

HOLY WEEK

PALM SUNDAY

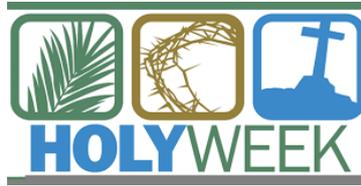
MAUNDY THURSDAY

GOOD FRIDAY

HOLY SATURDAY

EASTER SUNDAY

A week of reflection as we journey with Christ



Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday. It ends on Easter Sunday.



What is Palm Sunday? Entrance into Jerusalem (RED)

Every day of Holy Week is one step on a spiritual pilgrimage, and Palm Sunday is the day that pilgrimage begins, when Christians commemorate Jesus' 'triumphal entry' into Jerusalem where the Gospels tell us he was greeted with crowds waving palm branches and crying

'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'
(Mark 11:9-10).

(Ironically, these same voices that greet Jesus as Messiah and King will be the same voices that shout 'Crucify him!' just a few short days later on Good Friday.)

Palm Sunday takes place one week before Easter and commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Christians carry blessed palm branches into church, symbolising the crowd's welcoming gesture as Jesus rode into the city on a donkey. The Gospel readings recount the story of Jesus' death and Passion, inviting us to reflect on his sacrificial love and the profound significance of Holy Week. You can reflect on this passage by reading the Gospel of Mark 11:1-11.

How to Observe Palm Sunday

Celebrating Palm Sunday begins with a uniquely powerful experience of Mass. This particular Mass includes two incredible readings from the Gospels. As Mass begins, we hear the account of Jesus triumphantly entering Jerusalem on a donkey and being praised by massive crowds. It is a special opportunity to begin a spiritual pilgrimage toward Easter.

Then, during the Liturgy of the Word, we dive into the entire Passion account. Many parishes present this account in an interactive format: the priest reads Jesus' lines, lectors narrate and read the parts of many characters, and everyone in the pews/seats reads the part of the crowd. As you listen, place yourself there in the story. Imagine the sights and sounds. Who do you resonate with? What words or phrases stick out to you? It is a particularly long reading, so try to focus on the one thing God is trying to say to you. At Palm Sunday Mass, you'll also receive blessed palm branches. Many people keep these palm branches all year, using them as a religious decoration in their home or weaving them into a cross shape. Since palm branches are a blessed item, they should not be thrown in the bin.



What is the Chrism Mass?

The word *Christ* means *Anointed One*. Many of the most significant moments in the life of a Catholic are marked by a special anointing. For instance, the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders and Anointing of the Sick all use sacred oil to symbolise our union with Jesus and the outpouring of his grace.

All of that oil is set apart, blessed and distributed at the Chrism Mass.

Many dioceses celebrate the Chrism Mass on Tuesday, Wednesday, or the morning of Holy Thursday. During the Chrism Mass, the Oil of the Sick (used during the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick), the Oil of Catechumens (used during the Sacrament of Baptism), and the Chrism oil are consecrated by the Bishop. Large vessels of oils are carried to the altar for the blessings and consecration of Chrism, which is a mixture of oil and balsam. After Mass the oils are distributed to representatives of each parish. The oils are taken back to the parishes and used for the Sacraments throughout the year.

But that's not all. Another important moment of the Chrism Mass is that every priest within the diocese renews his priestly promise. We're also invited to pray for all priests and their ministry.

MONDAY (PURPLE)

What happened on Monday of Holy Week?

As you continue your pilgrimage through Holy Week, Monday is an opportunity to slow down and reflect on the humanity of Jesus.

On this day, Jesus entered the temple, made a whip out of chords, flipped the tables of money changers, and drove them out of the sacred space. Many people relate to this moment in Jesus' life because it reveals that he too felt the very human emotion of anger. Anger is a natural and normal part of our human makeup. There are times when anger should be expressed and expressed powerfully. But they are rare. Like any passion, for anger to be useful it has to be harnessed, controlled, and directed at will.

Monday of Holy Week is a great time to consider a few key questions:

- What anger and resentment are you carrying around in your daily life?
- How do you process your anger—in a healthy or unhealthy way?
- What would your life look like if you could channel your anger into productive and decisive action?

A Prayer for Monday of Holy Week

Jesus,

Thank you for the vast array of feelings and emotions that you allow me to experience. Teach me to release any resentment that is lingering in my heart and help me to express my anger in a healthy way. When I notice injustice, give me the courage and boldness to do something about it.

Amen.

What happened on Tuesday of Holy Week?

