



NEWMAN
CONNECTION

Holy Week Companion

Palm Sunday - Easter Sunday



Interactive Table of Contents

PALM SUNDAY

MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

HOLY THURSDAY - MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

HOLY THURSDAY - NOCTURNAL ADORATION

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

GOOD FRIDAY - STATIONS OF THE CROSS

HOLY SATURDAY REFLECTIONS

EASTER VIGIL

EASTER SUNDAY



WHAT IS HOLY WEEK?

HOLY WEEK, APTLY NAMED, is the HOLIEST time in the Church year. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, the Church relives the final week of Jesus' life on earth. As a Church, we strive to live these days with Jesus, Mary, the Apostles, and the crowd.

The Church calls this week Holy, meaning consecrated, or devoted to a specific purpose. These days remind us of the shocking truth:

“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

(Jn 3:16-17)

In these holy days, may we pray for the grace of conviction, that our hearts might be penetrated by this truth: God came for me. He was born for me. He brought the good news for me. He died for me. He rose for me. May I become aware of His love, which stopped at nothing to come for me, on the chance that I'd love Him back.

This Holy Week, we will try to live each day with great reverence. We cannot do this on our own, no matter if we have prayed every day for fifty years, or if today is our first day speaking to God. As we begin, we beg for God's grace (from Latin, gratia, meaning free gift), not because we deserve it, but because we need it.

May we pause here, close our eyes, and speak to Our Father, who sees and loves us with an endless and unconditional love:

“Father, I love you so much. I want to love you more. Help me to believe that you see me and love me.

Send your Holy Spirit to help me live this week with Jesus.

Overwhelm me with His love for me. Amen”

PALM SUNDAY - LITURGY

HOSANNA!

“Hosanna!” is translated, “Please! Save us!” When Jesus enters into Jerusalem, the crowds are quoting Ps 118: “Save us, we beg you, Lord! ...Blessed is he who enters in the name of the Lord!”

We cry out to Jesus, because without Him we are desperately lost. Let us beg Jesus, who is kinder and more loving than anyone we know or imagine: ‘Hosanna! Please! Save me!’

On Palm Sunday, the Gospel is proclaimed to us before Mass begins, outside of the Church. Why? Because as much as possible, we want to walk every step with Jesus. We hear the Gospel proclaimed, and in our hearts are urged to cry out with the crowd:

“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”

We raise our palms, and lay our cloaks at Jesus’ feet as He enters into Jerusalem. We rejoice that the long-promised King has come! Rejoicing and praise abound, as we welcome our humble King, riding on a young colt.



PALM SUNDAY - MEDITATION

“Let us return to today’s Gospel passage and ask ourselves: what is really happening in the hearts of those who acclaim Christ as King of Israel? Clearly, they had their own idea of the Messiah, an idea of how the long-awaited King promised by the prophets should act. Not by chance, a few days later, instead of acclaiming Jesus, the Jerusalem crowd will cry out to Pilate: “Crucify him!”, while the disciples, together with others who had seen him and listened to him, will be struck dumb and will disperse. The majority, in fact, was disappointed by the way Jesus chose to present himself as Messiah and King of Israel. This is the heart of today’s feast, for us too.

Who is Jesus of Nazareth for us? What idea do we have of the Messiah, what idea do we have of God? It is a crucial question, one we cannot avoid, not least because during this very week we are called to follow our King who chooses the Cross as his throne. We are called to follow a Messiah who promises us, not a facile earthly happiness, but the happiness of heaven, divine beatitude. So we must ask ourselves: what are our true expectations? What are our deepest desires, with which we have come here today to celebrate Palm Sunday and to begin our celebration of Holy Week?”

- Pope Benedict XVI
Palm Sunday Homily, April 1, 2012



MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

LITURGY

An ancient philosophical principle states that 'the good is self-diffusive'. What does this mean? Essentially, the more 'good' or 'full' something is, the more it naturally spreads itself. Example: you get great news. You want to shout it from the rooftops! A fully mature apple tree produces the most apples. Full human love? "First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes the baby carriage! By God's design, the more "good" something is, the more it grows and spreads!

