

FROM MAUNDY THURSDAY TO EASTER

The Holy Triduum at Holy Trinity Cathedral



Why do we celebrate it?

When do we celebrate it?

Why is it important?



We believe that this short booklet about our Triduum celebrations this year will be helpful to you, in order to fully participate in these holy days of our faith. The largest part of this text is the explanation of the meaning of the Triduum and its parts, written by a lay Dominican, Gretchen Filtz. To her reflection we added the explanation of the services we will celebrate in the Cathedral this year, based on the meaning and rhythm of Triduum.

Holy Week is the most solemn and glorious week in Christianity, the pinnacle of the liturgical year.

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday (when Jesus made his final entrance into Jerusalem) and culminates with Easter Sunday. As Holy Week progresses to its final days the solemnity heightens.

On Palm Sunday we will have a blessing of the palm branches in the crossing of the Cathedral, after which we will process outside of the Cathedral, through the forecourt into the nave. Apart from the procession, the specific part of this liturgy is the reading/singing of the Passion of Jesus. Following the liturgical cycle of readings, this year we are reading Luke's redaction.

THE HOLY TRIDUUM

(The Holy Three Days)

Sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Easter Sunday is considered the most solemn part of the liturgical year. This three-day period is referred to as the *Easter Triduum*, also known as the *Holy Triduum*, or *Paschal Triduum*. Triduum means “three days”.

The important thing to understand is that the Holy Triduum is **one great festival** recounting the last three days of Jesus’ life on earth, the events of his Passion and Resurrection, and when the Lamb of God laid down his life in atonement for our sins.

“Though chronologically three days, they are liturgically one day unfolding for us the unity of Christ’s Paschal Mystery”.

Hence, participating in three services of the Holy Triduum is a most solemn way to celebrate Easter. The liturgical reform of the 20th century has renewed this ancient practice and we are encouraged to take part in every service of the Holy Triduum – on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil.



Agnus Dei – Jesus, the Lamb of God

These three days are known as the “Paschal Mystery” because it is the ultimate fulfilment of the ancient Jewish Passover (or Pasch), which itself was a recollection of how God brought the Jews out of their slavery in Egypt. The spotless lamb was slaughtered at the

Passover meal and consumed, and that night the destroying angel “passed over” the homes marked with the blood of the Passover Lamb, and those covered by the blood were saved. This was the Old Testament pre-figurement of Jesus’ work at the Last Supper – where he inserted himself as the Paschal Lamb – and Calvary, where he dies on the cross to save us by giving us an ultimate example of the self-giving love. In this way, these mysteries are deeply connected with the mystery of incarnation, in which we recognise God’s desire to become one of us. In that way, the whole life of Jesus becomes a tool of salvation, with these three days being the culmination of 33 years of God’s work of salvation in Jesus the Christ.

HOLY THURSDAY



The evening Eucharist on Holy Thursday is referred to as *The Eucharist of the Lord’s Supper*.

On this night we remember and celebrate the final supper Jesus shared with his disciples in the context of Passover. Maundy Thursday marks a new beginning, the beginning of the end. From this point on, our Christian worship is a continuum through to Easter morning. The Jewish beginning of the day (in the evening) unites the events of Maundy Thursday with the death of Christ the next afternoon. The provision that the services may continue into a Vigil underlines this continuity.

One explanation of the term Maundy Thursday is that it derives from the Latin “mandatum novum do vobis” (A new commandment I give

you), associated with John 13:34 and with the foot washing that takes place earlier in that chapter.

While the Ministry of the Word places this commemoration in the context of Passover, care should be taken to avoid confusing Maundy Thursday commemorations with a celebration of the Jewish Passover. The Gospels witness to two different traditions about the timing of the Last Supper. The first three Gospels have the Last Supper as a Passover meal, while John places it on the Day of Preparation.

The essentials of this commemoration include the Ministry of the Word, foot washing, Eucharist, the stripping of the church, and the Vigil of the night. These all arise out of Scripture and the worship of the early church, enabling the faithful to participate in the story of Christ's passion and death.

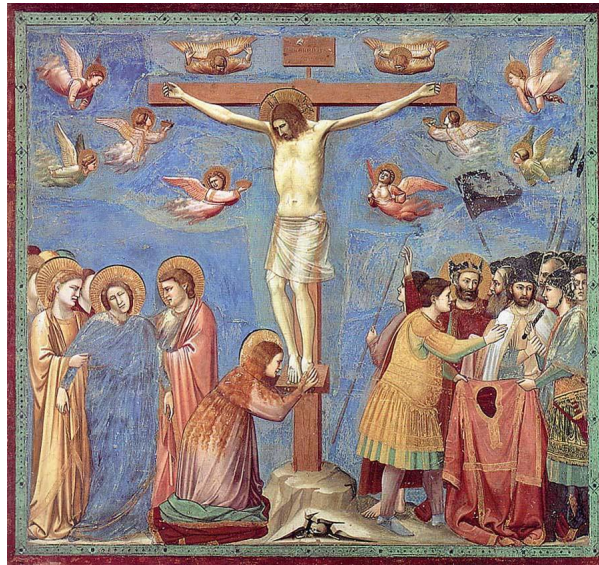
The rite of foot washing dramatises vividly the humility and servanthood of Jesus, both on the night of his betrayal and in his continuing presence in our midst. As we enter into the foot washing, we give witness to our own role in loving service and make our response to the new commandment, to love one another as he has loved us.

