

Journey of Faith



The Meaning of Holy Week

It was the last week before Mrs. Evans' RCIA class would enter the Church. Mrs. Evans was going over everything that would happen that week.

"I don't get it," Terrence said, raising his hand. "Why do we call it Good Friday if it's the day Jesus died? Shouldn't it be Bad Friday?"

"Jesus' death was bad," Mrs. Evans said, nodding. "But why he died wasn't. In fact, Jesus' death was the most amazing act of love anyone could have imagined! Jesus died to save us. All of us in this room and everyone in the world. That is very, very good."





How are you feeling about your decision to join the Church?

Do you have any questions about Holy Week?



What can you do to greet Jesus when he comes to you at the Easter Vigil?

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday, also discussed in lesson E2, is also called "Passion Sunday." During Palm Sunday Mass, we hear two Gospel stories. The first story tells us about Jesus' joyous entry into Jerusalem. The second is about how Jesus was betrayed, arrested, and crucified. This is called the passion of Jesus.

Hurray for the King!

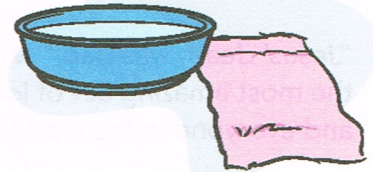
Jesus entered Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. Every year, Jewish people gathered to remember when Moses led the Israelites from slavery to freedom. When the people heard that Jesus was coming, they went out to meet him. They spread their coats on the road and waved palm branches. They shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, [even] the king of Israel" (John 12:13). Jesus entered riding on a donkey because the Bible said that's how the king would enter.



Holy Thursday

The Last Supper is celebrated on **Holy Thursday**. Jesus did two important things at the **Last Supper**:

Jesus tied a towel around his waist and washed the feet of his disciples. Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet. But Jesus replied, "Do you realize what I have done for you?...If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:12-14). Jesus set an example for his apostles and for us. He wanted us to understand that our job is to serve others.





How can you serve others this week?

Then, at the Passover meal, Jesus gave himself to us in the form of bread and wine! He said, "This is my body" over the bread and "this is my blood" over the wine (Matthew 26:26–30, Mark 14:22–24). He also said, "Do this in memory of me" (Luke 22:19). This was the first Eucharist.



Do you think of Jesus before meals?

The Passion Story

After the feast, Jesus led his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. While there, some soldiers came and arrested Jesus. Pontius Pilate told the soldiers to beat him and crucify him. The soldiers made fun of Jesus. They took off his clothes and dressed him in a robe, the kind a king would wear. Then they put a crown of thorns on his head. After they tortured him, they led him away. Jesus carried his cross all the way to Calvary, where he was put to death.



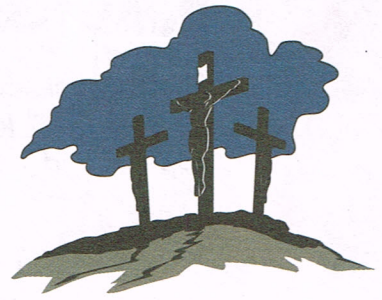
Why do you think no one stood up for Jesus or helped him?

How can you stand up for others when you see them being hurt or bullied?

Good Friday

Good Friday is a sad but important day for the Church. There is no Mass, but the church service tells the story of Jesus' death again.

Three times we hear, "This is the wood of the cross, on which hung the Savior of the world." Three times we answer, "Come, let us adore him." Then we **venerate**, or honor, the cross by kneeling next to, touching, or kissing it. We leave the church in silence because there is nothing left to say. Jesus said—and did—it all.



How can you honor Jesus' cross at home?

Holy Saturday

During the day on **Holy Saturday**, the church is silent and the altars are bare. We prepare for the Easter sacraments by praying and fasting. At sunset, the whole Church gathers to celebrate the Easter Vigil.

The **Easter Vigil** begins at the door, where the Easter candle is lit and carried into the church. We all light our smaller candles from the one flame that represents Christ. Light fills the whole church. We sing "Alleluia!" We hear Scripture readings that show us how God has been saving us from the beginning of time. Finally, we listen to the resurrection story.

After the readings, everyone becoming Catholic receives the sacraments. If you haven't been baptized yet, you will be baptized. Then everyone will be confirmed. Later in the Mass, you will receive the Eucharist with the rest of the congregation for the first time.



How will you celebrate the resurrection and becoming Catholic this year?



READ TOGETHER

Read a version of the resurrection story with your family (Matthew 28:1–10, Mark 16:1–7, Luke 24:1–12). Imagine you're visiting the empty tomb. You think Jesus has died, but an angel appears and says he has risen.

Take turns sharing how you feel. What would you do or say?

In Short



- During Holy Week, we follow the events of Jesus' passion through his resurrection.
- Palm Sunday and the Easter Triduum mark the main events of Holy Week.
- Jesus wants us to share the good news of his resurrection with others.

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