

Saint you.” in
memorial of the last



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SAINT MARY HIGH SCHOOL THEOLOGY 10- PERIOD DMR. MONCADA" THE EASTER TRIDUUM" By: ELIZABETH KENSEK JANUARY 8, 2018 Easter is the most important holiday in the Catholic church. This Christian holiday celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ which occurred on the third day after His crucifixion and death on the cross.

The three days prior to Easter are known as the Easter Triduum. The Latin word "triduum" refers to "a period of three consecutive days and has been used to describe many three-day periods that prepare for a feast day through liturgy, prayer, and fasting" (Ignatius Insight). These include Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday, which is also known as the Easter Vigil. The General Norms for the Liturgical Year states that the Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, "reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday" (Paragraph 19). The Triduum begins with Holy Thursday. The traditional English name for this day, "Maundy Thursday," comes from the Latin phrase, "Mandatum novum," meaning "a new command." The day starts with the evening mass of the Lord's Supper.

The gospel reading that is said at the mass is from the Book of John and depicts Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, showing that He is human and divine, but is still merciful to God. In the mass, the "persona Christi," which is Latin for "in the person of Christ," will wash the feet of parishioners and churchgoers to symbolize Jesus washing the feet of His Apostles. In the early hours of Holy Thursday, and in some cases earlier in the week, the bishop celebrates the Chrism Mass, which focuses on priesthood and the public

renewal of their promises to faithfully fulfill their duty as priests (Catholic Education).

Along with the washing of the Apostles feet, Jesus offers himself to us during the Last Supper. He breaks the bread and passes the cup around the table for the Apostles to eat and drink “ in remembrance of him.” He tells the Apostles to, “ Take this, all of you and eat of it, for this is my body, which will be given up for you.

” In memorial of the last meal Jesus had with his disciples, Holy Thursday reminds the faithful of the gift of the priesthood, the offering Jesus gave to us of his Body and Blood, and the overwhelming love that the Lord has for the world and all the people in it (Catholic. org). The second day of the Triduum is Good Friday. This is the first full day of the Easter Triduum. It is dedicated to the Passion and death of Jesus Christ for us. On Good Friday, Jesus was betrayed by Judas on the night of the Last Supper. After His arrest, Jesus was sent to Pontius Pilate, who questioned Him but found no reason to condemn Him.

Pilate declared Jesus to be innocent, but the crowds were angry. To prevent rioting, Pilate agreed to execute Jesus and sentenced him to crucifixion. Jesus was convicted of blasphemy, calling himself “ The King of the Jews” (Catholic. org). Before his crucifixion, Jesus was stripped of his clothing and given a crown of thorns. After, He was forced to carry his cross to the place of His death, Golgotha, also known as Calvary.

During his walk to the site of His crucifixion, Jesus fell three times and had food and objects of hatred thrown at him. After His arrival at Golgotha, Jesus

was nailed to the cross and crucified. During Christ's last few hours on the cross, darkness fell over the whole land.

Before His death, Jesus spoke His last words, " My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22). At the moment of Christ's death, an earthquake shattered the ground and lightning crackled in the sky. Following His death, Jesus' body was removed from the cross and laid in a tomb, covered by a large boulder to prevent anyone from entering (Catholic. org). The events of Good Friday are used in the Stations of the Cross, " a fourteen-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on Earth as a man" (Catholic. org). Good Friday is a day of fasting within the Church.

Usually, churches are silent and altars are barren. According to " The Easter Triduum: Entering into the Paschal Mystery": " There are traditionally no masses or celebrations on Good Friday. The liturgy of the Lord's Passion consists of three parts: the liturgy of the Word, the veneration of the Cross, and the reception of Communion. Although Communion is given and received, this liturgy is not a Mass; this practice dates back to the earliest years of the Church and is meant to emphasize the somber, mournful character of the day" (Ignatius Insight).

Good Friday is meant to remember Jesus Christ dying for our sins and saving us so that we may be restored to eternal life. The third and final day of the Triduum is Holy Saturday. The ancient Church celebrates Holy Saturday with fasting to prepare for the celebration of Easter. After sundown, the Christians would have a vigil, which concludes with baptism and Eucharist at dawn. The same idea is found in the Easter Vigil today, which is the highpoint of the

Easter Triduum and is filled with many readings, symbols, much ceremony, and sacraments (Catholic Education). The Easter Vigil, the Church states, ranks "the mother of all vigils" (General Norms, 21). Being a vigil, it is the time of anticipation, fasting, and preparation. Usually, when preparing for something during the liturgical seasons, it takes place at night.

It starts after nightfall and finishes right before Easter morning, meaning it begins and ends in darkness. This means that once Christ has resurrected, we will no longer be in darkness, but in the light. It consists of four general parts: the Service of Light, the Liturgy of the Word, Christian Initiation, and Liturgy of the Eucharist (Ignatius Insight). The Service of Light begins outdoors and in darkness.

A fire is lit and blessed, and the Paschal candle, which symbolizes the light of Christ, is lit from the fire by the priest. The symbolism of the light removing the darkness and life overcoming death make up the Easter Vigil. The Paschal candle is placed in the sanctuary, usually near the altar, during the Easter season. After, it will be kept by the baptismal fount so that when someone receives the sacrament of baptism, the candles of the baptized can be lit from it (Ignatius Insight).

Once inside, the priest or deacon will begin reading. The readings vary, beginning with the Creation and concluding with the angel telling Mary Magdalene and others that Jesus has resurrected from the dead. Some of the readings are focused on baptism, the sacrament which makes man in communion with God. After the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Word, catechumens, or the people who have never been baptized, and candidates,

or the people who have been baptized but in a different, non-Catholic Christian denomination, are initiated into the Church by the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. The followers are then sprinkled with holy water and will renew their baptismal vows (Catholic Education). The Easter Vigil ends with the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the reception of the Body and Blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This day is all about the anticipating and waiting for the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Catholic. org).

Finally, after the conclusion of the Triduum, we are met with the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter Sunday. As said in the Gospels, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day, following His crucifixion and death on the cross. His resurrection symbolizes the triumph of good over evil, sin, and death. This event is proof that those who trust in God and accept that Jesus Christ is our only Savior will be raised from the dead and brought to eternal life with God in Heaven (Catholic. org). Since Easter represents the fulfillment of God's promises to mankind, it is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar. " Therefore Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the " Feast of feasts," the " Solemnity of solemnities," just as the Eucharist is the " Sacrament of sacraments" (CCC 303).

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