An example of this happens in several Gospels before Jesus' passion, "the house filled with the fragrance of the oil." (Jn 12:3)

The aromatic nard that Mary poured out on Jesus shows this "self-diffusing good." The "fragrance filled the house." This means that it spread to everyone. Mary poured out the oil with such love, that every person in the house was affected by it. In

Matthew's Gospel, Jesus said, "wherever this Gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." (Mt 26:13) This one act of love has "filled the house" for 2,000 years! This means we don't have to force our way through life. The more full we are of love, we more naturally we "spill" that love over into others:

Come, Holy Spirit: inflame our hearts so that we naturally diffuse your fragrance to the world!



MONDAY OF HOLY WEEK

MEDITATION

“Dear Jesus, help me to spread Your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly, that my life may only be a radiance of Yours.

Shine through me, and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only you, O Jesus! Stay with me! Then I shall begin to shine as You shine: so to shine as to be a light to others. The light, O Jesus will be all from You; none of it will be mine. It will be You, shining on others through me.

Let me thus praise You the way You love best, by shining on those around me. Let me preach You without preaching, not by words but by my example, by the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to You.”

- Saint John Henry Cardinal Newman



TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

LITURGY

With death a few days away, the Church remembers the beginnings of Jesus' life. Death, betrayal, and sin swoop in for the final chapter, but the remainder of the story is one of great hope, gift, and fullness.

We read Isaiah, 'from my mother's womb he gave me my name:' (Is 49:1), and recall the angel's conversation with Mary: "His name shall be Jesus; He shall be great, and shall save His people from their sins." He was named; He showed that He was great, and now, He will save His people from their sins. The story has unfolded. From the womb, He has been called, and His entire life has been leading to this moment, of saving you and me.

We will wait with Him, reflecting on His life, and grateful that we, too, received a call and name from the Father at the very beginning of our lives, when we were in our mothers' wombs.

Today, we join in Jesus' prayer: "Do not leave me to the will of my foes, O Lord, for false witnesses rise up against me and they breathe out violence." Jesus does not run away, though aware that His death is approaching. As malice grows around and towards Him, His heart and His face remain towards the Father, and towards the Cross. Despite Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial, Jesus remains "obedient to the Father...led to your crucifixion like a gentle lamb to the slaughter."

May our hearts be meek and humble like Yours, Jesus: empty of retaliation, seeking only to love the Father, and trusting that His Will is our greatest gift!

TUESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

MEDITATION

“People sometimes get disheartened because they have read that suffering ennobles and have met people who seem to have come out of the crucible like pure silver, made beautiful by suffering; but it seems to them that in their own case it is quite the opposite. They find that however hard they try not to be, they are irritable; that astonishing stabs of bitterness afflict them, that far from being more sympathetic, more understanding, there is a numbness, a chill on their emotions: they cannot respond to others at all; they seem not to love anyone any more; and they even shrink from, and dread the very presence of those who are compassionate and who care for them. They say that in their case, suffering is certainly a failure. The truth is that they are too impatient to wait for the season of sorrow to run its course; a seed contains all the life and loveliness of the flower, but it contains it in a little hard black pip of a thing which even the glorious sun will not enliven unless it is buried under the earth. There must be a period of gestation before anything can flower.”

**- Caryl Houselander,
Excerpt from: The Reed of God**



WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

LITURGY

Wednesday of Holy Week is traditionally known as “Spy Wednesday,” for it is the day that Judas secretly betrayed Jesus to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver - roughly one-third the price of the aromatic nard Mary poured out for Jesus

Pause a moment to reflect on Judas, to reflect on Jesus, and to reflect on friendship. ‘Even my bosom friend, in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted his heel against me.’ (Ps 41:9)

Jesus became ‘like us in all things but sin.’ (Heb 2:17). This means his human heart experienced human emotions. He wept at the death of Lazarus, rejoiced at little children...would his heart not break when betrayed by a close friend?

Psalm 69, states, “I looked for sympathy but there was none, for consolers, not one could I find.” St. Teresa of Calcutta often encouraged her sisters to ‘be the one,’ referring to this verse. Make a resolution to respond as Mother Teresa encouraged: be the one to stay near to him in his deep sorrow.

