

Liturgical Living: Holy Week



Palm Sunday is March 29 this year, and it marks the beginning of Holy Week. On this day, we recall Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, just days before he was to die.

Are you familiar with the Catholic tradition of spring cleaning your house on **Holy Monday, Holy Tuesday** and **Holy Wednesday**?

According to an ancient tradition, the three days after Palm Sunday are devoted in many countries to a thorough cleaning of the house, the most vigorous of the whole year. Carpets, couches, armchairs, and mattresses are carried into the open and every speck of dust beaten out of them. On Wednesday night everything has to be back in place, ready for the great feast.

Holy Wednesday is also known as Spy Wednesday. Being the day before the Last Supper is celebrated, Holy Wednesday recalls the plotting of Judas Iscariot (Judas being the "spy") to hand Jesus over to the authorities.

Holy Thursday officially marks the end of Lent and the start of the Triduum (the holiest days of the year). The Holy Thursday begins after sundown and commemorates the Last Supper with a traditional washing of the feet.

At the end of Holy Thursday Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is processed to a "tabernacle of repose," symbolizing Jesus' journey from the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane. While in the Garden, Jesus asks Peter, James, and John to "watch and pray" with Him. Typically, the faithful "keep watch" at the tabernacle of repose following Mass.

Good Friday is a somber remembrance of Jesus' crucifixion and death on the cross. It is a day of fasting and penance. If you go to church on Good Friday, you will notice that the tabernacle is open and empty. We do not celebrate the Mass on Good Friday, as the Holy Communion that is distributed was consecrated on Holy Thursday. Each person will also come forward to venerate the cross at this service.

Holy Saturday is when we celebrate the Easter Vigil Mass, which is the highpoint of the liturgical year. Rejoice, He is Risen! He is Risen, indeed!