

# Holy Week and Easter, The Resurrection of the Lord

RCIA/OCIA Segment 20



Welcome to the OCIA/RCIA class for Holy Week, which will begin on Sunday with the Passion of our Lord (or Saturday if attending the vigil Mass).

This period of the liturgical year is the most significant and important of all the year; more important than Christmas.

## Opening Prayer

Loving God,  
I am just beginning to realize how much you love me.  
Your son, Jesus was humble and obedient.  
He fulfilled your will for him by becoming human and  
suffering with us.

I ask you for the desire to become more humble  
so that my own life might also bear witness to you.  
I want to use the small sufferings I have in this world  
to give you glory.

Please, Lord, guide my mind with your truth.  
Strengthen my life by the example of Jesus.

Help me to be with Jesus in this week  
as he demonstrates again his total love for me.

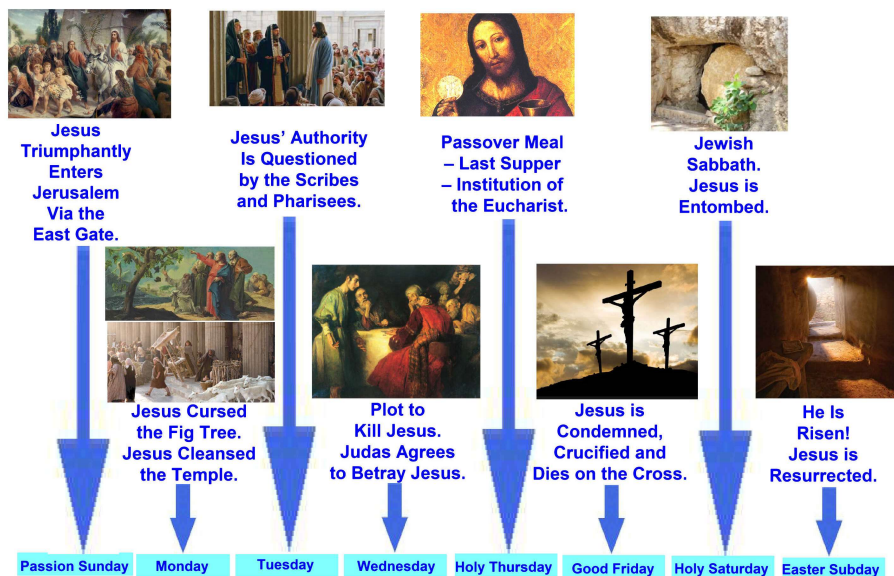
He died so that I would no longer  
be separated from you.

Help me to feel how close you are  
and to live in union with you.



# Holy Week

## Biblical Timeline for Holy Week



We'll talk about Passion or Palm Sunday, so named for the entrance Jesus made on a colt – a young donkey which is considered a symbol of humility since it was not a horse, as the Romans used, and was considered unblemished with respect to it being young and not yet used for work.

Reading the Gospel of John we learn that on the next day, Jesus caused a ruckus in the temple and later cursed a fig tree due to its lack of fruit.

The next day as Jesus was preaching the scribes and pharisees questioned His authority to speak for God