Today is the last day of Lent, as the Holy Triduum begins tomorrow (more on that to come!). In this final day of prayer, fasting and almsgiving,

May we reflect on the Eucharist today, and pray them as Jesus enters our hearts:

Jesus, you came to give your life for me! You came to serve me, though you are God. Thank you, Jesus. Help me to live these precious days close to your servant heart!

WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

MEDITATION

“Greater love has no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends, Jesus said at the Last Supper. We could exclaim: But there does exist a greater love than giving one’s life for one’s friends: your love! You did not give your life for your friends but for your enemies! Paul says that scarcely can someone be found who is ready to die for a just man, although such a man might be found: But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom 5:8).

The word “friends” in the active sense indicates those who love you, but in the passive sense it indicates those whom you love. Jesus calls Judas friend (Mt 26:50), not because Judas loved him, but because he loved Judas! There is no greater love than giving one’s life for one’s enemies while considering them friends; this is what Jesus meant by his statement. People can be—or act as though they are—enemies of God, but God will never be the enemy of any human being.... Jesus died, crying out, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.... It is a peremptory request made with the authority that comes from being the Son: Father, forgive them!”

- Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa, O.F.M. CAP

HOLY THURSDAY - LITURGY

"HIS HOUR HAD COME"

Today on Holy Thursday Jesus knew "His hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end." (Jn 13:1-2)

Anyone who has lost a loved one knows how precious the last moments are: you still have their ears in which to whisper, their eyes to see and be seen, their lips to listen for any final message, their hands to hold, their faces to kiss... The disciples did not yet know that, in less than 24 hours, Jesus would be taken from their world. They didn't know the final moment had come, but Jesus did.

In his final hours, what does He do? He gives them two new Sacraments: the Priesthood, and the Eucharist. He gives himself in both. From this time forward, because Jesus chose this to be the case, a Catholic priest is acting in persona Christi (in the person of Christ), when he is celebrating the Sacraments of the Church. This means that it is not a mere man speaking rehearsed words, but rather Christ, Himself! It is Jesus who is speaking and acting with, in, and through the priest! Mysteriously, when a priest celebrates the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, it is truly Jesus saying to us, "take this, all of you, and eat of it. For this is my body, given up for you."

Holy Thursday is the day in which we celebrate the gift of the priesthood, and the gift of the Eucharist. Jesus has truly "loved his own to the end." (Jn13:2) This includes you and me. He has loved us to the end, and has given himself to us, both in the person of our priests, and in the gift of the Eucharist. He has become both food, and the one feeding. Today, reflect on Jesus' last moments. His heart cannot help but love us to the end. Thank him, tonight, for wanting to stay with you "until the end" in the priesthood, and in the Eucharist.

HOLY THURSDAY - LITURGY

Holy Thursday begins the Holy Triduum, the holiest three days of Holy Week (Tri-duum: Latin for three days). Holy Thursday is always celebrated at night, as the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

After tonight, we will not celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass again until Easter. This night is, as the Jewish people prayed during their Passover meal, "different from any other night." This is the night of Jesus' final hour. These three days are the culmination of thousands of years of waiting.

In the First reading from the book of Exodus, we hear how Egypt - the oppressors of the Jews - will be conquered by the Lord: the Jewish people are to be saved by marking their doors with the blood of a lamb. The blood of the lamb will spare them. They are instructed to remember this night as a memorial feast, perpetually, in which the Lord passed over them, leaving them safe and conquering their enemies for them.

Today's Second Reading recounts the Last Supper, in which Jesus gave us his Body and Blood under the signs of bread and wine. He called this the "new covenant in my blood." In his celebration of the Passover, and by shedding his blood on the Cross, Jesus becomes the true Passover Lamb, by whose blood his people are saved from their enemies.

When Jesus tells his disciples, "I have ardently desired to eat this Passover with you," (Lk 22:15), he was not referring merely to hunger pangs from an early lunch, nor of the Passover meal for this year, not even of this Passover meal in his 33 years of life. He, as the Eternal Word, who has existed for all of time, has been ardently desiring to become the Passover lamb for thousands of years, since the very first Passover spoken of in Exodus.

