

THE TRIDUUM

THE JOURNEY OF OUR REDEMPTION

The Paschal *Triduum* (TRID-oo-um), Latin for “three days,” commemorates Christ’s redemptive journey through death, burial and resurrection to new life. The Church observes the Triduum as a single event made up of three distinct parts:

HOLY THURSDAY:

The first day of the Triduum is filled with the action of Christ’s self-gift. The Mass of the Lord’s Supper on the evening of **Holy Thursday** commemorates Christ’s command that we “love one another.” Symbolized in the washing of the feet, the great commission of Christ is made concrete in the Eucharist as well as in Jesus’ crucifixion on Calvary. The liturgy ends with a procession as consecrated hosts are set aside for Holy Communion on Good Friday.

GOOD FRIDAY:

Although no Mass is celebrated on Good Friday, the liturgical celebration concentrates on the reading of the passion story from John’s Gospel, the veneration of the cross by the assembly, and the reception of Holy Communion from the hosts that were consecrated on Holy Thursday.

EASTER VIGIL:

Today is filled with the silence of the tomb as the faithful deepen their understanding of the meaning of Jesus’ death and prepare for the Easter Vigil in the evening which officially begins the Easter celebration. **The Easter Vigil** is the high point of the liturgical year. The drama of the lighting of the new fire, the blessing of the Paschal candle and the Easter proclamation in the candlelit church set the stage for the recounting of the story of salvation in the Scripture readings. “Alleluia” once again greets the Gospel, and following the homily, we celebrate baptism and the renewal of our baptismal promises. The Paschal Triduum officially concludes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday, but the wonder of the Easter Season extends for a full 50 days.



Celebrating the Triduum

at Church and at Home

Many parishes have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as part of their **Holy Thursday** celebration. Spend some extra time in silent prayer before the Eucharist.

Stations of the Cross are particularly appropriate on **Good Friday**. By calling to mind the steps in our Savior's journey to Calvary, we can better appreciate what he did for us. Group or individual recitation of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary is another powerful way to call to mind Jesus' sacrifice.

Good Friday is also a day of fast and abstinence: Those 14 and older are to abstain from eating meat, and those aged 18-59 are to fast by taking only one full meal with two smaller meals (no snacks in between).

Holy Saturday features no morning liturgy but some parishes might gather on Holy Saturday morning for Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. This is a good day to schedule at least some time of prayer in silence.

The Easter Vigil is a richly symbolic celebration of our belief in the Resurrection and the history of our salvation. Many parishes schedule baptisms for the Easter Vigil liturgy as a concrete representation of salvation through Christ.

Easter Sunday is the preeminent Sunday, reminding us of why we celebrate Mass and worship the Lord throughout the year. "Alleluia" is the word for the day. Sing or repeat it to yourself often as you go through the day's festivities.

TRIDUUM PRAYER

Almighty God, you gather your Church
in solemn celebration of the mystery of our Redemption.
Open our hearts and minds as we remember the dying
and the rising of Jesus so that we may appreciate
more deeply the mystery of our own baptism.
May these days remind us that we are not alone
in our suffering nor without hope.
May the joy we share strengthen us
to be witnesses of the Gospel throughout the year.
We ask this in the name of your Son and our Lord,
Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

READINGS FOR TRIDUUM 2021

Holy Thursday • Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14;
1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15

Good Friday • Isaiah 52:13—53:12;
Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9; John 18:1—19:42

Holy Saturday • Genesis 1:1—2:2;
Genesis 22:1-18; Exodus 14:15—15:1; Isaiah 54:5-14; Isaiah 55:1-11;
Baruch 3:9-15, 32—4:4; Ezekiel 36:16-17a, 18-28;
Romans 6:3-11; Mark 16:1-7

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, the 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.