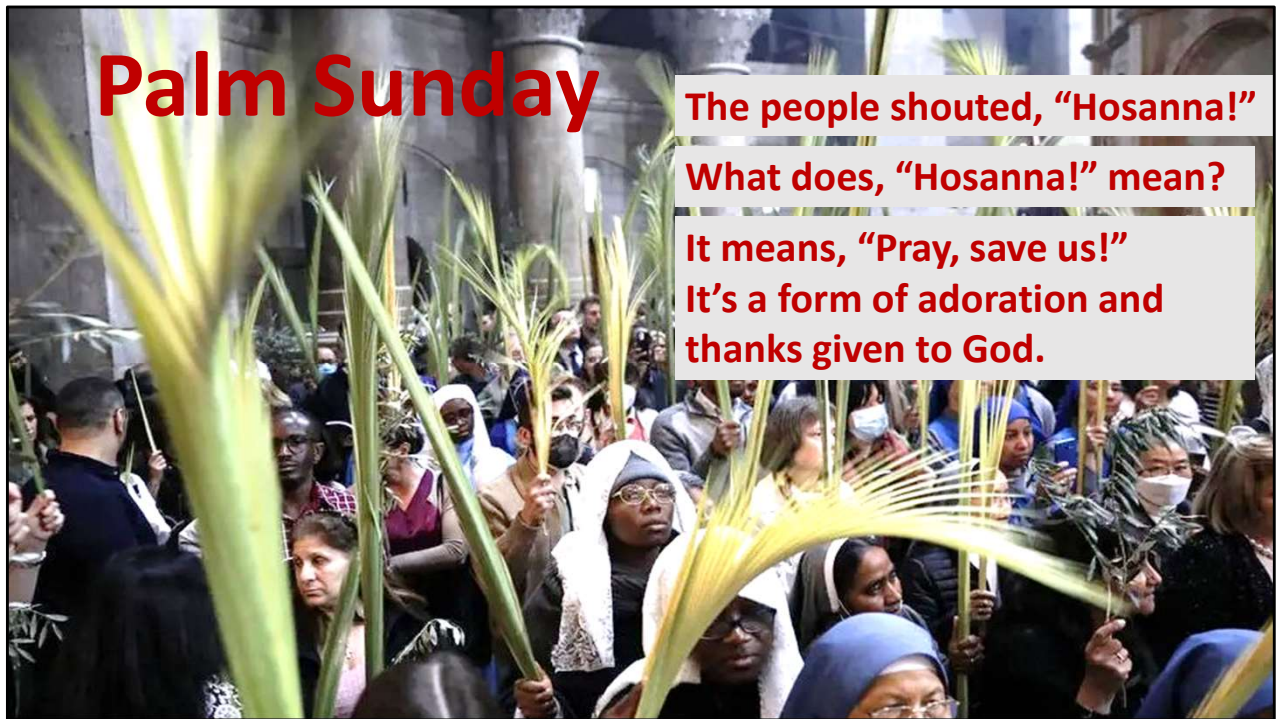
The high priests were both jealous and afraid of losing power to Jesus

and were plotting to kill Him  
when Judas Iscariot came to their rescue,  
willing to betray Jesus.

Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday),  
while not a holy day of obligation,  
does accommodate a great deal of the liturgy  
regarding Jesus' last few days before His death.

Good Friday commemorates the death of Jesus.  
No Mass is celebrated on this day to symbolize  
Jesus' departure from us.

Holy Saturday (Black Saturday)  
continues the theme of Jesus' absence  
Until the Vigil Easter (Resurrection) Mass.



Palm Sunday procession at the Shrine of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem

Palm Sunday begins the period of time in the Catholic Church's liturgy known as Holy Week.

This is the culmination of Lent and fulfillment of Christ's work on Earth.

This particular Mass runs the full range of passion and emotions beginning with Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem as the rock opera describes Him, Jesus Christ – Superstar, all the way down to the depths of despair as we read the Gospel describing Jesus' betrayal, condemnation, great physical suffering and finally his death by crucifixion. The crowds begin by singing "Hosanna" but later shout, "Crucify Him!" All of this foreshadows the liturgy for the coming week.

Some churches begin the Mass with the celebrant

and congregation outside of the church building with a procession of all into the church, symbolizing Christ's arrival into Jerusalem on a colt.

Palms are normally distributed before Mass and are blessed during the Mass. Since these palms are blessed, it would be a sacrilege to throw these away afterwards. Many people braid them into crosses, roses or other items such as a crown of thorns.

Palm Sunday is one of only two Sundays when the vestment colors are red; the other being Pentecost Sunday. And buckle-up; it's going to be a long Mass.

# *Easter Triduum*



Holy Thursday



Good Friday



Easter Sunday

We'll skip over Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week in order to get to the crux of the matter, the Triduum or three days, the final three days of Jesus' life, His death and His resurrection .

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops calls the Triduum "the summit of the liturgical year." It extends from the Thursday evening Mass of the Lord's Supper through the evening of Easter Vigil.

The beginning of the Triduum also marks the end of Lent.