Tuesday was a busy day for Jesus and the disciples. So much happened on this day, including Jesus calling out the Pharisees, teaching by the fig tree, and preaching extensively on the Mount of Olives.

But perhaps the most powerful moment occurred that night. After a long day, Jesus and the disciples went to Bethany to stay the night. There, a woman named Mary anointed Jesus with oil. The disciples are frustrated that such an expensive oil was used when the money it was worth could have been given to the poor. But Jesus responds with incredible gratitude and expresses his appreciation for Mary's tender love and care.

Tuesday of Holy Week is a great time to consider:

- Who and what am I most grateful for in my life?
- How often do I express my appreciation for those people and experiences?
- What would happen in my life if I lived every day from the perspective of gratitude?

TUESDAY (PURPLE)

A Prayer for Tuesday of Holy Week

Lord,

Thank you for all the ways you bless me, those I am aware of and all those I am still oblivious to. The Scriptures show me that from the beginning you have desired friendship with humanity. Help me to know and believe that just as you yearned for friendship with Adam and Eve; Abraham, Moses and Noah; Ruth, Esther, Rachel and Mary; you desire a powerful friendship with me. Give me a spirit full of gratitude and a passion for prayer so together we can foster a beautiful friendship.

Amen.

HOLY WEDNESDAY (PURPLE)

What happened on Wednesday of Holy Week?

Wednesday of Holy Week is often called *Spy Wednesday*. Why? Because this is the day Judas Iscariot spies on Jesus, secretly plotting to have him arrested.

On this day, Judas goes to the chief priests and asks them how much money they'd be willing to give him if he turned Jesus in. Thirty pieces of silver is enough for him to turn on Jesus, all of the disciples, and the future he had with a life of faith.

Wednesday of Holy Week is a powerful opportunity to reflect on the following:

- Where in my life have I experienced betrayal or a violation of trust?
- Am I holding onto that pain or have I invited Jesus into it?
- Where have I betrayed myself or lost the trust of others?
- How can I seek forgiveness and make amends?

Holy Wednesday is often marked with a service of *Tenebrae* (Latin for 'darkness' or 'shadows'), with the hearing of appropriate psalms and other readings while candles on a candelabrum (the 'Tenebrae hearse') are gradually extinguished, creating the sense of growing darkness.

This darkness symbolises the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples, and anticipates the anguish and tragedy of Good Friday later on in Holy Week.

A Prayer for Wednesday of Holy Week

Jesus, help me to love like you.

There are so many obstacles that get in the way of loving like you: my selfishness and insecurities; my pride and unwillingness to forgive; my anger and envy; my greed and laziness. Fill me with the grace to pray more than ever before in my life, and cast these obstacles aside so that each day I can love more and more like you.

I pray in a special way today for anyone who has been unjustly accused and punished for something they didn't do. Raise them above these painful circumstances and somehow keep their hearts from hardening with anger and resentment.

Amen.

What follows then are the 'Triduum' of Holy Week – Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.



HOLY THURSDAY / MAUNDY THURSDAY (WHITE)

What did Jesus do on his final night on earth? The Gospels are aligned. Jesus gathered together his closest friends for the Last Supper.

Thursday, we begin the Easter Triduum (pronounced Tri-du-um), the great three days. We follow the Jewish tradition of the day beginning with sunset. Thursday evening to Sunday evening - three days - the most sacred days of the Catholic faith.

We have to see the Triduum as one great liturgical act. We enter the liturgy on Thursday evening and do not leave till Easter. There is no dismissal that night. The priests leave in silence. On Friday there is no entrance rite and no dismissal. It is a kind of choreography, an incredible journey, full of dignity and grandeur. We remain there, no one is dismissed.

The Holy Thursday liturgy is often not well attended, but it is a vital part of this one liturgical act.

Jesus and his disciples are celebrating the Passover meal as they did every year. But now Jesus gives new meaning to the meal.

It begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper, commemorating the Last Supper celebrated by Jesus and his disciples on the Jewish holiday of Passover. It's not a Holy Day of Obligation, but we attend Mass. During this Mass, the priest washes the feet of some members of the parish in memory of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

But perhaps the most significant thing that happened on Holy Thursday was that Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

In the words of Saint Luke, “*And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, ‘I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.’ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’* And likewise the cup after supper, saying, ‘*This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*’” (Luke 22:14–16; 19-20)

Maundy Thursday services include an act of foot washing, which commemorates Jesus washing the feet of his disciples as an act of service on the night of his arrest (John 13:1-20). It is also the evening of his betrayal by his disciple Judas Iscariot, and his arrest at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Maundy Thursday reminds participants of the ‘new commandment’ (mandatum in Latin) that Jesus gave his disciples to love one another as he has loved them (John 15:12) – a love that is most readily seen in Jesus willingly giving up his life on the cross on Good Friday.