HOLY THURSDAY - MEDITATION

“In a letter that Pope John Paul II wrote to priests throughout the world for Holy Thursday, he tells of a custom that developed in many localities behind the Iron Curtain where persecution left no priests. I had already learned of such an event some years ago from friends. It happens there that the people go to an abandoned church or, if one no longer exists, to a cemetery where a priest is buried. They place the stole on the altar or on the tombstone and pray together the prayers of the Holy Eucharist. At the place where the consecration would occur, a deep silence ensues, which is sometimes interrupted by weeping. The pope then goes on and turns to us priests. He says: Dear brothers, when doubts about your vocation sometimes assail you, when you doubt the meaning of it and ask yourselves whether it is socially unproductive or even useless, then reflect on this fact. Think how much the people yearn to hear the words that only the lips of a priest can pronounce. How much they yearn to receive the Body of the Lord. How anxiously they are waiting for someone to be able to tell them, “I forgive your sins.”...

Contrasted with this humility of faith, how petty the recommendation of many theologians seems: in an emergency anyone can pronounce the words of consecration....

No man can dare on his own to use the “I” of Christ as his “I” without blaspheming. No one can say on his own authority: “This is my body.” “This is my blood.” “I absolve you from your sins.” And yet we need these words as much as our daily bread. When they are no longer spoken, the daily bread goes stale and social achievements become empty. So this is the most profound and at the same time the most exciting gift of priestly ministry, which only the Lord can give: not only to relate his words as words of the past, but to speak here and now with his “I,” to act in persona Christi; to represent Christ’s person, as the liturgy expresses it. Basically, we can derive from this the whole nature of priestly.....

HOLY THURSDAY - MEDITATION

.....activity and the commission of priestly life. Certainly, even if a priest contradicts these words with his life, they are still effective, precisely because the “I” of Jesus Christ is what matters here, and not the man’s ego. The man does not forgive sins, but he does. The body of this or that man does not become present, but his does. But at the same time it is clear that we cannot say such words without their making demands on our own life and requiring interior correspondence to what we are saying. Someone who is allowed to take the “I” of Jesus Christ on his lips must therefore above all believe it himself first. The priest must first and foremost be a man who believes.

- Pope Benedict XVI



HOLY THURSDAY - NOCTURNAL ADORATION

The Holy Thursday liturgy has no final blessing, no sending forth, no proclamation that, “the Mass has ended.” Instead, after Communion, the priest processes with the Blessed Sacrament to an altar of repose. This procession recollects Jesus’ journeying to the Garden of Gethsemane, following the Last Supper. Once the priest arrives at the altar of repose, the faithful are invited to remain in shifts until midnight, keeping Our Lord company in his loneliness. So begin the three days of the Holy Triduum. This night, will you watch an hour with your Lord, recalling his final moments?

The Church gives us this somber nighttime vigil as a gift to enter into Jesus’ last moments. Left alone in his final agony by his sleeping friends, we can choose to be with Jesus, thanking him for all he chose to do. Luke’s Gospel states that an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. Saints through the ages have had a great devotion to this angel, asking - since angels are not bound by time or space - to whisper their gratitude in Jesus’ ear, to tell him that his death would not be in vain in their lives. Tenderly consider your Savior’s loneliness and suffering, and share your love with him. Pray to his Gethsemane angel: ‘tell him of me! 2,000 years later, I choose to stay awake with him!’ Slowly read any of the Gospel accounts, and accompany Jesus in his agony.

St. Padre Pio’s reflection: The Agony of Jesus in the Garden



HOLY THURSDAY - NOCTURNAL ADORATION

In your reflection, consider the following rough timeline of tonight's events. Jesus' prayer was interrupted by Judas, leading soldiers to capture Jesus, taking him by force on an exhausting route. Reflect slowly on the series of events. Choose any moment that strikes you to stay with Jesus. Sink into the scripture surrounding the moment.

Console him, and receive any word he wishes to speak to you, his friend.

