



March / April 2021

Join us on a Journey... through Holy Week



THE SYMBOLS OF PALM SUNDAY

Most of us are familiar with the story of Palm Sunday. Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. Many people prepare the way for him by placing palms on the ground. It is a story of triumph and joy. And, it welcomes us to the most meaningful week in our Christian calendar: the week of Easter. Jesus enters the week as a humble king, bringing peace and joy to those who worship him. What an amazing day!

There are so many symbols used in telling the story of Palm Sunday. First, Jesus has his disciples find him a donkey on which to ride. Why not a gallant steed or something more regal? The donkey was a symbol of humility and peace. Jesus would not want to arrive in a showy fashion. The donkey told everyone that Jesus arrived in peace. Even as the savior of the world, his humility would be present in all that he did. Jesus wanted to be one of the people, not separated by formality or regality.

Jesus' followers laid palms along the road for Jesus and his donkey to walk upon. They shouted "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" The palm leaves were also a symbol of peace. They also signify goodness and eternal life. Jesus' peaceful but triumphant entrance into Jerusalem was properly celebrated by his followers. They knew that he was truly the Christ, he was bringing them peace and

would give them eternal life. His words were heard loud and clear.

The story of Palm Sunday should bring us all peace and joy. It was truly a magnificent day. As Catholics, we celebrate by wearing red, and having palms blessed to hang in our homes. These same palms come full circle the next year, because they are burned to create the ashes used for Ash Wednesday.

There are so many symbols of our faith that are woven throughout the week of Easter, and Palm Sunday surely does not disappoint. For me, a distinct part of the joy of being a Catholic is the ritualism and symbolism in our faith. Pay attention! How many symbols will you experience this Easter season? This week will lead us to the ultimate symbol of our faith – the cross on which Jesus lays down his life for us.

Be filled with humility, peace and hope this year. It is what Jesus would want for us. Happy Easter!



JOAN SEIBENICK
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
& ADMINISTRATION



HOLY THURSDAY: GIFT, SACRIFICE, SERVICE

Holy Thursday has deep, enduring significance for Catholics. We remember the meal Jesus celebrated with his disciples before his crucifixion on Good Friday. He broke bread and shared it, and he passed the cup of wine, sharing his very self with them. He commanded his apostles to continue to “do this in memory of me.” Jesus also washed the feet of his apostles before they ate, an act of humble service. Holy Thursday Mass may also include the ritual of washing feet. Today, participants in the rite of washing feet represent all members of the people of God. Washing feet is a simple act of kindness and charity; in the same way our service to others does not need to be complicated to be valuable. Stewardship begins with what we are given in the Eucharist; the strength of the Eucharist helps us acknowledge and respond to the call to serve.



Many of us parents remember the progression of our children from feeding in our arms to eating in a highchair, sitting at the table in a booster chair, and finally, sitting in an adult-sized chair for meals at the table. The type of food progressed too. Those joyous milestones are embedded in our hearts as they are part of our memories of family meals. Part of our mealtime gatherings surely includes some rituals, whether it is grace, or moments of sharing the best parts of our day or listening as each family member shares something they are thankful for, or all the above.

When we participate in Mass, we also participate in a ritual meal—the sacrifice of the Eucharist. We gather, we listen to God’s Word, we pray the Eucharistic prayer, we watch as the bread and wine, the work of human hands, are consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ, and we are dismissed with the mandate to love and serve each other. We know that we are receiving someone, not something; and we as Church draw our life from Jesus. All of this flows from the Last Supper sacrifice that we recall on Holy Thursday.

The banquet of the holy meal of Eucharist unites all of us in a sacrament of total, endless love. In a few short weeks, at select Masses in May, we will be



celebrating Eucharist with our young parishioners who have been preparing for several weeks to celebrate their First Eucharist. They will approach the Table of the Lord with open hearts, ready to receive Jesus in the fullness of his Body and Blood. We ask you to keep these children and their families in your prayers as they complete their preparation and ready their hearts and souls for First Eucharist. They will join all of us in a “walk of humble gratitude, willing surrender, perpetual progress, and saintly success” (F.X. Cronin; “Why Are We Called to Stewardship?” Catholic Exchange, Feb 1, 2021.).