After the Holy Thursday liturgy, before going home, we pray in silence before the Blessed Sacrament, recalling his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Jesus was clear. “This is my Body. Eat it.” And “This is my Blood. Drink it.” “Do this in remembrance of me.” It’s not a symbol or a metaphor. It’s a clear and direct command. Jesus impresses upon his disciples that this is a sacred meal of his Body and Blood and that they should continue this practice after he is gone.

For over two thousand years, Catholics have taken Jesus at his word and obeyed the command he gave on his final night through the sacred ritual of the Mass.

A Prayer for Holy Thursday

Jesus,

Draw us nearer to you than ever before. Inspire us to spend time with you in the tabernacle. Fill us today with a whole new love and respect for the power of the Eucharist. Lord, take our miniscule understanding of what the Eucharist is and what it can do to a whole new level.

Jesus, help us realise what we are really hungry for in our lives today and give us the wisdom to realize that you want to feed our deepest needs with the Eucharist. Help us to remain close to you as we prepare for Easter. And bless us in ways unimaginable.

Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY (RED)



Good Friday commemorates Jesus’ trial before Pontius Pilate, his sentence of death, his torture, and his crucifixion and burial. It is called ‘good’ Friday in the obsolete sense of the word ‘good’ – connoting something ‘holy’ or ‘pious’ (‘Holy Friday’), which is striking as ‘Good Friday’ is the most sombre day for Christians, when the agony, death and burial of Jesus is remembered. Good Friday is the

day Jesus was tortured, mocked, crucified, and died. It was a day of incredible suffering and hatred—so why do we call it Good Friday?

It is a day of contrasts and of paradox, a day of contradictions.

It is a day of unparalleled evil but we strangely call it “Good”.

God came to earth so that we may go to heaven.

God became human so that we might become divine.

The Son of God became a slave so that we could be set free.

Jesus was rejected so that we might be accepted.

Jesus forgave so that we would forgive.

Jesus was convicted so that we might have conviction.

Jesus was sold so that we could be redeemed.

Jesus was hurt so that we could be healed.

Jesus was scourged – we were purged.

Jesus descended into hell so that might ascend to heaven.

Jesus was crowned with thorns that we might have the crown of eternal life.

The sky went dark so that we might see the light.

The earth shook so that we might be calm.

Jesus was condemned as guilty so that we might be found innocent.

Jesus carried his cross so that Satan’s plan would be crossed out.

Jesus heart was opened by a spear so that our hearts might be opened by love.

Jesus laid in a borrowed tomb for only three days.

This is a day of supreme contrasts, paradox and even contradiction.

Jesus suffered all those bad things, so that we might call

This Friday “Good”.

We call it Good Friday because the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus saved us from our sins. And even though it was an incredibly tragic day, it was one of the greatest days in history.

As it says in Isaiah, “*He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.*”

There is no path to happiness in this life unless you can make sense of suffering, and Christianity is the only religion or philosophy that understands the transformative value of suffering. While the whole world is doing everything it can to avoid and drown out their pain and suffering, we are reminded each Sunday at Mass that our pain and suffering have tremendous value when united to the pain and suffering of Jesus on the Cross.

Separated from Jesus, our pain and suffering become meaningless, and that is why life is so depressing for so many in a world that has rejected God and the idea that suffering has value. Willing sacrifice out of love is a path most people have never tried. And it is a path that is essential if we are going to find our way back to thriving in this world.

How to Observe Good Friday

Although there is no Mass, many people still visit their church to attend a service. For many Christians, Good Friday is a day of fasting, with the faithful attending a church

service where they will meditate on and venerate the cross of Christ. One powerful way to remember Good Friday is by maintaining silence throughout the day, especially between 12 pm and 3 pm (when Jesus was on the Cross).

A Prayer for Good Friday

What was Jesus hoping to achieve by dying on a cross? What gave him courage and perseverance to go through with it? There are many answers, but consider this: he hoped his life and death would change what people placed at the centre of their lives.

- What's at the centre of your life? Money, sex, food, drugs, shopping, image, ego, social media, your phone—or the love of God?

This Good Friday, let the death of Jesus rearrange your priorities like never before. Start by taking some time in prayer, reflecting on how he might be inviting you to bring him more fully into the centre of your life:

Jesus,

You give and take according to our needs and your wisdom. On this dark day you laid down your life to give us all a fresh start, a new beginning, and a never-ending stream of marvellous grace and beautiful mercy.