1:30 AM:

Jesus' prayer is interrupted by Judas, arriving with a band of soldiers:

Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-53; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:2-12

2:00 AM:

Jesus is taken to Annas' house for his first trial:

Jn 18:12-14, 19-23

Peter denies Jesus the first time:

Mt 26:58, 69-70; Mk 14:54, 66-68; Lk 22:54-57; Jn 18:15-18



HOLY THURSDAY - NOCTURNAL ADORATION

3:00 AM:

Jesus is taken to Caiaphas. He is beaten, mocked and held overnight:
Mt 26:57-68; Mk 14:53,55-65; Lk 22:54, 63-65; Jn 18:24

Peter denies Jesus a second and third time:

Mt 26:71-75; Mk 14:69-72; Lk 22:58-62; Jn 18:25-27

Daybreak:

Jesus appears before Sanhedrin and is condemned to death by the Jewish authorities:

Mt 27:1; Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66-71

Judas hangs himself:

Mt 27:3-10

Jesus appears before Pilate, the Roman authority:

Mt 27:2, 11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Lk 23:1-5; Jn 18:28-38

Jesus is taken to Herod, where he is mocked:

Lk 23:6-12

Jesus appears before Pilate again. He is scourged. Barabbas is released instead of Jesus; Jesus is condemned to death:

Mt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:13-25; Jn 18:39-19:1, 4-16

Jesus is prepared for crucifixion, mocked by Roman soldiers, and carried his cross to Calvary:

Mt 27:27-34; Mk 15:16-23; Lk 23:26-33; Jn 19:2-3, 16-17

12:00 PM:

Jesus is crucified outside the city walls:

Mt 27:35-44; Mk 15:24-32; Lk 23:33-43

Darkness covers Jerusalem

Mt 27:45-49; Mk 15:33-36; Lk 23:44; Jn 19:28-29

3:00 PM:

Jesus commends his spirit to the Father and dies

Mt 27:50-56; Mk 15:37-41; Lk 23:46-49; Jn 19:30

GOOD FRIDAY - LITURGY

KINGS SHALL STAND SPEECHLESS

In the book of Revelation, Jesus - the Lamb - is called the "King of kings." Isaiah says that upon seeing Jesus, "kings shall stand speechless." Out of context, we might suppose they stand speechless due to his glory and power. But no...Isaiah then speaks of how marred beyond human appearance Jesus was, spurned and avoided by people, harshly treated, like one from whom people hid their faces. "Kings shall stand speechless" before him? Why? What kind of king is he, to not defend himself behind armies, and not kill those who beat him?

Imagining a king treated like this is hard to do, unless his kingdom had fallen. But Jesus' Kingdom had not fallen! Jesus acts as more than an earthly king can or should. Any other king giving himself over to his enemies would just be giving his now-leaderless-people a wounded and dead king. Jesus, however, the King of kings has ALL authority, even over life and death. "I have the power to lay my life down, and the power to take it up again." (Jn 10:18) Kings shall stand speechless before him, because this path was impossible except for Jesus, the King of kings.

Our King has given life. Isaiah continues of him: "if he gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him."

We stand speechless, as we see what a King we have!

Every Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is made up of two liturgies: the Liturgy of the Word, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Without one of the other of these liturgies, there is no Holy Mass.

Every other day of the year, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (comprised of these two liturgies) is celebrated.....

(continued on next page)

GOOD FRIDAY - LITURGY

Good Friday, however, we fast from the most precious gift of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, although we still celebrate the Liturgy of the Word and receive Holy Communion remaining from Holy Thursday's Mass. Holy Saturday we fast from BOTH Liturgies AND Holy Communion!

Why does the Church choose to have two days where the life-giving sacrifice of the Eucharist is not celebrated? Guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church desires Holy Thursday's liturgy to disrupt our 'norm.' By allowing us the space, silence and time to grow in awareness of what has been accomplished in Christ's suffering and death, our hearts are renewed in our love and longing for the Eucharist. Absence truly does make the heart grow fonder!

This fasting from the Eucharistic Sacrifice is not ONLY to awaken a longing for what we don't have. This period of waiting also allows us to grow in our awareness and gratitude for what we DO have. Every Mass we attend is a 'RE-Presentation' (a presenting, once again) of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. On Good Friday, however, we pause in our celebration of the RE-Presentation to recall the ACTUAL event. We intentionally remember the source: on a certain day, at a certain time, in a certain place, Jesus Christ truly sacrificed himself on the Cross for us, winning the battle over sin and death. He truly suffered. He truly died. The world was caught in a period of waiting, reeling from the fact that the Messiah had just been killed. Today, of course, we know how the story ends. But Good Friday allows us to enter into the "unknowing." We are allowed to be overwhelmed with sorrow and shame, for we had killed God.

