

WALKING IN THE WAY OF THE CROSS

The Journey of Holy Week

By The Rev. Gary Eichelberger

Through the enduring liturgies of Holy Week, we have the opportunity each year to recognize and appreciate the critical ways in which our lives are bound up with and defined by the journey to the cross that Jesus of Nazareth took almost two thousand years ago.

As we enter Holy Week through the Procession of the Palms on Palm Sunday, we are invited to pray the following: "Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace." It would be my hope for you that, as you prepare for Holy Week, you would consider this prayer and that, through the liturgies of Holy Week – as you walk in the way of the cross, you would recognize it to be just that – the way of life and peace.

On Palm Sunday, we start our journey by commemorating the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, where he was welcomed and lauded with "Hosannas!" as "the one who comes in the name of the Lord." However, within a matter of minutes, we find ourselves, in the reading of the Passion Gospel, joining in the demands of the gathered crowd that has now turned against him. As we shout together "Crucify him! Crucify him!" we acknowledge that, through our sins, we are counted amongst those responsible for his suffering.



On Monday and Tuesday evening of Holy Week, through our special services of Holy Eucharist, we first hear the account of Mary anointing Jesus's feet with costly oil – which foreshadows both Jesus's washing of the disciples' feet on Maundy Thursday and his entombment on Good Friday – followed on Tuesday by the account of Jesus's proclamation that "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified."

On Wednesday evening, following a tradition in the church dating back to the eighth century, we gather for the Tenebrae service, where we will have the opportunity to meditate on a succession of scripture readings as a series of candles are extinguished until we find ourselves in near darkness – symbolizing the dwindling devotion of the disciples over the course of the trials of Holy Week.

On Thursday, we enter the Paschal Triduum, consisting of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil – the three holiest days of the church year. As we approach the services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil, it is helpful to recognize that, though they span three days, the services actually constitute one continuous liturgy taking us from the Last Supper to the Empty Tomb. Thus, there is no dismissal at the conclusion of either the Maundy Thursday or the Good Friday service.

With sundown on Maundy Thursday, we are called upon to remember the Last Supper that Christ shared with his disciples on his way to the Cross and to recall how, through that meal, Christ washed the feet of his disciples and instructed them in preparation for the Eucharistic banquet that would become the center of the Church's worship life after his resurrection.

As we then celebrate the Eucharist together on Maundy Thursday, we also prepare for an important distinction accorded to the two days that will follow. That is, Good Friday and Holy Saturday are the only

two days of the church year when the Eucharist may not be celebrated. In anticipation of this absence, we sanctify additional bread and wine such that the Body and Blood of Christ may be reserved for distribution at the Good Friday service and available to be taken to the sick, if needed, over the course of the following two days. These reserved gifts of bread and wine are then veiled and processed to an altar of repose in the chapel, where parishioners will be invited to keep vigil in prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in the hours between the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service and midnight.

Before the Maundy Thursday service ends, however, the sanctuary must be prepared for the somber nature of the day that follows. Thus, as the congregation remains kneeling, the stripping of the altar takes place, whereby all ornaments are removed from the sanctuary. With the linens, altar hangings, sacred vessels, candles, and other adornments removed, the sanctuary is left dark and bare in anticipation of the continuation of the Triduum liturgy on Good Friday.

On Good Friday, a day of heightened self-examination, prayer, and fasting, we return to the church in solemn commemoration of the momentous events of this day. We hear the Passion Gospel once again. We pray the Solemn Collects. We kneel in adoration for the solemn Procession of the Cross. We receive the Body and Blood of Christ from the reserved sacrament. And, after the church bell tolls thirty-three times in remembrance of the years of our Crucified Lord's earthly life, we depart in silence and await the setting of the sun on Saturday – when we will gather for the Great Vigil of Easter and complete the paschal liturgy with great joy and fanfare.

Holy Week & Easter

PALM SUNDAY, MARCH 20

Regular Service Schedule
No Sunday School

MONDAY, MARCH 21 & TUESDAY, MARCH 22

5:45 PM - Holy Eucharist, Chapel

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

7:00 AM - Holy Eucharist, Chapel
10:30 AM - Holy Eucharist, Chapel
5:45 PM - Tenebrae, Chapel
(Nursery available Infant - K5)

MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 24

7:00 PM - Holy Eucharist with Foot Washing
and the Stripping of the Altar, Church
(Nursery available Infant - K5)

Following the service, a Vigil will be kept with the Reserved Sacrament in Markley Chapel until midnight.

GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 25

12:10 PM - Good Friday Liturgy, Church
12 noon - K5 - 5th Grade Stations of the Cross
(Nursery available Infant - K4)
6:00 PM - Stations of the Cross, Church

HOLY SATURDAY / EASTER EVE, MARCH 26

4:30 PM - Baptism, Chapel
7:30 PM - The Great Vigil and First Eucharist of Easter,
Church

EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 27

7:30 AM - Holy Eucharist, Chapel
9:00 AM - Holy Eucharist, Church
9:00 AM - Holy Eucharist, Chapel
11:15 AM - Holy Eucharist, Church
11:15 AM - Holy Eucharist, Chapel

*Nursery available Infant - K2 during 9:00 AM & 11:15 AM
No FaithSteps, Sunday School or 5:00 PM service*

Having walked in the way of the cross together, we will then know it as the way of life and peace as we experience the present power and reality of

the Risen Christ and together acclaim: "The Lord is risen indeed!"