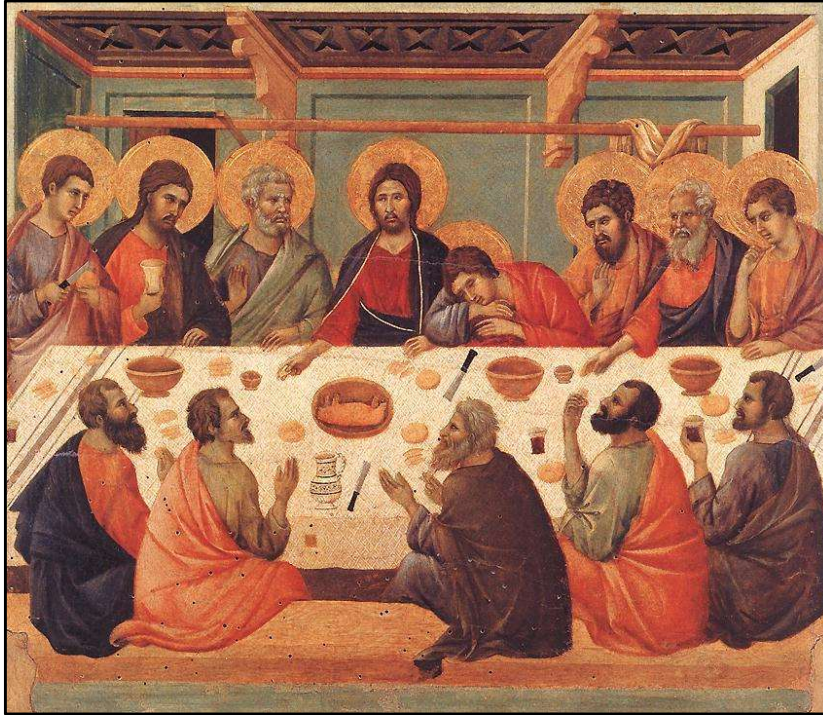
So, Lent ends with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, but Good Friday is a day of fast and abstinence.

So, what do we gain by that?









## Holy Thursday

### The Mass of the Lord's Supper

Washing of the feet

Establishment of the priesthood

Institution of the Eucharist

Reception of the Holy Oils

Recession for the Repose of the Blessed Sacrament away from the main altar

Holy Thursday or Maundy Thursday is the Mass of commemoration of the Last Supper, even though every Mass memorializes the Last Supper.

After the homily there is an optional "washing of the feet" ceremony, where the priest washes the feet of others to signify his role as servant — just as Jesus did with his disciples. This act of humility performed by Jesus serves as an example for others to follow.

At the Last Supper Jesus said,  
"Do this in remembrance of me." Luke 22:19  
Also, in John 20:23 Jesus said,  
"Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,  
and whose sins you retain are retained."  
(Albeit Jesus gave this authorization after His resurrection.)

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread,  
said the blessing, broke it,  
and giving it to his disciples said,  
“Take and eat; this is my body.”  
Then he took a cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it to them, saying,  
“Drink from it, all of you,  
for this is my blood of the covenant,  
which will be shed on behalf of many  
for the forgiveness of sins.”” Matthew 26:26-28  
Similarly in Mark 14:22-24 and Luke 22:19-20

"The reception of the Holy Oils may take place  
in individual parishes either before the celebration  
of the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper  
or at another time that seems more appropriate."  
— Roman Missal, Chrism Mass, no. 15  
(In our diocese, this Mass will be celebrated  
on Tuesday of Holy Week at 10 AM at the Cathedral.)  
These include:

Oil of the Sick

for the healing of body, mind, and soul

Oil of Catechumens

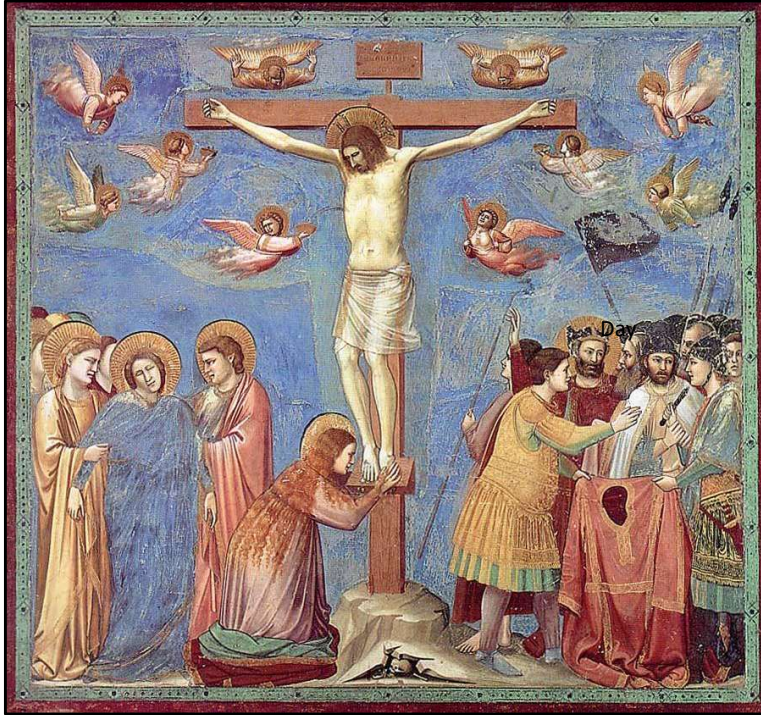
for the anointing of those preparing for Baptism.