Mary Montour

MARY MONTOUR
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

3 FACTS ABOUT HOLY THURSDAY

1 It’s not just called “Holy Thursday” - there are different names for it around the world. Other names include Maundy Thursday, Covenant Thursday and Thursday of Mysteries.

2 ‘Maundy’ comes from the word ‘mandé’ which as a mix of French and English origins, but it traces its roots back to ‘mandatum’ which is Latin. The word ‘mandatum’ is where we get the word ‘mandate.’ ‘Mandatum’ is found in the words of Christ, “Mandatum novum do vobis ut diligatis invicem sicut dilexi vos” which means “A new commandment I give to you: That you love one another, as I have loved you.”

3 The washing of the feet and the sacrament of the Eucharist: two expressions of one and the same mystery of love entrusted to the disciples, so that, Jesus says, “as I have done... so also must you do” (John 13: 15).

CALLED TO BE PRESENT: AN INVITATION FOR GOOD FRIDAY

In preparation for Holy Week, I decided to spend a holy hour in prayer as many days as I can during Lent. Before Lent even



began, I found myself sitting in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

In prayer I decided to ask Jesus what I could do for Him and His people during Lent. In response,

He gifted me with a beautiful contemplation that really prepared me for Good Friday.

Growing up, I always loved Holy Week and the activities I participated in during this time. The week always felt peaceful, reflective, contemplative, and most importantly, it felt like time slowed down during this deeply spiritual week. Good Friday was the epitome of 'solemn hopefulness.' It was the beginning of the end of the promise of our God - that He would fulfill scripture by dying on a cross for our sins. Until my reflection above, I rarely contemplated the time between Good Friday and Easter Sunday; the part where Jesus was literally dead.

Being welcomed into this space seemed morbid and incomprehensible; how could my all-powerful and all-knowing God be dead - really dead? The more I allowed myself to enter this uncomfortable space, the more I felt drawn to console the heart of Jesus in this stage of His human life. I felt the call to be like Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Like these two disciples, it was my turn to humble myself in front of the Lord, to sit and be with Jesus' body, care for His wounds, and prepare Him for burial. How many times are we called to rest with the wounded

body of Christ? The answer might be shocking: all the time.

Jesus wants us to be with Him on Good Friday in all chances that we have. When we encounter someone who is spiritually dead or suffering, has been deeply wounded, traumatized, beaten, or lonely, the Lord is inviting us to be with His body (the Body of Christ). We are asked to be the Mary Magdala, Mary Mother of God, Mary of Clopas, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus in accompanying the Body and comforting it in any way we can. We are asked, not to fix the wounded and dying, but to be present and attentive to the physical and spiritual needs of those in suffering and those near death.

Countless times, Jesus calls us to follow the example of His life. He was constantly being present to others in His ministry. When he gave the sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7 and spoke in Matthew 25, Jesus called us to comfort the mourning, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal and attend to the ill and so on. But all of this is only complete in Matthew 7:24 when Jesus says, "Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who builds his house on rock". No intention can be justified without action. During this Holy Week and your time in prayer, I encourage you to sit with the Good Friday body of Christ and ask the Lord how you can truly be attentive to Him and His people.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Annie Mesewicz".

ANNIE MESEWICZ
DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND
ADULT FAITH FORMATION

WHY DON'T WE CELEBRATE MASS ON GOOD FRIDAY?

This is a very good question to which St. Thomas Aquinas shares: "The figure ceases on the advent of the reality. But this sacrament is a figure and a representation of our Lord's Passion... therefore, on the day on which our Lord's Passion is recalled as it was really accomplished, this sacrament is not consecrated." Basically, St. Thomas teaches that the Mass is not celebrated on Good Friday because we commemorate Our Lord's sacrifice on the Cross. On Good Friday, we are mystically present at Calvary alongside the Blessed Mother and the other disciples who remained at the Cross.

Now, in saying that Good Friday is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice, it is not suggesting that the Holy

Sacrifice of the Mass is somehow less real. Recall how the Church defines a sacrament: "A Sacrament is a visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted for our justification" (from The Roman Catechism). The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is indeed a re-presentation of the real and true sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the Cross. Yet the Mass both signifies Christ's sacrifice and actually makes it present. And so, in the commemoration on Good Friday, the sign of Christ's sacrifice offered in the Mass gives way to the historical reality. We only hold this commemoration of the Lord's Passion once a year because the reality of Christ's sacrifice took place on one particular day in the calendar year.