From this sacrifice, which we enter deeply into on Good Friday, every Eucharistic celebration flows. By abstaining from the Eucharistic celebration we are reminded what the source of this wellspring actually is: Christ's sacrifice of love on a rough, wooden cross.

Every other day of the year, we genuflect only before the Eucharist. Today, after the Good Friday service until tomorrow, we reverence the Cross with a genuflection, saying in our hearts, Hail true Cross of Christ, on which hung the Savior of the world! I adore you!

GOOD FRIDAY - MEDITATION

“Jesus’ cry on the Cross, dear Brothers and Sisters, is not the cry of anguish of a man without hope, but the prayer of the Son who offers his life to the Father in love, for the salvation of all. At the very moment when he identifies with our sin, “abandoned” by the Father, he “abandons” himself into the hands of the Father. His eyes remain fixed on the Father. Precisely because of the knowledge and experience of the Father which he alone has, even at this moment of darkness he sees clearly the gravity of sin and suffers because of it. He alone, who sees the Father and rejoices fully in him, can understand completely what it means to resist the Father’s love by sin. More than an experience of physical pain, his Passion is an agonizing suffering of the soul.”

- Saint John Paul II

Excerpt from: Novo Millennio Ineunte 26



GOOD FRIDAY - STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Meditations on the Stations of the Cross

By St. John Henry Newman

Way of the Cross

By Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)

Way of the Cross

By St. Faustina Kowalska



HOLY SATURDAY - MEDITATIONS

“What is happening? Today there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence, and stillness, a great silence because the King sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still, because God slept in the flesh and raised up those who were sleeping from the ages. God has died in the flesh, and the underworld has trembled.

Truly he goes to seek out our first parent like a lost sheep; he wishes to visit those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. He goes to free the prisoner Adam and his fellow-prisoner Eve from their pains, he who is God, and Adam’s son.

The Lord goes in to them holding his victorious weapon, his cross. When Adam, the first created man, sees him, he strikes his breast in terror and calls out to all: ‘My Lord be with you all.’ And Christ in reply says to Adam: ‘And with your spirit.’ And grasping his hand he raises him up, saying: ‘Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

‘I am your God, who for your sake became your son, who for you and your descendants now speak and command with authority those in prison: Come forth, and those in darkness: Have light, and those who sleep: Rise.

‘I command you: Awake, sleeper, I have not made you to be held a prisoner in the underworld. Arise from the dead; I am the life of the dead. Arise, O man, work of my hands, arise, you who were fashioned in my image. Rise, let us go hence; for you in me and I in you, together we are one undivided person.

‘For you, I your God became your son; for you, I the Master took on your form; that of slave; for you, I who am above the heavens came on earth and under the earth; for you, man, I became as a man without help, free among the dead; for you, who left a garden, I was handed over to Jews from a garden and crucified in a garden.



HOLY SATURDAY - MEDITATIONS

'Look at the spittle on my face, which I received because of you, in order to restore you to that first divine in-breathing at creation. See the blows on my cheeks, which I accepted in order to refashion your distorted form to my own image.

'See the scourging of my back, which I accepted in order to disperse the load of your sins which was laid upon your back. See my hands nailed to the tree for a good purpose, for you, who stretched out your hand to the tree for an evil one.

'I slept on the cross and a sword pierced my side, for you, who slept in paradise and brought forth Eve from your side. My side healed the pain of your side; my sleep will release you from your sleep in Hades; my sword has checked the sword which was turned against you.

'But arise, let us go hence. The enemy brought you out of the land of paradise; I will reinstate you, no longer in paradise, but on the throne of heaven. I denied you the tree of life, which was a figure, but now I myself am united to you, I who am life. I posted the cherubim to guard you as they would slaves; now I make the cherubim worship you as they would God.

"The cherubim throne has been prepared, the bearers are ready and waiting, the bridal chamber is in order, the food is provided, the everlasting houses and rooms are in readiness; the treasures of good things have been opened; the kingdom of heaven has been prepared before the ages."

