

+ HOLY WEEK – SPECIAL MASSES AND SERVICES +

+PALM OR PASSION SUNDAY (4/9)

The Saturday evening 5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass marks the official start of **Holy Week** and begins with a remembrance of the entrance of the Messiah into Jerusalem. The particularly unique feature of this liturgy revolves around the procession of palms. The palm branches are blessed for the procession but are also preserved as sacramentals and carried about and later placed in a special place in the homes of the faithful and even on graves.

The Mass is dominated by the reading of Matthew's Passion-narrative of Jesus capture, sufferings and death. During the Passion, the celebrant and two other ministers impersonate respectively the Evangelist, Jesus Christ, and the other speakers. This division of the Passion among three characters is very ancient.

+HOLY THURSDAY MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (4/13)

This concelebrated 7:30 p.m. Mass, with parish choir, commemorates the Last Supper of Christ and his 12 Apostles and the institution of the Blessed Sacrament or Holy Eucharist. It is celebrated in **white vestments** and the overall tone of the Mass reflects a measure of joyous solemnity. The "*Gloria in Excelsis*" is sung and during it there is a general ringing of the bells, after which the bells are silent until the Gloria is heard again during the Great Easter Vigil Mass (Holy Saturday).

During the Mass, special attention is given to the reservation of an additional large host and several vessels of small hosts, which are consecrated and which will be consumed the next day (Good Friday). The Liturgy of the Eucharist concludes with the Blessed Sacrament being born in solemn procession to an "altar of repose" (parish hall) adorned with flowers and lighted with a profusion of candles. The hymn, "*Pange Lingua Gloriosi Corporis Mysterium*" is sung during the procession. The chapel of reposition is kept open for the remainder of the evening until eleven o'clock in order to allow the faithful to make visits. Our Eucharistic Adoration is brought to a conclusion at **midnight** with the Night Prayer of the church and benediction.

An especially unique feature of Holy Thursday Mass is the **Washing of the Feet**, in memory of the loving service of Christ at the last Supper and also the stripping and removal of the altar linens. (*We will remain open until midnight this year to accommodate those who enjoy following the tradition of visiting and praying at multiple church repositories Holy Thursday evening.*)

+GOOD FRIDAY (4/14)

On Good Friday, the Church mourns for Christ's death, reverences the Cross, and marvels at His obedience till death. Holy Mass is not celebrated and the Eucharist is not consecrated that day. Holy Communion takes place with the hosts which were consecrated at the previous day's Holy Thursday Mass. The celebrants wear **red vestments**.

On this day, the church remains stripped of ornate objects, including the altar cloth and candles, as a sign of respect. Holy water fonts remain empty.

Also, on this day, the **Stations of the Cross** are often prayed either in church or outside. Our parish makes stations booklets available for those who wish. The **Living Stations of the Cross** begin at 12 noon. (Held outside weather permitting). The **Solemn Good Friday Service is held at 3 p.m.** and combines a number of separate and unique features dating back to antiquity. First, we have the **Reading of the Passion** according to Saint John. Secondly, there is the **Adoration of the Cross** where the faithful step forward to kiss the cross. Thirdly, there is the **Communion Service** using the sacred hosts consecrated the evening before at Holy Thursday Mass and stored in the tabernacle of repose. At the conclusion of the liturgy, all depart in silence. *Christ has died.*

At 7:30 in the evening, you are invited back to join in the **Solemn Stations of the Cross** where we join our hearts and our prayers with the suffering Christ as he walks the way of the cross to Calvary.

+HOLY SATURDAY (4/15)

This is a day of silence and prayer which commemorates the dead Christ in the tomb. No Mass is celebrated during the day. The tabernacle is left empty and open. Again, there is no holy water. The tabernacle candle, denoting the Presence of Christ, is extinguished and the Eucharist is reposed elsewhere. The faithful are **encouraged** to observe the Pascal **fast** to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more deeply in his resurrection.

This evening is marked by the **8 p.m. Great Easter Vigil** or “watch-service” and is held after darkness has set in. In olden times, the Mass barely terminated before midnight.

This is the absolute superlative of all Catholic Masses. It is very beautiful, unique and throughout the rest of the year, there is nothing like it.

The Vigil Mass, appropriate for adults and older children, consists of four parts, **the Service of Light; the Liturgy of the Word; the Liturgy of Baptism and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.**

The liturgy features the choir of the parish accompanied by special instrumentation, The congregation gathers, with their unlighted candles, in darkness reminiscent of the tomb. The celebrant lights and consecrates the new fire with a view to the lighting of the lamps “like those awaiting their master’s return.” Next comes the benediction of the large paschal candle, with its suggestions of night turned into day and its reminder of the glories of that vigil once kept so long ago at the beginnings of the early church. Next, the singing of the “*Exsultet*” takes place with its explicit reference to “*this most holy night.*” The reading of the Sacred Scriptures from both the old and new testaments leads up to the witness of those who experienced the empty tomb and, of course, the Easter homily. The Prophecies, the Blessing of the Font, and the Litanies of the Saints are all a part of what has been a very essential feature of the Easter Vigil from the earliest days. Finally, there is the Mass with its joyous *Gloria*, at which the bells are again rung and **the triumphant Alleluias which mark nearly every step of the liturgy, proclaim the Resurrection as an accomplished fact.**

Again, this special liturgy is the ultimate worship experience for Catholic Christians who wish to truly revel in and savor what is at the very heart of our *faith* “**Save us Savior of the World, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**” Please try to set aside this evening and don’t let anything else you may have planned stand in the way of your experiencing this Mass.

+TENEBRE – THE DIVINE OFFICE OF THE CHURCH

Holy Thursday + Good Friday + Holy Saturday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

Throughout the world, Daily Mass is not celebrated on the three days of the **Triduum**. However, you are invited to share in morning prayer services which are unique to these three special days. Come worship together and pray the same prayers as the Holy Father, the bishops, our parish clergy and religious brothers and sisters the world over. This is the **Divine Office** of the Church. **It is ancient. It is solemn. It is beautiful.**

The most conspicuous external feature of the Tenebre service, apart from the distinctive and very beautiful chant to which the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* are sung as lessons, is the gradual extinction of the fifteen candles in the “Tenebre hearse” or triangular candle stock, as the service proceeds. At the end of the **Benedictus** at Lauds (Morning Prayer), only the topmost candle, considered to be typical of Jesus Christ, remains alight. On account of the gradual darkening, the service, since the ninth century or earlier, has been known as Tenebre (darkness). The antiphons and proper lessons vary each day of the Triduum. **Come....pray with us!**