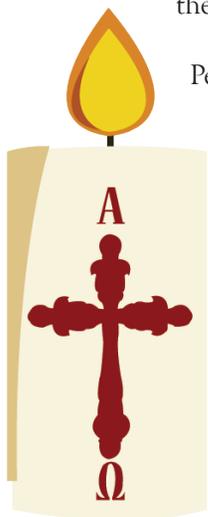
Excerpt from Fr. Matthew Mary, MFVA

FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT: THE EASTER VIGIL

Holy Week is one of the truly special times of the Church year. Each day is special, but the one that brings the most joy to me is the Easter Vigil. I look forward to celebrating it each year, it is a beautiful liturgy. The liturgy is very rich in symbols and has a profound effect on the people entering the church through the sacraments of initiation. That is why, because of the pandemic, it was so disappointing not to celebrate the liturgy last year. I am looking forward to this year's opportunity to celebrate the Easter Vigil. What a sight it is to see how the church is beautifully decorated with spring alive in all its glory. It is ready to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus – the one who has conquered sin and death and brought light to the world.

The Mass starts outside in the dark of the night. The new fire is blessed, and the new Easter Candle is decorated and lit. The Paschal Candle pierces the darkness of the night and it moves into the church. Three times it stops, and people light their small candles from it. Slowly the church fills with the light of Christ, bringing a beautiful glow into the church. The exultet is proclaimed and then the history of the Israelites is read through a series of Old Testament readings, leading to the Gloria being sung for the first time since the beginning of Lent. Then the epistle is read, followed by the glorious strains of alleluias rejoicing once again at Christ's resurrection.

Then, after the homily, the sacraments of initiation are celebrated. The adults making their commitment to embrace the Catholic faith are an awesome witness to beliefs. First, those coming into the church are baptized and then they receive confirmation. The rich symbols of water and the Holy Spirit descending on them welcome them into the Church. They too will receive the Eucharist with the community for the first time. It is amazing to see their faces as they come forward to receive Jesus. There is a sense of excitement and peace in their faces as they proclaim amen and take Jesus into the heart.



People say that Easter Vigil is a very long service. Many will not go because of the length of time. But really it is time that seems to go by so quickly. When you are engaged in the Mass, you lose track of time and it is over before you know it. It is well worth the time to spend the evening before Easter with our faith community.

The Easter season is something that is not just one weekend. The season goes seven weeks because it is that important. When you think about it, we celebrate Easter every time we gather to break bread in the Eucharist.

Jesus is blessed and broken for us to receive. But Easter highlights what Jesus has done for each of us. He emptied himself so that we might all live. He offered himself as a perfect sacrifice that all might find their way to the Father. Easter is a time of renewal. That is why we renew our baptismal promises at the Easter Masses. We recommit to the promises we made when we were baptized. We remind ourselves that we belong to God and we are his children. He gave us his Son and we promise to remain faithful to that gift. It is a reminder that we must remember these promises in our daily lives. Alleluia! The Lord has risen, let us rejoice and be glad! Happy Easter everyone.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Don West".

FR. DON WEST
PASTOR

During the fifty days of the Easter season, take time to bring your family together, as well as deepen your relationship with God.

- Place a bright, beautiful container large enough to hold a few dozen pieces of wrapped candy on the dinner table. Each time you gather for a meal, go around the table and share one sign of new life he or she has noticed or one good deed she or he had done. When finished talking, the speaker places a piece of candy in the box. At Pentecost, share the candy amongst each other.
- Use chalk to decorate around your home with Easter words and symbols.
- Water is a primary symbol for the Church during Easter as we recall our baptism. Reminisce over photos and mementos related to each family member's baptism.
- We sing Christmas carols throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons. What about the Easter songs? Are they heard in your home for fifty days?
- Take an Emmaus walk. Read Lk 24: 13-35 together. Then go to some place that has special meaning to your family. Imagine that Jesus is walking with you.

