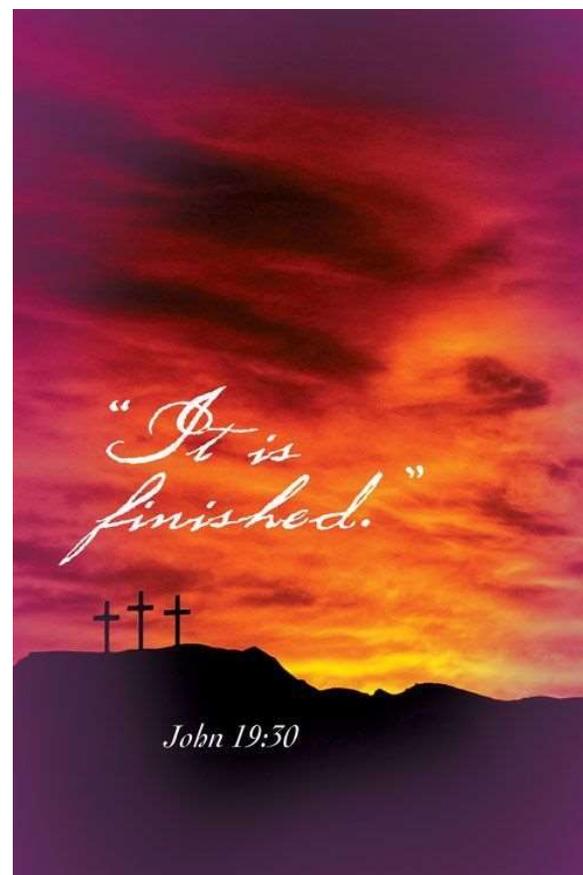
At the very first Last Supper, Jesus also instituted the Eucharist for the Church. He asked us to continue to do this in memory of him. At this Holy Thursday celebration, we are reminded of who we are in Jesus Christ and that, through the sacrament of the Eucharist, we are and we become even more the Body of Christ together.

Holy Communion from this Mass is reserved in a special place and is distributed during the liturgy of Good Friday (when there is no Mass). At the conclusion of the Holy Thursday Mass, we are invited to remain for a while and pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. It reminds us of the invitation of Jesus to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane to stay with him and pray.

Good Friday

The solemn liturgy of the Lord's Passion is the highlight of Good Friday. It consists of three parts: the Liturgy of the Word which includes the reading of the Passion narrative from the gospel of John and an extended form of the General Intercessions, the Veneration of the Cross, and distribution of Holy Communion.

At first, it might seem odd that in this 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 want 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. Due to the covid pandemic, this year we will show our reverence for the cross from a distance without approaching it or touching it.



Good Friday is the only day of the year on which Mass is not celebrated. However, we receive Holy Communion that was consecrated at the Mass on Holy Thursday. The liturgy of Good Friday ends in silence as we go home and continue to reflect on the meaning of the death of the Lord.



Holy Saturday

The only liturgy on Holy Saturday begins after dark and is called the Easter Vigil. It is the most solemn celebration of the Church year. It is the official beginning of our Easter celebration. The Lord is risen! Proclaim the Good News!

The Easter Vigil includes four parts: 1. the lighting of the Easter Fire and Paschal Candle (the large candle that we will use throughout the year), along with the singing of the *Exsultet* (the Easter Proclamation); 2. an expanded Liturgy of the Word that traces time through Salvation History (the story of our Salvation); 3. the Liturgy of Initiation (where new people come into the Church the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation), and 4. the Liturgy of the Eucharist. All these rituals come together for one purpose: **to remember and recall the saving deeds of our God on our behalf.**

Throughout these three days, we experience the highs and lows in our faith, ending with the ultimate high — the new life of the resurrection. Come and celebrate the great Mystery of our Faith as we praise the God of our salvation!