- From an Ancient Homily for Holy Saturday

HOLY SATURDAY - MEDITATIONS

"In this 'time-beyond-time,' Jesus Christ 'descended to the dead.' What do these words mean? They mean that God, having made himself man, reached the point of entering man's most extreme and absolute solitude, where not a ray of love enters, where total abandonment reigns without any word of comfort: 'hell.' Jesus Christ, by remaining in death, passed beyond the door of this ultimate solitude to lead us too to cross it with him. We have all, at some point, felt the frightening sensation of abandonment, and that is what we fear most about death, just as when we were children we were afraid to be alone in the dark and could only be reassured by the presence of a person who loved us. Well this is exactly what happened on Holy Saturday: the voice of God resounded in the realm of death. The unimaginable occurred: namely, Love penetrated 'hell'. Even in the extreme darkness of the most absolute human loneliness we may hear a voice that calls us and find a hand that takes ours and leads us out. Human beings live because they are loved and can love; and if love even penetrated the realm of death, then life also even reached there. In the hour of supreme solitude we shall never be alone: Passio Christi. Passio hominis. (Passion of Christ. Passion of Man)."

- Pope Benedict XVI

The Mystery of Holy Saturday, May 2, 2010



Painting by Amber Knorr - www.amberknorrart.com



[< Home Page](#)

EASTER VIGIL - LITURGY

EXULT!

At the Easter Vigil, we hear the Exsultet - The Easter Proclamation - sung or said with great joy and celebration as we hold candles lit from the one "Holy Fire." Seeing the stark contrast between the darkness of night, and the brightness of countless flames, we rest in gratitude and joy as we anticipate the joy of the Resurrection.

As the Jewish Passover stated, "this night is unlike any other night." We now proclaim, "this is the night when Christ broke the prison-bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld!" May our hearts well with love as we celebrate the Easter Vigil - the holiest liturgy within the Church calendar!

In today's readings, there are up to Seven Old Testament readings and Psalms, leading to one New Testament Epistle, a three-verse Alleluia, and a Gospel Proclamation. The Church has carefully chosen "milestone" readings detailing the journey of Salvation, from Adam and Eve to Jesus.

As much as possible, may we "Exult!" as we walk the road of salvation with those who have gone before us. May we recognize times in our own lives when we have fallen, run away, rebelled, and wondered if God would truly come for us. United in spirit to our mothers and fathers in the faith, we receive the Good News that all has been conquered and made new by Christ! Exult!



EASTER VIGIL - LITURGY

Tonight, as on Palm Sunday, we begin outside of the Church, in the darkness, surrounding a fire that burns brightly in the night. The priest prays, "O God, who through your Son bestowed upon the faithful the fire of your glory, sanctify this new fire, we pray, and grant that, by these paschal celebrations, we may be so inflamed with heavenly desires, that with minds made pure we may attain festivities of unending splendor."

From this new, holy fire, he lights the Paschal Candle, which will burn throughout the Easter Season, and be lit whenever Baptism - new life - is celebrated in the Church. Processing with the candle, he lifts it high and sings, "The Light of Christ!" to which we respond, "Thanks be to God!"

In this simple entrance, we are each given a small flame in the night to speak hope to our hearts, wearied and sorrowful from the past days. Like expectant children, we gather at the earliest possible hour to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which we have been without for two long days! We will hear the story of Christ in the readings, from Genesis to the Gospel, and join our hearts and minds with those who waited thousands of years for this holy night of the resurrection!

Tonight's Liturgy can be divided in up to four parts:

Part I: The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil

Part II: The Liturgy of the Word

Part III: The Baptismal Liturgy (if there are any Catechumens are to be welcomed into the Church)

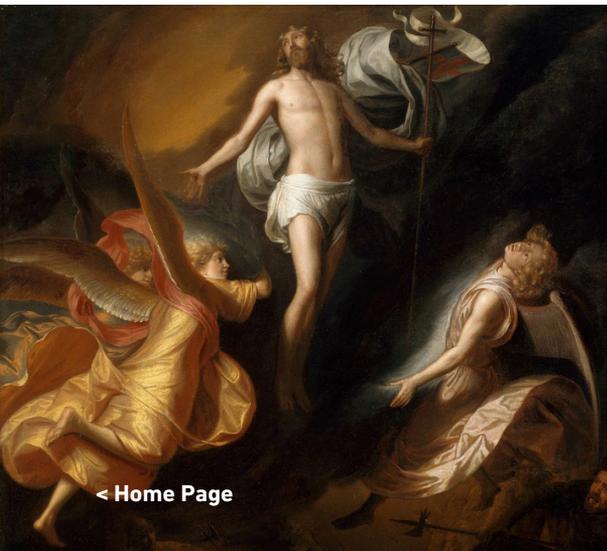
Part IV: The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Church, as a good Mother, has prepared a feast for her hungry children! May we enter with grateful hearts into the depths of each part of tonight's liturgy, and may our hearts overflow with joy and gratitude!

