

The climax of our Lenten journey with Jesus begins with the events of Palm/Passion Sunday and moves through Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday (which culminates in the Easter Eve Vigil), and finally Easter Day. These days represent the very heart of our Christian faith, and to celebrate Easter more fully requires that we experience Holy Week. During Holy Week, people may make an appointment with one of the clergy for Confession (Please see explanation, "Confession during Holy Week").

Palm/Passion Sunday (5 p.m. Saturday, 8 & 10 00 a.m. Sunday)



The day begins in a festive mood, commemorating Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. People throw down their palms as he enters on donkey. He entered the temple and drove out the sellers and money-changers. Jesus began to tell parables, which the religious leaders knew were pointed at them. And they wanted to arrest him and began a scheme of turning the people against him—which eventually led to his crucifixion. The liturgy moves from festive to somber—from palms to the cross. The congregation reads aloud the Passion (which in Greek means, "suffering") of Christ from Matthew's gospel. The liturgy that introduces Jesus being honored by the people concludes with Jesus being taken

into custody. Palm crosses are distributed as reminders of that shift. At all three services the congregation will gather outside the church for festive music and blessing of the palms. They will then process into the church for the reading of the Passion and Communion.

Monday and Tuesday

These are quiet days for reflection and meditation. Jesus, by example, took time constantly to pray. Prayer is a primary connection with God. During these days we keep before us the enormity of God's love for us—coming to live among us, and going to the cross for us.

Wednesday (noon)

St. John's will have a Eucharist with Healing at noon in the church. Scripture references indicate that Jesus went about the countryside healing many people. He invites each of us to be healed and restored to health and wholeness.

The Triduum: The Three Sacred Days

The ancient Triduum, the Three Sacred Days, are the most dramatic and moving liturgies of the entire Church Year. It is the Christian Passover. The Triduum (pronounced "trid' - oo - um) counts the three days from sundown on Maundy Thursday to Easter sundown.

Once begun on Maundy Thursday, the liturgies continue in succession without a benediction to close until the Easter victory is celebrated. Thus the Passion and Resurrection are observed as a whole, with each part and each liturgy dependent upon the next. The central events of Christianity are commemorated during the Triduum. For this reason, it is important to plan ahead and clear calendars so that you can attend each liturgy.

Maundy Thursday (7 p.m. Service)

Worship service: The Maundy Thursday Liturgy is one of endings and beginnings. What was begun on Ash Wednesday is brought to a close on this night. What begins this night does not end until the resurrection. The liturgy opens with the sermon, which serves to bridge the ending of Lent and the beginning of the Triduum. The theme is love,



our Savior's love for us, expressed in the washing of the disciples' feet, in giving himself in bread and wine, in dying upon the cross.

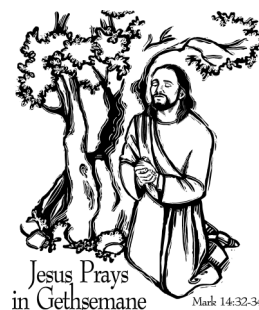
The lessons of love are followed by an example of love in the footwashing, Christ the Master serving as servant. A new command derives from it: "Love one another." From this new command (*mandatum*) comes the name for this night: Maundy Thursday.

The Lord's Supper continues the love theme with Christ's self-giving of his body and blood in the forms of bread and wine. Too soon, the love feast is ended, and the markings of betrayal are seen. The symbol of Christ in our midst, the altar, is stripped bare as Christ was stripped of his power and glory. The starkness of Good Friday and death is inescapable. All depart in silence without a blessing or dismissal. At St. John's the Reserved Sacrament is taken to the chapel and placed on the altar until the Good Friday liturgy.

The Watch or Garden Vigil (throughout Thursday night and early Friday morning)

"Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray."

As Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, so will we go to the Altar of Repose, our Holy Garden (set up in the chapel) to stay in the presence for just one hour in an attitude of prayer. At St. John's the congregation has the opportunity to sign up as part of teams of two for hour watches throughout parts of the night, 8 p.m.—midnight, and then Friday morning from 5 a.m. until 12 noon, in the chapel. From Thursday midnight until 5 a.m. on Friday, people are encouraged to hold an hourly home prayer vigil. For those who haven't participated, it is a powerful experience. There will be a sign up sheet at church or contact the church office to reserve a time to pray in the chapel or at home.



Good Friday (11:30 Stations/Noon liturgy; 7 p.m. Stations/Good Friday Liturgy)



The Good Friday Liturgy begins as it ended on Maundy Thursday: with silence and austerity. The chancel is bare, There is no music except to accompany hymns. Everything is focused on the adoration of the Crucified Lord, reigning from the throne of the cross.

The Stations of the Cross at 11:30 a.m. will occur on the lawn, and the 7 p.m. interactive Stations of the Cross will take place inside the church. (Brief explanation of Stations is found in "The Traditions of the Stations of the Cross.")

The opening of the liturgy includes no praise, but proceeds directly to the Prayer of the Day and the lessons. The Passion according to John details the events of this day and is followed by the Bidding Prayer for the needs of our world.

Then a large cross is brought into the church in solemn procession and placed centrally in the chancel. It becomes the focus of adoration of the crucified Christ. The words of meditation are the ancient Reproaches, in which God directs his reproach at us, his people, who have crucified his Son by our sin (cf. Micah 6:3-5).

The liturgy does not end on a note of reproach, however. The closing versicles and prayer emphasize the triumph and redemption that comes through the cross. God will have the final word, but we must wait.

It is the custom at St. John's to have Communion from the Reserved Sacrament, which stays in the chapel altar all night Thursday until the first service on Good Friday.

Again, all depart in silence, without blessing or dismissal.

The Great Vigil of Easter (5 p.m. Saturday)



From the earliest times, the Church has celebrated the victory of Jesus Christ over death by the Great Vigil service on the eve of Easter. In the early church, those desiring to become Christians participated in an extended time of instruction and were baptized at the Great Vigil. The service begins with little changed from Friday night. The church is bare and also dark. Like the children of Israel who watched and waited through the night for the Lord of the Exodus, everyone gathers late on Holy Saturday to watch and to wait for the Lord of the Resurrection.

The first task is to break the darkness with the light of Christ burning atop the Paschal candle. This is the Light of Christ, dispelling the darkness of night, of sin, of death. This light will be a constant reminder of the Easter victory at all Easter services, at every baptism, and at every funeral.

Having broken the darkness, the stories of faith and salvation, are told while the vigiling goes on. These are our family stories that lead us to the Resurrected One.

After hearing the stories all renew their baptismal vows so that everyone is ready to receive the Lord of the Resurrection. Quickly the table is set, and the room is made ready with flowers, banners and festive array.

At last He comes! The victory is won! The Risen Lord comes in bread and wine and songs of praise. We celebrate the first Eucharist of the Easter season. We shout "Alleluia." Alleluias are absent from worship services during Lent.

Easter Day—Alleluia! He is Risen! (Sunday services 8 & 10 a.m.)

Alleluia!

As we celebrate the day of Resurrection, we are reminded that The Risen Christ brings life out of death.. He is triumphant over evil, and our lives are resurrected to newness. Resurrection means that Jesus, The Living One, goes head of us, opening up a future for us— forever.

Confession during Holy Week

"Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5:16). "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

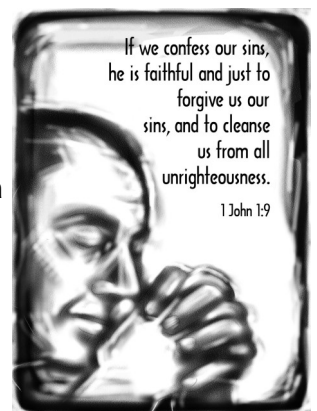
The Church of Jesus Christ has always provided a means by which Christians burdened by sin may confess and find the healing grace of personal forgiveness. Jesus forgave sins as a part of healing and charged his disciples to do the same (Luke 5:17-26; John 20:22-23).

