

## **HOLY WEEK: A Brief Guide**

During Holy Week the Church celebrates the work of salvation finished by Christ in the last days of his life on earth. Lent lasts until Thursday of this week. The Easter Triduum (Latin = continuous period of three days) begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. There is no formal dismissal until the end of the Easter Vigil. It continues with the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord on Good Friday, and reaches its climax at the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. Try to prepare for all these ceremonies by quietly reflecting on the readings.

### **Palm Sunday:**

Please take part in the Procession of Palms if possible. This reminds us of Christ's triumphant procession into Jerusalem where within days the people would turn against him and call for his death. "His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus ... emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave."

### **Holy Thursday:**

On this day Mass is celebrated only in the evening to remind us of Christ's institution of the Eucharist, which perpetuates His offering of Himself on the Cross. This Mass also reflects Christ's charity and service in the washing of the feet, in which the priest acting in the person of Christ makes a gesture of service to his parishioners. "I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." The Holy Oils, newly consecrated in Plymouth Cathedral by the Bishop, are brought into the church. Just before the Gloria we "make a joyful noise unto the Lord", and then the bells are silent until Easter. At the conclusion of the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is like our Lord Himself, taken away. We are then invited to sit and adore in silence.

## **Good Friday:**

This is a day of fasting (one square meal only) and abstinence (from meat and alcohol). On this day the Church meditates on the suffering and death of Our Lord in the reading of the Passion of Our Lord in John's Gospel, prays for the needs of the whole world, adores the Cross, and receives Jesus in Holy Communion, using Hosts which were consecrated on Holy Thursday. Mass is not celebrated today.

## **Easter Vigil:**

*The Vigil*, which begins only when night has fallen, has four parts:

*A Service of Light* in which the new Easter Candle "Christ our Light" is brought into a darkened church, and Easter solemnly proclaimed.

*Liturgy of the Word* in which we listen to the story of our salvation beginning with a reading from Genesis.

*Liturgy of Baptism* in which Holy Water is blessed, we all renew our Baptismal Promises and new church members are confirmed.

*The Liturgy of the Eucharist* in which we commemorate the Sacrifice of the Cross, and the presence among us of the Risen Christ.

## **Easter Sunday:**

Children are especially welcome and will receive a gift. We will also renew our Baptismal Promises.

**A Happy and Blessed Easter to you all  
Father David**