Holy Chrism

used to anoint infants after Baptism,  
those who are to be confirmed,  
Bishops and Priests at their Ordination,  
and altars and churches at the time of their dedication.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday  
concludes with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament  
to the "altar of repose," a place where  
the consecrated Host is kept, away  
from the main altar where Mass is normally celebrated.

Many parishes will create space for people  
to stay and pray with the reposed Eucharist  
in the monstrance  
at this altar of repose late into the night,  
remembering Jesus' request  
in the Garden of Gethsemane  
for someone to "watch and pray" with Him.



# Good Friday

Day of Jesus' Crucifixion and Death

Day of Mandatory Fasting and Abstinence

No Consecrated Host in Tabernacle or Alter

No Mass is Celebrated

Good Friday Liturgy Only

No Instrumental Music, Only Chants

Communion Offered from Hosts  
Consecrated From Holy Thursday

Veneration of the Cross

Why do we call it "Good Friday?"

What's "good" about the crucifixion and death of Jesus?

Well, His sacrifice provided a means for our salvation.

Also, early (biblical) references to the word, good,

Implied holiness, as we name Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday.



# Good Friday

## Fasting and Abstinence



As a foundation of Christian asceticism, fasting is a form of self-denial, of sacrifice.

What differentiates sacrifice from the self-discipline of the moral life is this:

In the moral life we forgo temptations or self-indulgences that are actually wrong or bad for us, but in the sacrifice and self-denial of Christian asceticism we voluntarily give up what is good in itself, just as the Israelites made offerings to God of the best from their flock.

By willingness to give up for God what is good as well as what is bad, we affirm and practice attachment to God and detachment from created things, even created things that are lawful in themselves.

There is also a mystical dimension to fasting.

By turning away from the needs of our human organism, we become more aware that we are more than organisms.

Just as we listen more attentively when we close our eyes,  
so when we put aside food  
we become more aware of spiritual things.

Christian asceticism is inseparable from prayer.  
Just doing without food is only dieting.



### **The Empty Tabernacle**

The tabernacle doors are left wide-open and the sanctuary candle is extinguished.

Jesus is temporarily gone symbolically on Good Friday. One does not need to bow or genuflect before the empty tabernacle. So, why is it still here? We have a hopeful anticipation of Christ's return; not only as our resurrected Lord, but in his second coming, as well.

So, by emptying our tabernacles on Holy Thursday, the Church is telling us  
- to really understand what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. We need to experience this absence,

so that we may experience His presence more keenly.

Additionally, the sacramentals have been removed;  
no Holy water in the fonts,  
the alter is cleared – stripped down to a bare table.





There are no Masses offered on Good Friday, only a commemoration of the Lord's Passion, The Church (in the Roman rite) offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass everyday as a means of re-presenting the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ in an unbloody manner upon the altar; yet on the day on which we call to mind the real sacrifice of Christ as it took place in time, the Church observes a commemoration without Mass.

A reasonable Catholic might think to himself:  
"Wouldn't Good Friday be a more appropriate day than any other for offering Mass?  
Why on this one day do we refrain from offering it?"

Saint Thomas Aquinas writes in *Summa Theologica*:  
"The figure ceases on the advent of the reality.  
But this sacrament is a figure

and a representation of our Lord's Passion.  
And therefore on the day  
on which our Lord's Passion is recalled  
as it was really accomplished,  
this sacrament is not consecrated."

Basically, St. Thomas teaches  
that the Mass is not celebrated on Good Friday  
because it is on this this day  
that we commemorate Our Lord's  
real sacrifice on the Cross.  
In the Good Friday commemoration,  
we are mystically present in some way  
at Calvary alongside the Blessed Mother  
and the other disciples who remained at the Cross.

Further, a sacrament is defined as  
an outward or visible sign  
of invisible grace.  
Saint Thomas reasons that,  
"the figure ceases on the advent of the reality."

In other words, the Mass and the  
consecration of the Eucharist,  
as an outward or visible sign,  
must yield to the actual sacrifice,  
made once and for all,  
which is commemorated  
on one particular day of the year.



The celebrants enter the sanctuary, lie prostrate in front of the altar while the rest of the congregation kneel and pray in silence for a while.

