

Adult Faith Formation

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To deepen our understanding
of our Faith and increase our
Love for God

April 2009

April Focus



Holy Week and Easter are here! During Holy Week the liturgies take on a more intense meaning of Christ's institution of the Holy Eucharist, His Suffering, Death and Resurrection. We have included explanations from several sources of different happenings during the liturgies of Holy Week. We hope these explanations help you enter more deeply into these liturgies. Attending all the Triduum services is a beautiful way to personally enter into the Paschal Mystery and to understand His love for us. Oh, how great is God's love for us.

*"Born for us, and for us given, Born a man like us below,
Christ as man with man residing, Lived the seed of truth to sow,
Suffered bitter death unflinching, And immortal love did show."*

Dictionary for the Laity

Hosanna—(Hebrew *hoshi'a na*: it means—save, we pray.) It is an exclamation used to give praise to God. In every Mass the word hosanna is said twice during the Sanctus at the end of the Preface. It is also repeatedly sung during the distribution of the palms, and the solemn procession on Palm Sunday.

Gloria In Excelsis Deo—(Latin - "Glory to God in the highest") **in ex-cel-sis**: in the highest degree.

Epiclesis—(Latin - *invocatio*) The prayer petitioning God to send the Holy Spirit so that the offerings at the Eucharist may become the Body and Blood of Christ and thus the faithful, by receiving them, may themselves become a living offering to God. In every sacrament, the prayer asking for the sanctifying power of God's Holy Spirit is an "epiclesis". CCC-Glossary. (*The physical action of the priest at the Epiclesis is to place both his hands over the gifts, and at this time a server will ring the bells.*)

Source—Webster's 4th edition Dictionary, CCC—Glossary, and www.newadvent.org

Washing of the Feet on Holy Thursday

This practice probably has its roots in the hospitality customs of ancient civilizations, especially when sandals were the norm in footwear. A host may have provided water for guests to wash their feet, may have served the guests by washing their feet, or even may have provided a servant to wash the feet of their guests. This is mentioned in several places in the Old Testament of the Bible e.g. Genesis 18:4, 19:2, 24:32, 43:24; and 1 Samuel 25:41. The Catholic practice of foot washing is done so on the basis of the authoritative example and command of Jesus as found in the Gospel of John 13:1-15.

The Roman Missal recommends that, if considered pastorally appropriate, the priest should, immediately after the homily, celebrate the rite of washing of the feet. Some men of the parish who have been selected, usually six, are seated in chairs in front of the altar. The priest goes to each and, with the help of the servers, pours water over each one's feet and dries them. The washing of the feet represents the service and charity of Christ, who came "not to be served, but to serve."

Regarding the question of washing the feet of men only, the following comments are from Fr. Jerry Pokorsky from ADOREMUS.ORG (Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy)

"The ritual of washing the feet of men suggests the strong connection between Christ's washing His Apostles feet and the institution of the Eucharist and Holy Orders.

Christ chose an occasion which was not open to all His followers, but only to those twelve men He had chosen and called as Apostles. We must conclude, then, that the ritual is intimately connected to the priesthood and the institution of the Eucharist. Its symbolism cannot be reduced to a general theme of service to the whole Church.

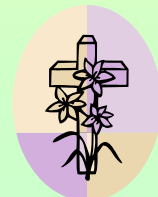
The Lord's example is given to those who would serve the people of God in His name, calling them to humility and self-abnegation in their priestly ministry. Hence, the ceremonial recalling of this act is liturgically related to the whole mystery of Holy Thursday -- to the priesthood and the Eucharist. To include women confuses this focus and obscures the theological meaning of these solemn acts.

Upcoming Events

- > **Palm Braiding**—Palm Sunday, April 5th—After the 8 AM and 10 AM Masses. Come Join Us!
- > **Divine Mercy Sunday**—April 19th, watch the bulletin for parish events being planned.
- > **Archdiocese Men's Conference**—Saturday, April 25th. For more info. go to www.ArchSPM.org/family then click on "men" or check out the flyer in back of church.

Parenting Tip of the Month

In this month of Holy Week and Easter how about taking your children on an Easter Egg Hunt? Have them research either books or the internet on how the egg became associated with Easter. They can also learn the various customs that have evolved over the centuries. A quick and short Easter Egg Hunt is in this newsletter. Do you see the Easter Egg in this column?



Pope Benedict XVI April Prayer Intentions

General: That the Lord may bless the farmers with an abundant harvest and sensitize the richer populations to the drama of hunger in the world.

