

40 days Lent

Ash Wednesday to Passion Sunday of the Palms

3 days 'Triduum'

The Great Three Days

the evening of Maundy Thursday, through Good Friday, to Easter dawn

50 days Eastertime

Easter Day to the Day of Pentecost

Christ is risen! Alleluia! Alleluia!

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Sunday Eucharist 9.30am

PASS THIS ON TO A FRIEND...

TRIDUUM

The Great Three Days

Maundy Thursday : Good Friday : Easter Day

1-4 April 2010



The Great Three Days

Lent is 40 days of preparation for the Triduum. Eastertime is its 50 days of celebration. The Sacred Triduum (pronounced 'try-doo-um') begins Holy Thursday at sunset and concludes Easter day at sunset. We count the Triduum in the Jewish way, from sunset to sunset, to correspond with the biblical days of creation. Three great days: The *sixth* day, when God finished the creation; the *seventh* day, the sabbath when God rested; the *first* day, when God began creating anew. On the *sixth* day Jesus dies. On the *sabbath* Jesus lies buried in the tomb. On the *first* day, Jesus is raised in glory. That's why it takes us these three days to observe the Christian Passover. We witness a new creation. In baptism, and in the renewal of our baptismal vows, we celebrate the body of Christ that struggles and suffers and dies, buried in the oblivion of death and risen from chaos into inextinguishable light.

One Three-Day Liturgy

Mass of the Lord's Supper, Celebration of the Lord's Passion and Death, the Great Vigil and First Mass of the Resurrection are a three-panelled window (a triptych) into the heart of God. Holy Thursday's eucharist has no sending rite. Good Friday' liturgy has no gathering or sending. The Easter Vigil lacks a gathering rite. The Christian Passover begins in the evening of Maundy Thursday, and the church remains to see it through to the triumphant conclusion. Triduum is like other human adventures - weddings, family reunions, funerals often unfold over a series of days. There are several meals, occasional lulls, catnaps, shifting moods, quiet times, raucous ones, leading up to the main event. The ideal is to *join as one* for these three days.

Present Tense

The liturgy of the Triduum is not an attempt to re-create first century Jerusalem, pretending we're there again. "Were you there..." is hardly the point. Rather, are we here, now? In the liturgy of the Christian Passover the boundaries between past, present and future are drawn into heaven's timeless now. *This* is the day of salvation! *This* is the night light is created, the rainbow appears, Isaac's life is redeemed, the Reed Sea opens, the Jordan parts, three children in the fiery furnace sing God's praises. *This* is the most blessed of nights, when Christ offers his body and blood, gives up his life, lies in the depths of the earth, and rises from death.

Time Stands Still

Where churches have tower bells, they have always been silenced at this time. The point is that time stops. Business-as-usual was brought to a halt. The Christian Passover only makes sense as an act of keeping watch, waiting, anticipating, remembering. The Paschal Triduum requires of us a liturgical focussing on the 'main event'. It asks us to put everything else aside – so far as that is possible in our hyper-active culture.

Fast and Feast

Fasting is one way we keep watch. It's something we do when our stomach is in knots, when we are overwhelmed with emotions. The paschal fast unites home and church, until at dawn on Easter Day we pass over from fasting to feasting - breakfasting, breaking our fast, together.

Maundy Thursday 7.30pm

Love one another, as I have loved you... Do this to remember me.

Holy Thursday takes its name from the "mandatum", the mandate of Christ to the church, the new commandment given to the company of the disciples: "Love one another, as I have loved you". We sit at table with Christ, who feeds us with his own body: "Do this to remember me". This is the night of touching flesh, and consuming flesh. Our way is to be Jesus' way, the way of humble service of *all*. And it's not just that we are to be *Christ for others*. It is that others, all others, are *Christ for us*. In all people - beautiful or ugly, with the divine image clear and sparkling, or smashed into a thousand pieces - we see God, reverently and gently responding with loving service. We receive the Holy Oils of Chrism and Anointing, blessed by the Bishop in the Cathedral at the Chrism Mass.

Night Watch 8.30pm-10am

Could you not watch with me one hour?

The answer was No. *Now* it becomes Yes! We keep watch *through the night* with Christ in the blessed sacrament, holding together the liturgies of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. We are invited to remain with Jesus in his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, his arrest, humiliations, beatings, and trials before religious and political leaders. Throughout the night we share in a sustained contemplative silence with Christ, and with Christians around the world. The night is divided into one hour slots. A roster is in the church foyer. Invite a friend.

Good Friday 10am

Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.

Not Doom & Gloom Friday, but Good Friday! On this day we look into the eyes and heart of love - Love at the heart of the universe; Love creating all things and holding creation in being; Love always becoming flesh and dwelling among us full of grace and truth; Love that goes to the cross rather than abandon us; Love that confronts all the powers of domination and injustice; Love that suffers and dies and rises eternally. The Good Friday liturgy is a celebration of the cross, the tree of life. On the dung heap, in the place of rejection and ridicule, outside the city walls, in the poor, humbled, crucified Christ we encounter the power and wisdom of God as nowhere else. We read the Passion according to John, we pray for God's world and church, we kiss the wood of the cross, we receive Christ crucified and living in holy communion. How good to be here!

Meditation at the Cross 12noon-12.30pm

To Pilate's surprise, Jesus made no further reply.

Good Friday. Christian meditation. Contemplative silence.

Holy Saturday 9am

So they went and made the sepulchre secure.

Between Good Friday and Easter Vigil we prepare. After Morning Prayer we prepare ourselves and the building! We fill the dry font with water, lay the altar with freshly-laundered linen and new candles, lay other tables for our Easter breakfast together, polish sacred vessels until they sparkle, wash decanters for wine and water, prepare the great Paschal Candle, arrange magnificent flowers, put away red Passiontide vestments and set out Easter's golds and whites, practice the many scripture readings for the Great Vigil, and rehearse ministers and servers for the completion of the Sacred Triduum. No worthy celebration without careful preparation! All are welcome. All are invited.

Easter Day 6am

Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is risen.

This is our night of nights, our day of days. This is our liturgy of liturgies. All christian liturgy derives its meaning and power from this liturgy, this dawning day. There is none other like it. We gather together before dawn. It requires some effort! In the dark we kindle fire and light. We trace in sacred scriptures the story of God's marvellous dealings with humankind. Gradually, the day dawns, until we see the whole sacramental universe. The sun rises as usual after crucifixion! We baptise, making new Christians by water and Spirit. We renew our own baptismal vows. We are marked as Christ's own forever. We ring bells. We gather around the table, like the first disciples at Emmaus, glimpsing the raised Christ in the breaking of the bread - still with the scars of passion on him, blessing us with torn hands, walking with us on bleeding feet. Here, against all the odds, in our midst - where two or three, or a hundred or so, are gathered together - is Christ the First and the Last, the Alpha and Omega, the Crucified and Living One. We remember the dead, to whom we are joined through resurrection across the tender bridge in Christ. We break fast together - in the company of our sisters and brothers in Christ. Bring bells. Make a joyful noise! *Alleluia! Christ is risen!*