



From the Desk of Father Justin

Here we are: the start of Holy Week - Palm Sunday.

Today's bulletin article will be a short smorgasbord of Holy Week and Easter-related trivia/updates that you may not be aware of. Otherwise, may the sacredness of the season be with you and I sincerely hope to see you between Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday at some point!

-Father Justin

- Your Lenten sacrifice is valid until sundown (4:00 PM or so) on Holy Thursday. Bear in mind that Good Friday is a major day of fasting, so strive to eat a small amount of food... and of course say no to meat. Suffer a little bit in your life and join Christ on the cross for Good Friday. Don't worry - you'll probably make up those calories on Sunday!
- All ordinary church business will continue, but in a minimal way, between Palm Sunday and Wednesday of Holy Week. All ordinary church business will end on the morning Holy Thursday, apart from life-or-death sacramental emergencies. Between Holy Thursday and Easter Sunday, I will meet no one for marriage prep, spiritual direction, or matters of administration. I will not return phone calls or emails, and I will not hear any confessions prior to Sunday. That means that there will NOT be confessions available on Holy Saturday at 3:00 PM. However, I will resume my usual 7:00 AM confession time on Easter Sunday. Once we begin Holy Thursday, we are called to focus all our attention on the mystery of faith. All ordinary business must be put on hold, out of respect for the holiest part of our year.
- At the end of Mass on Holy Thursday, we will repose Jesus in the school's library. We will keep the main doors of the church open from that time until 9:15 when Deacon Kurt will lead Night Prayer. We will lock the church at that time, and we'll unlock the church on Good Friday at noon. You'll be free to enter the church for personal prayer between noon and our Good Friday service at 1:30. The church will be locked from late Friday afternoon until Saturday evening in preparation for the Easter Vigil which begins at 8:00.
- The period of Holy Thursday through the Easter Vigil is the only predictable time we ought to remove Jesus from the tabernacle in church. A Catholic church's worship space should never be absent of the presence of Christ. We do not remove him for anything short of an absolute necessity or emergency... aside from the Triduum of Holy Thursday through Holy Saturday. Christ is not a feature of the church to be included or removed at our whim. In fact, He is the very reason for the church in the first place!
- Our sacred oils are blessed or consecrated at the Chrism Mass on Tuesday of Holy Week. I will claim our oils then and reverently dispose of the old oil on Wednesday with some schoolkids.
- Holy Thursday and Good Friday are "extra" parts of Holy Week, and I encourage you to attend one or both of them. All able-bodied Catholics should certainly attend the Easter Vigil on Saturday or Easter Sunday Mass as their basic Sunday obligation.
- Good Friday's service is not a Mass: it's the Good Friday service. As that is the day we remember Jesus dead on the cross and placed in the tomb, it is the one day of the year that Mass is not celebrated. This contrast takes place all around the world, every year, without fail: it is a universal part of our Catholic faith.
- If things go perfectly, the congregation should consume all hosts of the tabernacle on Good Friday, where I am free to consecrate fresh hosts during Easter Saturday's vigil.
- Remember: if Christ is not in the tabernacle, a genuflection is not appropriate. We genuflect to our King: Jesus Christ. We do not genuflect to anything less, such as fancy gold box, an altar, or a person who's less than our king. Therefore, when he is absent (from the end of Mass on Holy Thursday to the conclusion of Mass on Holy Saturday), we should not genuflect to an empty box nor out of mindless habit. During this time, the appropriate act is to reverently bow toward the altar as a sign of basic respect.