Mission: That the Christians who work in areas where the conditions of the poor, the weak and the women and children are most tragic, may be signs of hope, thanks to their courageous testimony to the Gospel of solidarity and love.

Holy Thursday — The Stripping of the Altar, The Altar of Repose, and Adoration

The stripping of the altar marks a definite interruption in the Holy Sacrifice, which will not be celebrated again until Holy Saturday. The significance of this action recalls the Agony in the Garden, and the arrest and imprisonment of Jesus. Since the altar itself symbolizes Christ, the "stripping of the altar" symbolizes the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples. It shows that Jesus, at the time of His passion, yielded Himself up in utter humiliation into the hands of His enemies to be crucified (Phil. 2:6,7) and that at the crucifixion He was forcibly stripped of His garments, which the soldiers divided among them, as foretold in the twenty-first psalm. It is at this time that we are urged to turn from our old sinful actions and humble ourselves to be more conformable to Christ. This also represents the consequences of sin as a preparation for the celebration of new life and hope that is to come on Resurrection Day.

The Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament witnesses to the Church's esteem for Christ's Body present in the consecrated Host. It will remain "reposed" until the communion service on Good Friday. No Mass will be celebrated in the Church until the Easter Vigil proclaims the Resurrection

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament begins when the Eucharist is placed in an altar of repose. Silent adoration is encouraged by all the faithful as an answer to Christ's invitation "Could you not, then, watch one hour with me?" (Matt 26:40)

The Covering of the Crucifix

The veiling of the crucifix may have originated with the medieval custom of the "Lenten veil"—a curtain hung between the chancel and the nave as a sign of the Church's mourning for our Lord. Lent is a time of personal conversion and personal reflection on our interior lives. Veiling the Crucifix can be understood to be a visual fast, where we deprive ourselves of the consolation that its sight brings to our souls. Looking at the veiled crucifix can also remind us that our sins blind us to the love revealed in the Jesus' act of self-sacrifice. We can also see it as a reminder of why we need to cleanse ourselves of those sins, so that we are more worthy to behold the glorious Lord on Easter Sunday, when we will be renewed both physically and spiritually.

Friendly Defenders

Eucharist/Mass - *Transubstantiation*

Question #3: Jesus never said to eat his body.

Catholic Response: Sure he did. His words are crystal clear. At the Last Supper, Jesus said, "Take and eat; this is my body" and he also said...

Bible Verse: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

John 6:53-55

Description: During the Mass, we receive Jesus' real flesh and blood, presented under the appearance of bread and wine.

Related Verses: *Matthew 26:26-28, Luke 22:19, Acts of the Apostles 2:42-46*

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Good Friday — Priestly Prostration

Immediately after processing into the church on Good Friday, the priest prostrates himself (stretches out with face on the ground in adoration or submission) before the altar, recalling our Lord's total surrender of himself in his Passion. This prostration, an important rite of the Good Friday liturgy, is strictly observed – since it signifies both the abasement of "earthly man" and also the grief and sorrow of the Church this day. The priest is giving a sign of the primacy of Christ's love, not only in the life of the church, but in his own life personally as a priest. It also recalls the rite his of ordination and his commitment and total surrender to Christ. It is Christ's love and grace that gives life to the ministry. In his book, "Rise, Let Us Be On Our Way," Pope John Paul II makes a connection between the Lord's Passion and the rite of ordination. A powerful sign that the priest is a figure of Christ the Good Shepherd is when the priest, surrounded by his flock, once again makes a total surrender to the Good Shepherd, just as the Lord surrendered himself to the Father in the Passion.



*Happy Easter
Let us rejoice and be glad
for the Lord has Risen!*

*Congratulations to all who
receive a sacrament
this season of Easter!*



Easter Vigil — The Paschal Candle and the Exultet

The blessing of the "Paschal Candle", which is a column of wax of exceptional size, usually fixed in a great candlestick specially destined for that purpose, is a notable feature of the service on Holy Saturday. The blessing is performed by the deacon or priest. A long Eucharistic prayer, the "Exultet", is chanted by him, and in the course of this chanting the candle is first ornamented with five grains of incense and then lighted with the newly blessed fire. At a later stage in the service, during the blessing of the font, the same candle is plunged three times into the water with the words: May the power of the Holy Spirit come down into the fullness of this fountain. From Holy Saturday until Ascension Day the paschal candle is left with its candlestick in the sanctuary, standing upon the Gospel side of the altar, and it is lighted for the Masses during that timeframe. It is extinguished after the Gospel on Ascension Day and is then removed. For the remainder of the church year the Paschal Candle is lit only for baptisms and funerals.

Source—www.newadvent.org