

THE HISTORY OF THE TRIDUUM

By the second century, Christians celebrated the great Easter Vigil, an event which began the night of Holy Saturday, continuing until dawn on Easter morning. During this vigil, Christians commemorated salvation history, awaited the return of Jesus, and celebrated the resurrection of Jesus at dawn on Easter Sunday. At the vigil, catechumens, after a three year period of catechesis, were baptized and received first communion. At the time, Easter Vigil was the most important celebration of the liturgical year.

Eventually Christians expanded this celebration to a three-day commemoration of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, with the Easter Vigil being the high point of the three day commemoration known as the **Triduum** (Latin for "*three days*").

Over time, as the liturgical year expanded, the Easter Vigil lost its preeminence, although the three days commemorating Jesus' passion still held an important place in the Church year. However, since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the Easter Vigil, and the Triduum, have regained their position of prominence in the Western Catholic liturgical calendar.

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Did you know

- ❖ Lent is officially over with the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening.
- ❖ The Paschal Triduum is actually one single liturgical event with three distinct parts: the Mass of the Lord's Supper, Good Friday service and Easter Vigil.
- ❖ The Solemnity of Easter is celebrated not only on Easter Sunday but on the next seven days as well.