Give us the wisdom, Jesus, to use the minds you gave us to think for ourselves; teach us to develop and listen to our conscience; fill us with courage to stand up for justice and do exactly what you are calling us to do.

When we suffer ourselves, help us to offer that suffering to you. Teach us to carry our cross, remind us to go to you with our pain, and re-energize us with hope when we are ready to give up.

Jesus, today on Good Friday, we pray for anyone who is suffering physically. We ask you to fill them with the rare grace necessary to see and experience suffering as a way to get closer to you. We pray for all those we have wronged in our lives, and for those who have wronged us. We also pray in a special way for everyone who will die today. Hold them in their transition from this life to the next, and comfort their loved ones as you comforted and consoled so many people while you walked on the earth.

Amen.

HOLY SATURDAY (PURPLE)



The Triduum of Holy Week concludes with Holy Saturday which is a day of preparation for Easter and often with a late-night Easter Vigil service, which is really two parts. First, a liturgy that recalls the vigil, the 'keeping watch' of Jesus' female disciples at the tomb of Jesus, which begins in darkness where a new paschal or Easter fire is kindled. When night falls, the Church officially begins its first Easter Celebration at the Easter Vigil Mass and is followed by the joyous celebration of the first Eucharist of Easter, which will often include the baptism of new converts and the renewal of baptismal vows by the faithful.

Holy Week moves from the enthusiastic shouts of 'Hosanna' to the sombreness of Holy Wednesday and Maundy Thursday, to the horrors of the agony and death of Jesus on Good Friday, to the joyous celebration of the first Eucharist of Easter.

It is an emotional week for Christians, but one that anticipates the hope and glory of the resurrection of Christ at Easter, which is at the heart of the Christian Gospel and the centre of Christian faith and worship.

A Prayer for Holy Saturday

The most dominant emotion in our modern society is fear. We are afraid of losing the things we have worked hard to buy, afraid of rejection and failure, afraid of certain types of people, afraid of criticism, of suffering and heartache, of change, afraid to tell people how we really feel.

What was the dominant emotion of Jesus' followers on Holy Saturday? Fear. Fear that they had been misled. Fear that God didn't have a plan. Fear that God had forgotten them.

We all have fears, too. And sometimes, we let those fears paralyse us.

Today, on Holy Saturday, take a few moments to reflect on the fears that are stopping you from living your dreams, the fears that are making it hard for you to trust fully in God, and pray for the courage to overcome those fears:

Jesus,

You are courage incarnate. As you hung on the cross for my sins and the sins of the world, you showed me that all things are possible. You knew that life did not end on the cross. It was only the beginning of a new and glorious eternal life.

Jesus, there are areas of my life that make me feel stuck. There are areas of my life I feel like you have forgotten. There are things I have asked for for years, and it seems that you have no answer. I bring all of these things to you today, and I ask you to renew my trust that you have a plan for all of it.

Fill me with courage, Jesus. And give me strength to face all of the difficulties and uncertainties of this life with hope in your wonderful dream for my life.

Amen.

EASTER VIGIL (WHITE)



The Easter Vigil is a Mass celebrated on Holy Saturday. It begins with a bonfire outside the church, where everyone lights a candle. Mass attendees then process inside the church, filling the dark church with light.

The Easter Vigil is sometimes multiple hours long because the Mass includes a number of special readings from the Old Testament that foreshadow Jesus' death and Resurrection. If the parish has any new catechumens (people who are entering the Catholic Church), oftentimes they will receive their Baptism, First Communion, or Confirmation at the Easter Vigil.

EASTER SUNDAY (WHITE)



Easter Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus' Resurrection. It is the most important day in history. The whole world changed on Easter Sunday. It was an earth-shattering, life changing, historic event, and the ultimate proof that Jesus truly is God. Catholics have been celebrating Easter Sunday for over 2,000 years.

How to Celebrate Easter

Easter is not just a one-day celebration; it's an entire season! The time of celebration begins on Easter Sunday and goes all the way through to Pentecost.

As Catholics, the one thing we do more than anything else is celebrate. We celebrate life, death, new life, and eternal life. We celebrate education, innovation, discovery, love, truth, beauty, goodness, forgiveness, reconciliation, unity, family, and new life. We are a people of celebration. And here's the thing—you become what you celebrate. If you celebrate death and destruction, you will become death and destruction. If you celebrate life and creativity, you will become life and creativity. The Church's constant invitation is to celebrate the right things with great vigour, enthusiasm, and regularly.

