

## HOLY WEEK



### Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to give us an example of humility through his crucifixion and death. May we heed his lesson of patient suffering so that we may share in this resurrection. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Scripture Reading *Luke 23:35-46*

Luke's account of the Passion gives an explanation for the Passion and death of Jesus on the cross. By pardoning the repentant thief, Jesus shows that his death is for the forgiveness of sins. In his death, he offers to the Father the Holy Spirit whom he possessed for the life of the Church.

### What is Holy Week?

- Since 325AD, Easter has been placed on the first Sunday following the first full moon of spring.
- Since the second century, the Church has held the week prior to Easter as a time of intense prayer and fasting. It evolved out of the pious practice of pilgrimage to Jerusalem at Passover to reenact the events of the week leading up to Easter.
- As time went on, people began reenacting the events in their local communities, even in Rome as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century.
- Pope Pius XII reinstated the Holy Week practices as we know them in 1956.

### What is Palm Sunday?

- On Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus' journey into Jerusalem by blessing palm branches and having a procession into the Church.
- The readings of the day focus around the Passion of the Lord.

### What is the Chrism Mass?

- At the Chrism Mass, the bishop of the diocese consecrates the Chrism and blesses the oils to be used throughout the parish for the year.
- The priests of the diocese also renew their commitment of service and receive the prayers and support of the people.

# *Incarnating* THE **KERYGMA** HOLY WEEK

## **What is the Mass of the Lord's Supper?**

- The Mass of the Lord's Supper begins the Sacred **Triduum**, three days of reenacting the days of Christ's death and resurrection.
- Following Jesus' example, the priests and deacons of the parish wash the feet of parishioners.
- After the Mass, the Blessed Sacrament is taken to a chapel, known as a repository, for private adoration until midnight, symbolizing the disciples in the garden.

## **What are the Stations of the Cross?**

- The Stations of the Cross commemorate the stops along the Via Dolorosa (way of sorrow), Jesus' journey of about a mile from Pilate's court to Calvary and the tomb made on Good Friday.
- The Stations of the Cross, like the manger scene, were promoted by the Franciscans starting the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- Since 1975, Pope Paul VI and John Paul II have also promoted different sets of stations, based solely on Scripture.

## **What is the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion?**

- The Liturgy of the Lord's Passion contains some of the oldest prayers of the Church, around the 6<sup>th</sup> century.
- The Liturgy of the Lord's Passion is the continuation of the Holy Thursday Liturgy of the Lord's Supper.
- The Liturgy is divided into three parts:
  - Liturgy of the Word – including the reading of the Passion according to St. John.
  - Veneration of the Cross – where all are invited to come forward to kiss or touch a cross, the symbol of Christ's suffering and passion.
  - Communion Service – when the Body of Christ consecrated from the evening before is distributed to the assembly.

## **What is Holy Saturday?**

- On Holy Saturday morning the Church gathers at the tomb waiting for the Resurrection. The main reading from Morning Prayer is from an ancient homily from Holy Saturday, written anonymously that speaks about Christ's descent into hell.
- The preparation rites for the Elect take place following Morning Prayer. These rites include the recitation of the Creed, the prayers over the ears and mouth, and the choosing of a baptismal name.

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*Incarnating* THE  
**KERYGMA**

### What is the Easter Vigil?

- The Easter Vigil is the commemoration of Christ's rising from the dead. This is the highest point of the Christian year, the celebration of the Paschal Mystery in the great Easter Eucharist, source and summit of all liturgical action and life of God's people. This "holy night" is the "mother of all holy vigils" that begins the "queen of feasts." The full meaning of the Vigil comes from Luke 12 which implores us to stay awake in waiting for the Lord.