Then the priest prays the opening prayer. This is followed by the first reading from Isaiah 52:13-53:12  
Followed by the responsorial psalm, Psalm 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25  
Then the second reading from Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9:  
The Gospel is the Passion of Jesus  
By St. John.

Next the intercessions are made with the congregation standing and kneeling (although the people may remain kneeling).

After this there is a solemn procession of the cross.

After which the congregation is invited  
To come to the cross in order to venerate it.  
This may be done by touching or kissing the cross.  
Veneration of an image or representation  
of Christ's cross does not mean  
that we are actually adoring  
the material image, but rather what it represents.  
In reverencing His Cross we are, in effect, adoring Christ.  
Thus we affirm: 'We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee  
because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has Redeemed the World.'  
The chants of the Reproaches are usually sung during this veneration.

Lastly, the Communion service is held,  
using consecrated hosts from Holy Thursday.

Finally dismissal in silence.

# Holy Saturday



The only mention of the day after Christ died, in the scriptures from Matthew 27:62-66:

“The next day, the one following the day of preparation,  
the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said,  
“Sir, we remember that this impostor while still alive said,  
‘After three days I will be raised up.’

Give orders, then, that the grave be secured  
until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him  
and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead.’  
This last imposture would be worse than the first.”

Pilate said to them,

“The guard is yours; go secure it as best you can.”

So they went and secured the tomb  
by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

633: Scripture calls the abode of the dead,  
to which the dead Christ went down, “hell”  
- Sheol in Hebrew or Hades in Greek -  
because those who are there

are deprived of the vision of God.

Such is the case for all the dead,  
whether evil or righteous,  
while they await the Redeemer:  
which does not mean that their lot is identical,  
as Jesus shows through the parable  
of the poor man Lazarus  
who was received into "Abraham's bosom"

"It is precisely these holy souls,  
who awaited their Savior in Abraham's bosom,  
whom Christ the Lord delivered  
when he descended into hell.

Jesus did not descend into hell  
to deliver the damned,  
nor to destroy the hell of damnation,  
but to free the just who had gone before him.

634 "The gospel was preached even to the dead.  
The descent into hell brings the Gospel message  
of salvation to complete fulfilment.  
This is the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission,  
a phase which is condensed in time  
but vast in its real significance:  
the spread of Christ's redemptive work  
to all men of all times and all places,  
for all who are saved  
have been made sharers in the redemption.

Fasting is also encouraged, but not required, on this day.

# Easter Vigil

# Shrine of the Holy Sepulcher



The Easter Vigil is often termed,  
“The Mother of All Vigils.”

The USCCB states:

“On this holy night, the Church keeps watch,  
celebrating the resurrection of Christ  
in the sacraments and awaiting his return in glory.  
It is the turning point of the Triduum,  
the Passover of the new covenant  
which marks Christ's passage from death to life.  
Therefore, the Easter Vigil does not correspond  
to the usual Saturday evening Mass  
and its character is unique  
in the cycle of the liturgical year.”



# Easter Vigil Service of the Light



## **The Service of the Light**

In a suitable place outside the Church, a "blazing fire" is to be prepared so that the people may gather around it and experience the flames dispelling the darkness and lighting up the night. Thus do the beauty of the fire its warmth and its light, draw the liturgical assembly together. The rubrics, however, acknowledge that when this cannot be done adaptations may be made. The Missale also states that cross and candles are not to be carried in this procession."

# Easter Vigil Paschal Candle




The Paschal Candle is then brought forward. This candle should be made of pure beeswax, never be artificial, be renewed each year, be only one in number, and be of sufficiently large size that it may convey the truth that Christ is the light of the world. This reminds us that the Paschal Candle is the symbol of the "light of Christ, rising in glory," scattering the "darkness of our hearts and minds." Above all, the Paschal Candle should be a genuine candle, the pre-eminent symbol of the light of Christ.

## WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE?

**LIGHT**  
The light of Christ that shines in the darkness.

**FIRE**  
It represents Christ's resurrection.

**GRAINS OF INCENSE**  
They represent the 5 wounds of Christ.




**ALPHA AND OMEGA**  
Christ is the beginning and end of all things.

**CROSS**  
It represents Christ and his eternal light.

**YEAR**  
It reminds us of God's presence here and now.

## Easter Vigil Paschal Candle



FROM DARKNESS

TO LIGHT

FROM DEATH

TO NEW LIFE

The pure beeswax of which the candle is made represents the sinless Christ who was formed in the womb of His Mother. The wick signifies His humanity, the flame, His Divine Nature, both soul and body.

