

RCIA HO Class 27 Holy week liturgies

Holy Week, the week that leads up to Easter Sunday, includes several liturgies, which many of us are unable to attend due to other obligations. Though we may not have the opportunity to participate, it is helpful to know a bit about each of these liturgies in order that we may better understand the great Feast of the Resurrection (Easter Sunday).

The three days, which immediately precede Easter Sunday, are referred to as the “*Triduum*” (pronounced TRID oo uhm), from the Latin word meaning “a three-day period”. On Holy Thursday, the first of the three days, two important Masses are offered. The first, known as the “**Chrism Mass**”, is so called because the oils which are used in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, and the Sacrament of Anointing, are blessed by the Bishop. “Chrism” comes from the Greek word meaning “anointed”, and the title “Christ” means, “anointed one”. As many priests as possible from around the diocese come together to concelebrate this Mass with the Bishop. A priest or deacon from each parish in the diocese takes the blessed oils back to his parish for use throughout the year.

The “**Mass of the Lord’s Supper**” is celebrated during the evening on Holy Thursday (usually at 8:00). This Mass commemorates the institution of the Eucharist, and of the ministerial priesthood (sacrament of Holy Orders) by the Lord at the Last Supper. During the Mass of the Lord’s Supper the liturgical books direct that the priest may wash the feet of 12 men, symbolic of the fact the Our Lord washed the feet of His disciples in preparation for the Passover meal with them (John 13:5 ff). At the end of this Mass, which officially completes the Lenten Season, the Eucharist is transferred to a place of reposition. Traditionally the hymn *Pange Lingua* is sung during the accompanying procession. The altar is stripped, crucifixes in the church are veiled, and holy water is removed from the fonts. The commemoration of the Passion of the Lord has begun.

Good Friday, at 3:00 PM, the hour at which the Lord died on the Cross, we commemorate the Passion and death of the Lord. The word “Passion” comes from the Latin “*passion*” which means “suffering”. The sacraments are not celebrated, and Mass is not offered on this day. Rather, a three-part liturgy is celebrated: a Liturgy of the Word, Veneration of the Cross-, and the distribution of Holy Communion. Holy Communion from the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, reserved in the tabernacle of repose, is distributed to those who participate. The Paschal Fast is observed up to the Vigil (or until the Easter Morning Mass for those who do not participate in the Vigil).

On Saturday night (after darkness has fallen, usually 8:00 PM) the **Easter Vigil** is celebrated. Nine readings are assigned to this liturgy, seven from the Old Testament and two from the New Testament. Those who have been preparing to enter the Church during the course of the year are fully received at this ceremony. At last, on Easter Sunday morning we celebrate the **Resurrection of Our Lord**, and our liberation from slavery to sin and death.

The **Easter Season** extends from Easter Sunday to the Feast of the **Ascension** (40 days later) and then on to the **Feast of Pentecost** (9 days after the Ascension). These days are celebrated liturgically as one great Easter Sunday with the Easter Candle burning as a reminder at every Mass.

RCIA WKSH Class 27
(class 10 review Life of Christ #2 and Holy Week ceremonies).

- 1) What do we call Jesus' final meal with His apostles?
- 2) Which two sacraments did He institute at that time?
- 3) On what day and at what time and in what city did Jesus die on the cross?
- 4) Why did He allow Himself to be killed, or why did He have to die on the Cross?
- 5) What do we call Jesus' rising from the dead? On what day of the week did that happen?
- 6) Did anybody see it happen? How can we know it is true?
- 7) 40 days after His Resurrection Jesus went into heaven body and soul. What do we call that?
- 8) On the Feast of Pentecost Jesus sent _____ to strengthen the apostles so that they would not be afraid to tell people about Jesus and His Church. What sacrament is connected to that event?
- 9) What do we call the Mass at which those have been prepared receive the three sacraments of initiation? Which are the three sacraments of initiation?
- 10) What was Jesus doing during the forty days after He rose from the dead but before he went to heaven?