The stripping of the church is a vivid and dramatic way of showing forth the desolation and abandonment of the long night in Gethsemane. The stark, bare church reflects fittingly the tone of the occasion and the church remains bare until Easter Eve when the process is reversed.

The Watch of the Night enables the faithful to enter into the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane. During the watch, prayer is maintained in silence, with suitable psalms, readings and meditations being used.

There is no blessing given as the services on the next three days are in fact one service spread over three days.

GOOD FRIDAY



The liturgical reform of the 20th century has placed celebrations of these mysteries from the area of private devotion and pietism to the one, unique celebration of mysteries of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. This celebration, starting at 3.00 pm, has to be seen in the context of Maundy Thursday Eucharist and Easter Vigil. Private devotions and prayers are welcome during the whole day, especially after the service, in Bishop Selwyn Chapel.

Good Friday is a day of fasting and abstinence. This is the day of the crucifixion, the day Jesus died for the sins of the world. The Cathedral looks very different on Good Friday; it is plain and bare. There are no sacramental elements in the aumbry in the Marsden Chapel; it was carried away on Holy Thursday night to the "altar of repose" in Bishop Selwyn Chapel to signify Jesus' death. The light by the aumbry is blown out, and the aumbry doors are left open to show that it is empty. Jesus is gone. This is quite dramatic, highlighting that Good Friday is a solemn day of prayer and mourning.

The service on Good Friday is not a Eucharist and it is a continuation of the Maundy Thursday liturgy and hence begins in silence as the night before ended in silence. The holy table is completely bare.

The service consists of following parts:

- 1. The Ministry of the Word, with a focus on the Passion.**
- 2. The Meditation on the Cross of Jesus.**
- 3. The Solemn Intercessions.**

In this way it follows the tradition of the Ambrosian Rite (developed in Milan, in time of Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (227-397)), while Roman tradition places the Solemn Intercessions before the Meditation on the Cross of Jesus. Ambrosian Rite does not include administration of the Communion with the sacrament reposed on the Maundy Thursday.

After a silent entrance, prostration and Scripture readings, we meditate on the Passion of Jesus according to Saint John. Silence and reflection is woven throughout this service to allow time for personal prayer and reflection. Unless otherwise indicated, we **stand** to sing the hymns. We **sit** for readings and prayers.

After this meditation, the Meditation on the Cross follows. The Cross will be brought into the Cathedral, in order that the death of Christ may be proclaimed. At the entrance you have received a rosemary sprig or a nail - you are free to come forward when indicated and express your devotion by laying the rosemary or nail at the foot of the cross. Some people might wish to kiss the cross or just lay their head upon it, some might wish to kneel, genuflect or bow - diverse cultural expressions are welcome!

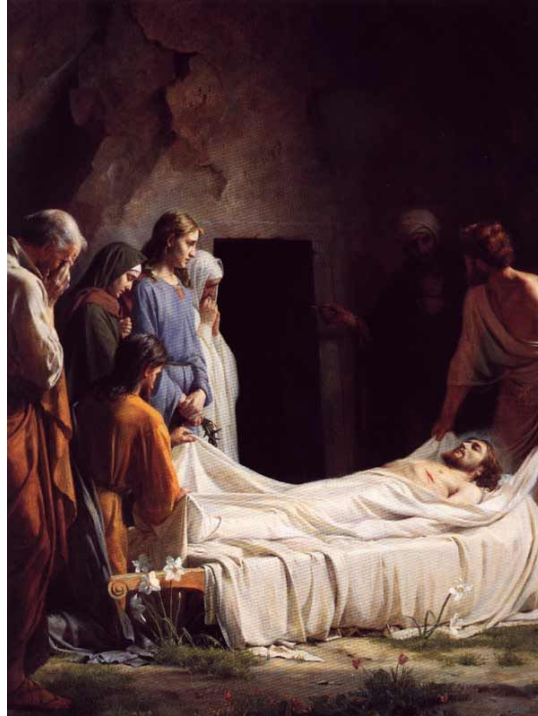
Having no communion on Good Friday is the most ancient tradition. In the early church, receiving communion would have been regarded as breaking the fast that lasted from Good Friday until the Easter Eucharist.

Among the Orthodox Christians, during Lent the Eucharist is celebrated on Saturdays, Sundays, and feast days. On other days the liturgy of the presanctified is celebrated (this is akin to receiving from the reserved Sacrament), but not on Good Friday, unless this falls on March 25, the feast of the Annunciation.

From the time of the seventh century, the custom developed in the West of receiving communion (both bread and wine) from the Sacrament reserved after the Maundy Thursday Eucharist.

Drawing on diverse traditions, Holy Communion is **not** administered at today's service.