Five grains of incense inserted into the candle in the form of a cross recall the aromatic spices with which His Sacred Body was prepared for the tomb, and of the five wounds in His hands, feet, and side.

The other symbols placed on the candle are an Alpha and Omega, representing Christ as the beginning and the end (Revelation 21:6) and the numbers of the current year.

The Paschal Candle is prominently displayed near the pulpit of the church or near the altar and is lit for all liturgies from the Easter Vigil until Pentecost Sunday

(although the TLM folks extinguish the candle after the Gospel on Ascension Thursday).  
Once the season of Easter is over,  
the Paschal Candle returns to the baptismal font and may be used for baptisms and funerals.



# Easter Vigil

## Liturgy of the Word

Up to nine readings may be proclaimed  
recounting the deeds of salvation history

Reading I Genesis 1:1—2:2

Reading VI Baruch 3:9-15, 32--4:4

Reading II Genesis 22:1-18

Reading VII Ezekial 36:16-17a, 18-28

Reading III Exodus 14:15—15:1

Epistle Romans 6:3-11

Reading IV Isiah 54:5-14

Gospel Mark 16:1-7

Reading V Isiah 55:1-11

The readings include:  
seven readings plus an epistle and the Gospel.  
If reduced, at least three readings  
From the Old Testament to always include  
Exodus 14.



# Easter Vigil Baptism



The days of Lent are the final Period of Purification and Enlightenment leading up to the Easter Vigil. Lent is a period of preparation marked by prayer, study, and spiritual direction for the Elect and prayers for them by the parish communities. The Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation takes place during the Easter Vigil Liturgy on Holy Saturday when the Elect receives the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist. Now the person is fully initiated into the Catholic Church.

As a newly initiated Catholic, they continue their formation and education continue in the Period of the Post-Baptismal Catechesis, which is also called Mystagogy. This period continues at least until Pentecost. During the period the newly baptized members reflect on their experiences at the Easter Vigil

and continue to learn more about the Scriptures,  
the Sacraments, and the teachings  
of the Catholic Church.  
In addition they reflect  
on how they will serve Christ  
and help in the Church's mission and outreach activities.

After the Baptism the newly baptized  
are dressed in white garments  
and presented with a candle  
lighted from the Paschal Candle.  
They are then Confirmed  
by the priest or bishop  
who lays hands on their heads,  
and invokes the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.  
He then anoints them  
with the oil called Sacred Chrism.  
The Mass continues with the newly baptized  
participating in the general intercessions  
and in bringing gifts to the altar  
At Communion, the newly baptized  
receive the Eucharist,  
Christ's Body and Blood, for the first time.

Prior to the Rite of Election,  
the Catechumen may choose  
one or two godparents,  
who will accompany the Catechumen  
on the day of Election,  
at the celebration  
of the Sacraments of Initiation,  
and during the Period of Mystagogy.  
They are called to show the Catechumens  
good example of the Christian life,  
sustain them in moments of hesitancy  
and anxiety, bear witness,  
and guide their progress in the baptismal life.

This also the time for all Catholics  
to renew their Baptism vows.



## Easter Vigil Liturgy of the Eucharist



The priest goes to the altar  
and begins the Liturgy  
of the Eucharist in the usual way.

# Easter Sunday Morning



This dogma about the resurrection of Jesus is the primary foundation of our faith; that Jesus really did die on the cross and was resurrected days later.

First, that Jesus was both God and man,  
Second, that he was resurrected in the flesh,  
as we also are promised,  
Third, that His sacrifice abrogated the sin of Adam and Eve  
and allowed our entrance into Heaven.  
This is the crux of all Christianity.

# Easter Sunday Morning



**He is  
Risen!**

**He is  
Risen,  
indeed!**

**Alleluia!**

Instead of greeting people with the phrase,  
“Happy Easter,” consider a more appropriate gesture:

**He is risen!**

**He is risen, indeed!**

**Alleluia!**



# Closing Prayer

How wonderful, Lord Jesus, you came back  
You suffered death but conquered it  
You laid in the tomb but on the third day  
You rose again  
O joyful day, Lord Jesus, when you returned  
You are the resurrection, our hope and our life  
O glorious and victorious Redeemer

Help us not to be afraid of death  
For we must pass through it to see you face to face  
And on the last day we will rise again  
For you said so  
Let us rejoice and praise you  
Our Blessed and triumphant Lord  
On this happy, joyful feast.

Amen.