There are many ways to celebrate Easter. The world celebrates with chocolate eggs, the Easter Bunny, and parties. While Catholics might join in on these festivities, that's not where the celebration ends. First and foremost, Catholics celebrate Easter by attending Mass on Easter Sunday or the Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday.

A Prayer for Easter Sunday

What is it in your life that needs to be resurrected this Easter? Perhaps it's a relationship, maybe it's your personal finances, perhaps it's your health, or maybe it's your career or spirituality. Bring it all to Jesus in prayer on Easter and you'll be amazed at how he fills you with new life!

Jesus,

Unleash the power of the Resurrection in my life today. Resurrect the area of my life that needs it today. Help me to stop resisting your grace, stay out of your way, and let you work in me and through me in whatever ways you want. Jesus, you have conquered death and hatred with love. Teach me to do the same in some small way in my own life. Give me the courage to love when I feel rejected, ignored, unappreciated, forgotten, and taken for granted.

Thank you, Jesus. Thank you. I pray I never let a day pass without these words crossing my lips. Jesus, on this Easter we pray for all those who have lost faith in you, and for anyone who has never encountered you in a way that allowed them to embrace you.

May the power of your Resurrection reignite faith in my life, in the lives of all those I love, and in the lives of the entire Church. Amen.



Holy Week

A GUIDE TO HOLY WEEK'S LITURGICAL COLOURS

Many colours, many meanings

"Holy Thursday a white day or a red day?"

"What colour should I wear on Good Friday?"

If you've asked yourself one of these questions, or many related questions, in the past few days, you're not alone. During Holy Week, Catholics use three different colours liturgically: red, purple, and white. Below is a quick guide to these colours, which days they're associated with, and what they symbolize.

Red: Palm Sunday & Good Friday

On Palm Sunday, celebrants wear red.

Used twice during Holy Week (Palm Sunday and Good Friday), red is associated with passion and love in the world at large. Red is the liturgical colour for exactly this reason, to help drive home the point that Jesus loved us to death -- and beyond.

The two times that we read the Lord's Passion in its entirety are Palm Sunday and Good Friday, so it's no coincidence that the liturgical colour these two days is red. Also associated with feast day of martyrs (those who witness to our Catholic faith to the point of giving their lives), the red liturgical colour on these two days symbolizes the blood shed by Jesus.

Purple

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of Holy Week all use the Lenten colour of purple. These days are the regular Lenten days and so get the regular Lenten colour, symbolizing the penance we are undergoing in preparation for Easter.

On Holy Thursday, celebrants wear white

White: Holy Thursday & Easter Vigil/Sunday

***Did you know Lent officially ends on Holy Thursday?**

On Holy Thursday, our mood turns celebratory as we poignantly celebrate the Last Supper the day before we commemorate Jesus' death on Good Friday, a day with no Mass. Holy Thursday is the day we dust the Gloria off and represent it to Catholic communities world wide, singing triumphantly the song of praise and glory to God that we have not sung together in weeks. And of course, on Easter we joyously and triumphantly celebrate the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, singing "death, where is your sting?" Jesus reigns and we celebrate! So the liturgical colour of white symbolizes joy, triumph, and glory.

****note: we don't end our fasting after Lent ends, but instead enter into the Triduum fast as we continue and intensify our preparation for Easter.***

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

(IN ADDITION TO USUAL MASS TIMES)

29
MAR

PALM SUNDAY

31
MAR

RELAXED LENTEN SERVICE

6.30PM @ ST THOMAS MORE

2
APR

MAUNDY THURSDAY (NO A.M. MASS)

8PM WASHING OF THE FEET AND THE LORD'S SUPPER

3
APR

GOOD FRIDAY (NO MASSES)

WALK OF WITNESS

- 11AM MAIDENHEAD (FROM SAINSBURY'S PIAZZA)
- 11.30AM COOKHAM (FROM ST JOHN THE BAPTIST)

3PM SOLEMN LITURGY FOR GOOD FRIDAY

4
APR

HOLY SATURDAY (NO MASSES)

10AM ŚWIĘCONKA: BLESSING OF EASTER BASKETS
(ST JOSEPH'S)

8PM EASTER VIGIL

5
APR

EASTER SUNDAY

USUAL MASS TIMES

WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR VICTORY? WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?

THE STING OF DEATH IS SIN, AND THE POWER OF SIN IS THE LAW.

**BUT THANKS BE TO GOD,
WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

1 CORINTHIANS 15:55-57