CELEBRATING THE EASTER SEASON

CELEBRATING OUR CATHOLIC FAITH

BAPTISMS

Tyler Jason Ball
Emily Darcy Gedert
Lucas Nolan Jergens
Elyse Victoria Jurgens

Kali Nichol Murtland
Emelia Rose Pollard
Lena Marie Tidball
Christopher David Seagraves III

Haley Grace Hile
Scarlett Kennedy Notaro

CONFIRMATION

Reagan S.
Andrew H.
Gabriel G.
Stella R.
Christina B.
Gabriel S.
Rachel S.
Kate W.
Emma C.
Madelyn S.
Michael K.
Colin E.
Carson H.
Jessica R.

Ryan S.
Claire H.
Shelby Ann M.
Lucas B.
William W.
Riley H.
Mary Margaret B.
Kate T.
John T.
Corrine G.
Cooper T.
Abbigail T.
Carly G.
Andrew D.

Stephen S.
Cayle R.
Jackson G.
Cooper P.
Victoria O.
Leah A.
Owen B.
Korissa V.
Jude M.
Lauren E.
Jessie L.
Clark C.
Jesse V.
Carter E.

Our Sympathies Go Out To...

Janet Berlet on the death of her mother
Tom Smith on the death of his wife, Nancy Smith
The family of Antoinette Hicks
Tim Jones on the death of his father
Diane Horner Harris on the death of her aunt
Angie Kiefer on the death of her aunt
Eileen Flege on the death of her sister
The family of John Dissel
Agnes Biehle on the death of her brother and sister
Judy Miller on the death of her sister-in-law
Sharon Holt on the death of her aunt
Glenn Cromer on the death of his wife, Norma Cromer
Cathy Sieber on the death of her mother
The family of Gordon Stout
The family of Clara Reagan



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Our parish finances are currently on budget. Even though our weekly income is still down due to Covid-19 (7.5% behind budget or -\$61,000), our total income is still on budget because of our successful Basket/Grand Raffle last summer. Our expenses were at \$834k versus a budget of \$936k (we are underspending by about 11% as of January 31). Of course, we always stick to a very tight budget and would never spend more than we have. But we are being even more cautious this year because of lower weekly income due to the virus. This summer we are planning another Basket Bonanza/Grand Raffle/Online Auction event in lieu of a large festival. We are hoping that we can add food or games, but at this point we just don't know how things will look in early August. If you are interested in donating to the online auction or basket bonanza, please see the information on our website. And mark your calendar for August 6-7-8 when our "festival lite" will take place. All of our baskets, raffle tickets and auction items will be available online as well as an in-person viewing of the Basket Bonanza. We will draw all winners on Sunday, August 8th online.

Even though we are not doing any major updates on campus yet this year, we have utilized some of our excess income from last year by updating lighting in the church, finishing the HVAC project in the Center and re-striping the parking lot. We are hoping that at the end of our current fiscal year we will be able

to afford to replace the upper Favret Hall roof and reseal and protect the stained glass windows there. Last year we created a "Wish List" for parishioners who would like to give toward a specific project. You can find that wish list on our parish website! We have had many donations to our wishlist this year and we are extremely thankful to the parishioners who have been able to step up in this way.

In this time of Lent, we ask that you not only "give up" but also "give to". Please consider spending some time volunteering in your community and spreading as much kindness as possible! And, let's all pray for each other. As a parish community, we can pray for fellow parishioners on a daily basis. I do this every day and I would love to know that we are all praying for each other. It is an important part of parish life to support each other in prayer! God bless each of you; you are a gift to our parish. Thank you for helping us get through a year of COVID restrictions. We just could not have done it without your support. Our parishioners are amazing!



JOAN SEIBENICK
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

UPCOMING DATES ON THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR

**FRIDAY, MARCH 19: THE SOLEMNITY OF JOSEPH,
SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 25: THE ANNUNCIATION OF
THE LORD**

SUNDAY, MARCH 28: PALM SUNDAY

THURSDAY, APRIL 1: HOLY THURSDAY

FRIDAY, APRIL 2: GOOD FRIDAY

SATURDAY, APRIL 3: EASTER VIGIL

SUNDAY, APRIL 4: EASTER SUNDAY



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