EASTER VIGIL - MEDITATION

“When Judas sinned, Jesus paid; He brought good out of evil, He led out triumph from the gates of Hell and brought all mankind out with Him; but the suffering of Jesus and the sin of Judas remain a reality. God did not abolish the fact of evil: He transformed it. He did not stop the Crucifixion: He rose from the dead. ‘Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned...cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.’ And thereby Judas committed the final, the fatal, the most pitiful error of all; for he despaired of God and himself, and never waited the see the Resurrection. Had he done so, there would have been an encounter, and an opportunity, to leave invention bankrupt; but unhappily for himself, he did not. I this world, at any rate, he never saw the triumph of Christ fulfilled upon him, and through him, and in spite of him. He saw the dreadful payment made, and never knew what victory had been purchased with the price.”

- Dorothy Sayers Letters to a Diminished Church, p 122



EASTER SUNDAY - LITURGY

SEEK WHAT IS ABOVE

Easter Sunday has come! Alleluia! He is truly risen from the dead! We read in St. Paul's letter to the Colossians: "If then, you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated." (Col 3:1)

This becomes possible in Jesus, because he raised us to what is above! Before, we were like small children, straining after things which we could never reach on our own. Our hearts and minds and souls and bodies yearned for MORE, and yet, there was a chasm we could not cross! Jesus, has crossed the chasm, stepping into our isolation, and raising our eyes, minds, hearts and bodies to seek what we were truly made for - the things that are above. This Easter Sunday, may we rejoice that Jesus has crossed the chasm, and has made happiness with him attainable for us, who could not grasp it for ourselves!

Walking into the Church today is like walking into a new place entirely! The lights are blazing, flowers - signifying life and abundance - have been brought in. The hymns and songs are sung with joy; the Gloria is proclaimed and claimed as our resurrection song. All is full and joyful and well!

Before the Gospel is proclaimed, we hear the *Victimae paschali laudes*: (Praise to the Paschal Victim). This ancient chant proclaims the rising of Christ from the tomb, and exhorts us to join in praising Jesus, who has broken the bonds of sin and death forever!

EASTER SUNDAY - MEDITATION

“It seems a law of fallen nature that life must always come to its being through darkness, and this makes us even more aware of its beauty. Dawn is lovelier because it comes after night, spring because it follows the winter.

All this is but the dim shadow of the law of our mysterious life in Christ. On Easter Sunday, all over the world, a cry goes up, Lumen Christi—Light of Christ. Everywhere new fire is kindled. Christ has risen. After the dark night of his Passion he is the morning light; after the cold darkness of the tomb he is the white bloom on the thorn. His resurrection is not something far away, merely remembered in the Church’s radiant liturgy. It is Christ dawning, Christ flowering in our lives, now, today. That is what Easter means: man has his heart’s desire, he is made new, new with the newness of the risen Christ, burning with the new fire of his love.

This Easter in the heart happens in a natural way, not in the violent fashion of a revivalist conversion. It is as secret as the miracle of flowering. Children have been known to sit watching buds hopefully for hours, but they never see them opening. Only suddenly they have opened, the flower is there! Easter in us is not something that happens once and is ended; Christ makes us new not only once but over and over again.

The seed sown on Calvary comes into flower in generation after generation, in life after life, and over and over again in each life the wood of the cross blossoms with the white flower of Christ. We can accept whatever suffering comes to us as the certain beginning of joy.”

- Caryl Houselander Lift up Your Hearts



Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia,
For he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia,
Has risen, as he foretold, alleluia;
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
For the Lord has indeed risen, alleluia.

God our Father, you give joy to the world by
the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary,
bring us to the happiness of eternal life.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Happy Easter
from Newman Connection!