HOLY SATURDAY



On this day Christ is in the tomb. There is no daytime Eucharist on Holy Saturday. It is still a day of sorrow and expectation, the final one before the Easter Vigil begins that evening. We remember, with Mary and the disciples, that Jesus died and was separated from them for the first time as he lay in the tomb. The faithful often continue their Good Friday fast through Holy Saturday. Bishop Selwyn Chapel is the place where people are welcome to come during the day and keep their wake, pray in silence and reflect upon the mysteries we celebrate.

EASTER VIGIL / EASTER SUNDAY



The high point of Holy Week celebrations is known as the Great Vigil of Easter, for it proclaims and celebrates the whole of salvation history and Christ's saving work.

The Easter Vigil has historic and symbolic roots in the Jewish Passover. For Christians, Christ, whose abiding presence is celebrated in the Eucharist, is our Passover. The Christian Pasch (the term used for the great three days of Easter) is Christ's passing over from death to life, which is ultimately celebrated during the Great Vigil of Easter, and on Easter Day.

Many of the images in the Easter Vigil are from the Old Testament, and are fulfilled in Christ, e.g. "lamb of God", "good shepherd", "living water". In this service we experience the passage from slavery to freedom, from death to life. This vigil of the Christian Pasch marks the beginning of the Sunday of all Sundays, the Lord's Day above all others.

The Easter Vigil consists of four principal parts: The Service of Light, the Ministry of the Word, The Liturgy of Water (Baptism) and the Eucharist.

In the **Service of Light** the resurrection is proclaimed in both spoken word and dramatic ceremony, the Paschal/Easter candle symbolising Christ the light of the world, risen from the darkness of the grave. The main feature is the procession of the Easter candle through the

church during which light is passed progressively to all present, culminating in the ancient Easter song of praise, known as the Exsultet: "Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!" The candle is prepared with the cross, the symbol of life and death; the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha and Omega, proclaiming Christ as the beginning and end of all things; and the numerals of the current year, a reminder that the Lord of all ages is present here and now.

The Ministry of the Word is the oldest feature of this celebration. The readings rehearse the mighty acts of God. This powerful sweep of scripture focuses the whole history of God's creating and redeeming work in Jesus Christ.

The Liturgy of Water follows in response to the proclamation of the resurrection in scripture. Throughout the church's history, baptism has been intimately linked with Easter. New converts entered into Christ's redeeming death and resurrection at the same time as the Church was celebrating its memorial of those events. It is, therefore, most appropriate that the Easter Liturgy include Baptism within it.

The natural and proper climax of the whole Christian Pasch is the **Eucharist**, the culmination of the great three days, in which we are united with our risen Lord, and we enjoy a foretaste of Christ's heavenly banquet at the end of time. Thus we can say that this Easter celebration is the most evangelical, biblical, sacramental and liturgical occasion in the whole of Christian year.

CELEBRATING EASTER FULLY

Easter Sunday is what we've all been waiting for! The 40 days of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving during Lent was in preparation for this day, when our hearts and souls can drink in deeply the culmination of the Pascal mystery: the Resurrection.

Therefore Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the 'Feast of feasts', the 'Solemnity of solemnities', just as the Eucharist is the 'Sacrament of sacraments'. St. Athanasius calls Easter 'the Great Sunday' and the Eastern Churches call Holy Week 'the Great Week'. The mystery of the Resurrection, in which Christ crushed death, permeates with its powerful energy our old time, until all is subjected to him.

To meditate more deeply on the Sacred Triduum, please read a profound Easter sermon by St. John Chrysostom, the golden-tongued Doctor of the Church. It is available online!

To celebrate the Sacred Triduum fully, check the roster of our Triduum Services in Holy Trinity Cathedral.

We do hope that this booklet is informative enough and that it explains the beauty of the liturgy of Holy Triduum. It is our sincere wish to see you at our services, from Maundy Thursday, till Easter.

Celebrating Holy Triduum takes time and commitment. Many suggest that it is good to celebrate it at least once – the experience of many is that it then becomes the cherished and deep way to celebrate Paschal mysteries.

As we strive to be a “worshipping community”, your participation is needed and welcome. We are hoping to see you with us.

Anne Mills
Dean of Auckland

Ivica Gregurec
Cathedral Precentor

HOLY WEEK AT HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL

Palm Sunday

10.00 am Festal Choral Eucharist with Procession
Nave

Holy Wednesday

6.00 pm Choral Evensong with Benediction
Chancel

GOOD FRIDAY

10.00 am Family Service
Nave

HOLY TRIDUUM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

7.30 pm Festal Eucharist of the Last Supper
(Festal Service)

GOOD FRIDAY

3.00 pm Good Friday Service

HOLY SATURDAY

8.00 pm Great Easter Vigil
(Festal Service)

EASTER DAY

8.00 am	Eucharist with Easter Hymns	St Mary's
9.00 am	Holy Communion (BCP)	St Stephen's
10.00 am	Choral Eucharist	Nave
5.00 pm	Festal Choral Evensong	Chancel
8.00 pm	Taizé Prayer	Bishop Selwyn Chapel

- *Festal services include use of incense, which is a symbol of our prayers being offered to God. The incense we use in the Cathedral is fair trade, organic, low-allergenic type from Ethiopia.*