

HOLY WEEK & THE SACRED TRIDUUM



What does the term "Triduum" mean?

It means three days. The last three days of Holy Week, just before Easter, are especially sacred. We remember the Last Supper, Christ's suffering and death, and His descent into Hell where He freed the just souls.

What is Holy Week?

"Holy Week has as its purpose the remembrance of Christ's passion, beginning with his Messianic entrance into Jerusalem." (GNLY, 31)

When is Holy Week?

Holy Week is the sixth and final week of Lent.

When does Holy Week begin?

"The Sixth Sunday, which marks the beginning of Holy Week, is called Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)." (GNLY, 30)

When is the Triduum?

"The Easter triduum of the passion and resurrection of the Lord begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday, the Sunday of the Lord's resurrection." (GNLY, 19)

When does the Sacred Triduum begin?

The Triduum begins after Vespers on Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

When does the Sacred Triduum end?

Evening prayer of Easter Sunday (Saturday night).

How long is Holy Week?

It is a week, 7 days, from Palm Sunday to Holy Saturday.

What is the purpose of Holy Week?

"Holy Week has as its purpose the remembrance of Christ's passion, beginning with his Messianic entrance into Jerusalem." (GNLY, 31) The purpose of Holy Week is our time of final preparation for Easter. It is also when remember Christ's triumphant entrance into Jerusalem and His final moments before His Crucifixion and death.

What is the purpose of the Sacred Triduum?

We remember the Last Supper, Christ's suffering and death, and His descent into Hell where He freed the just souls.

What are the colors for Holy Week?

The liturgical colors used during Holy Week depend on the day. They are significant to each day and are thus:

Palm Sunday – Red

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday – Violet

Holy Thursday, Chrism Mass – White

Holy Thursday, Mass of the Lord's Supper – White

Good Friday – Red

Holy Saturday (before the Easter Vigil) – Violet

Holy Saturday (during the Easter Vigil) – White

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What are the different days during Holy Week?

Palm Sunday – We celebrate Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem when the people put palms at His feet.

Spy Wednesday – It is the final Wednesday before Easter. The Gospel recalls Judas’ betrayal: “Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? But they appointed him thirty pieces of silver. And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray him.” (Matthew 26:14-16)

Maundy Thursday – The Chrism Mass takes place in the morning, when the Bishop blesses the Holy Oil to be used throughout the year. In the evening is the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. We recall Christ’s institution of the Eucharist and the washing of the Apostles’ feet (the institution of the priesthood).

Good Friday – We remember Christ’s suffering and death.

Holy Saturday – We recall Christ storming the gates of Hell and freeing the just souls. At the Easter Vigil we welcome the Catechumens into the Church.

What are the Stations of the Cross?

The 14 Stations of the Cross depict Christ’s last moments on Earth. They help us to remember His suffering and death by taking us from Pilate condemning Jesus, his climb up Calvary, death on the Cross, and being laid in the tomb. We especially pray these on Good Friday at 3PM when Christ died.

What is the Chrism Mass?

It is when the Bishop blesses the Holy Oils to be used throughout the year. The Chrism Mass takes place in the morning on Holy Thursday.

What about fasting and abstinence on Good Friday?

On Fridays during Lent we abstain from meat. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote a lot about why we abstain from meat on Fridays. It is not just a form of penance, but also helps us to overcome the passions of the flesh.

On Good Friday we not only abstain from meat, but we also fast. Fasting means we eat two smaller meals and one “regular” meal. The two smaller meals should be smaller than your one regular meal. You should also avoid snacking in between meals.

What are some Holy Week and Sacred Triduum traditions?

On Palm Sunday we receive blessed palms. The final week of Lent is a special time for preparation for Easter.

Holy Thursday gives us the Chrism Mass in the morning (where the Bishop blesses the holy oils to be used throughout the year). The Mass of the Last Supper takes place in the evening. We remember Christ’s Last Supper and His institution of the Eucharist. Many Churches also incorporate the foot washing ceremony to remember Christ’s institution of the priesthood.

Good Friday reminds us of Christ’s suffering and death. The Stations of the Cross are typically prayed at 3 PM.