

From the Rector eNotes, April 2025

Once again, we will soon arrive at the threshold of our most holy days.

We will begin with palms in our hands. The mood is downright joyful and expectant. It is quickly dashed by the shadow of the cross. As we flee from his side, those palms suddenly dissolve, along with our courage; we will hear the crowd chanting “crucify him, crucify him,” we might recognize our own voice among the clamors. At Tenebrae, we will learn to chant psalms of lament, the words preparing the soil of our heart like a long, steady rain. On a Maundy Thursday, we will see him, in our mind’s eye, take a towel and wrap it around his waist. He will bow down and take our feet, washing them clean. We will learn to do the same, because he has shown us how. As his body was stripped, beaten and tortured, we will strip the sanctuary. Psalm 22 slowly pounds the heavy air. The space will be bare, almost cold (are our hearts?); we try to keep vigil, we almost inevitably fall asleep. On a Good Friday, a cross will be carried in, nail holes speckle the wood. We will have a chance to kneel before it, kiss it, and give thanks for its power. Then we will wait. A great silence engulfing the entire creation. We will whisper our prayers in the Memorial Garden, near our beloved dead. We will wait some more. And then we will light a fire. We will hear the church sing a most ancient prayer “This is the night...” We will douse some catechumens with water, we will smear oil on heads, we will proclaim the hope of our lives: Christ is risen.



There is nothing like these holy days. They are weird and dark and startling and beautiful, and they point to truths we will spend our whole lives trying to grasp and live.

Last year, I wrote a note on my phone after Holy Week, trying to hold onto the sacred morsels of that week. The note includes:

Lunch provided for staff by thoughtful parishioner,
Flower Guild sharing a meal with a man who makes a bed in his car most nights,
a woman in the front pew with tears streaming down her face,
a server on his knees before the cross head bowed low,
communion in the home with the tumor afflicted,
droves at the foot washing, masses moving to venerate the cross,
hands trembling, heart bursting.

Each Holy Week, my life changes. I know that sounds dramatic, but it is true. My life changes, because it’s touched by the most important moments of Jesus’ life. Whenever

Jesus' life touches ours, whenever his life intersects with our lives, we see glimmers of what could be, of who we were created to be, who we might still yet become, of who we truly are. Each Holy Week, my life changes, because I see your faith and your hope and your anguish and your tears. I see the way we are made new in baptism and marked as Christ's own forever. I see how much we need God and how much God has given to us, how we are his "passion."

So do come, dear ones, to each liturgy in Holy Week – Palm Sunday, Tenebrae, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and the Easter Vigil. It is where we need to be, together, with our Lord. Come to the great procession of the palms, to the foot washing, to the altar stripped and bare, come to the cross and bow down, come to that new fire, see its blaze, see how Christ's love burns for you, come and be made new. Come and bear witness to the "really real" the "truly true" the "holiest of holies." Come and be near the One who gave up everything to be near you.

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