During the Eucharist there is a general confession made by the congregation and absolution pronounced. In the Episcopal Church, Reconciliation for the Penitent is a rite offered for people in the form of individual confession to another person, whether clergy or laity. The following explanation is found in our *Book of Common Prayer* (p. 446):

The ministry of reconciliation, which has been committed by Christ to his Church, is exercised through the care each Christian has for others, through the common prayer of Christians assembled for public worship, and through the priesthood of the Church and its ministers declaring absolution.

The Reconciliation of a Penitent is available for all who desire it. It is not restricted to times of sickness. Confessions may be heard anytime and anywhere.

The content of a confession is not normally a matter of subsequent discussion. The secrecy of a confession

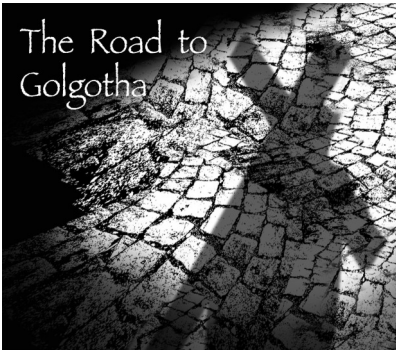


is morally absolute for the confessor, and must under no circumstances be broken.

Some people ask if Reconciliation of the Penitent rite is necessary especially in light of the general confession made during corporate worship. An answer is, "All may. None must. Some do." Some people find it helpful in being restored to a right relationship with God and their neighbor. Confession during Holy Week provides an opportunity to prepare for Easter.

Anyone desiring to make a Confession is asked to call the Church Office for an appointment. 531-6020

The Tradition of the Stations of the Cross



The Road to Golgotha

The Stations of the Cross combine art, literature and movement to recreate Christ's walk to the cross in a church setting, thus allowing us today to make a "pilgrimage to Jerusalem" and be drawn closer to the Christ who walked there.

Throughout history, Christians have wanted to go to the Holy Land and walk the path that Jesus walked, especially the path to the cross. It is from this longing and from pilgrimages accomplished that the Stations of the Cross derive their popularity and devotion.

No sooner had the Roman Emperor Constantine been converted in 313 A.D., his mother Helena set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to mark and build churches at places significant to Christ's life, most notably the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

The earliest diary of a pilgrimage is given by a young woman named Egeria (perhaps a nun) around 394 AD. She writes in detail about the Holy Week liturgies that occurred in sequence at different churches (stations) in Jerusalem as each related to the story of Jesus' Way of the Cross.

The reason, of course, for pilgrimages and remembrances of them, both then and now, is contained in the idea of sacred space. Palestine, and Jerusalem in particular, were places made sacred by the presence of the Son in whom God was made manifest to us.

Over the years, pilgrims have visited and marked many and varied holy spots in the Holy Land. They have returned to their homes and erected in their churches tableaux of those sacred places related to Christ's passion. When Franciscan monks were given custody of the holy places for care and keeping in 1342, they promoted this kind of devotion by erecting similar series of tableaux in their churches, where local people could walk, pray and meditate on Christ's Way of The Cross. From there, the practice spread widely.

The number and subject matter of the Stations of the Cross have varied as widely as the number of sites marked at various times in the Holy Land itself. One 15th century account lists over 100, while others have listed 30 or even as few as five. The number 14 seems to have appeared first in the early 16th century in a list devised by a Belgian Carmelite monk named John Pascha. The number and subject matter was fixed in 1731 by Pope Clement XII, consisting of nine gospel scenes and five scenes from popular tradition; however, they may vary. Because the "Way of the Cross" has always existed as a devotion with no one official text, there have been many versions of it available.

Adapted from: <http://www.members.aol.com/LiturgybyTLW1/Seasonal/Lent/Discipln.html> and other sources

There are many online Stations of the Cross websites including the two below:

<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/stations.html>

<http://www.crivoice.org/stations.html>