

St. Thomas

THE TRIDUUM — APRIL 14-16, 2022



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH

This stained glass is located in the St. Thomas the Apostle Nave.

THE SACRED PASCHAL TRIDUUM

Thursday of the Lord's Supper — April 14

Mass of the Lord's Supper – 7:00 pm

Friday of the Passion of the Lord — April 15

Celebration of the Passion of the Lord – 3:00 pm

Holy Saturday — April 16

The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night – 7:30 pm

The Sacred Paschal Triduum: *the three-day unitive celebration of the death and resurrection of the Lord. During these days, the Catholic Church ritualizes and commemorates the final days of Jesus' life – not to recreate history, but to recreate mystery.*

Each day of the Triduum leads into the next – making the entire celebration one large liturgy. This is why each day is a Holy Day of Obligation; as disciples, we are to remain vigilant and present through Christ's last day until His resurrection.

MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

This liturgy celebrates the institution of two Sacraments: Eucharist and Holy Orders – both means by which God continues to bring people more deeply into faith.

Jesus, being a Jew, celebrated Passover at the Last Supper. Passover is a weeklong celebration and ritual remembrance of God's covenantal promise to keep the faithful safe and protected. We *hear* this story in our Old Testament reading from Exodus; when Jewish families protected their first-born sons from death putting the blood of a lamb over their door. Symbols of our Jewish heritage are *seen* through a display in the Narthex under a chuppah (canopy), and through our use of unleavened Eucharistic bread for consecration.

Today we *act* on Christ's mandate to do as He did by participating in the Washing of Feet. This ritual action only takes place on Holy Thursday, making it a special moment to share with our faith community year after year — reminding us that Christ “has given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”

“This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 1 Corinthians 11:24b (NABRE)

FRIDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

On Good Friday, we journey with the Lord, the innocent servant of God, who has taken our sins upon Himself as He walks the path to Calvary.

Concluding the Holy Thursday liturgy we process the Blessed Sacrament out of the church to an Altar of Repose. Our community's space replicates a garden like Gethsemane, where we wait as disciples for our Savior to be taken and crucified for our sins. We also strip the main altar of the church, so that when we enter today, nothing grand is awaiting us at the altar — as today is not a Mass. We do not enter to music, and we *see* the presiders prostrate themselves before the bare altar. Our ritual *act* is the procession and adoration of the Holy Cross, an incredibly powerful moment in which we remember Jesus' walk on the Via Dolorosa up to Golgotha. We then purposefully walk up to the cross of Christ and acknowledge our humanity, our sinfulness, our imperfections; and thank God for the gift of the beloved Son.

The scripture accompanying our liturgy today requires us to *hear* the suffering servant. The Responsorial Psalm echoes Christ words on the cross — “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” — Jesus knew the time had come, that prophecies had been fulfilled, and God's incarnational work on earth was finished. While on the cross, Jesus gives His mother and the beloved disciple to one another. This challenges us to realize that Christ is still giving us one another to care for, and we do not get to choose who they are.

“When Jesus had taken the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.” John 19:30 (NABRE)

THE EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY NIGHT

Shattering the darkness, the great Paschal candle is lit with the Easter fire, five wax nails of incense are imbedded, and it becomes the symbol of the triumph of the crucified Christ.

It is in the light of the Paschal candle that the liturgy continues to unfold. We *see* the light of Christ brought into the church, and passed among the faithful who stood by Christ throughout the Triduum. We celebrate a new and eternal day, and so we begin by *hearing* the proclamation of the gift of light and life from the Book of Genesis. We then *hear* stories of our salvation history, bringing the life of God's people to tonight — where light has conquered darkness. Because Christ dies in an act of obedience and not as a result of sin, He has broken the link between sin and death.

By being baptized children of God, we bring the light of Christ into the world. We physically do this today through the *act* of passing the light. We also celebrate the initiation of new members to the church through baptism and share the new Easter flame with them; passing the light twice in one liturgy. What a glorious way to begin sharing the Good News. Alleluia!

“Then the angel said to the women in reply, ‘Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said.’” Matthew 28:5 (NABRE)

Sources:

2020 Sourcebook for Sundays, Seasons, and Weekdays. The Almanac for Pastoral Liturgy. Liturgical Training Publications: Chicago, IL. 2020.