

HOLY TRIDUUM - During the pandemic and how can we still make it holy and meaningful



Holy Thursday

Mass of the last supper, washing of the feet

For the last time, before His arrest and death, Jesus had a dinner with His closest friends. Not everyone was invited to the upper room, but only those who were closest to Jesus, His disciples. They know that they are not safe anymore, they understand that from now on all of their lives will be in danger and we know today that mostly all of them were killed for Christ. What Jesus does for them is very simple, but also very meaningful; He eats the supper with them and then He washes their feet.

What can we learn from this?

I think when we lockdown in our houses and we can't even go to Church to participate in the Holy Thursday liturgy, we can do something simple, yet meaningful to our closest friends, to our family members. If you are home together with your family, why don't you have a simple dinner, be together like Jesus with His friends. They were scared too, they also didn't understand what was happening to Jesus and what will happen to them, but they treasured their time together. If you are alone at your house, try to call someone and talk, tell them how important their presence in your life is, and if you can't call anyone, you still have Jesus present with you at your home. Invite Him into your

home and into your heart. He will tell you like He told His disciples before- you may not understand what is happening now, but you will understand in the future. Jesus washes the feet of His friends; this is how He shows His humility and His love for them. Let us do the same, especially on this holy day, now when we might be tired of each other locked down in our own homes, tell others, or make them feel that you love them and you are there for them, and humble enough to admit your own shortcomings and mistakes. Let's make this Holy Thursday even holier than all the years before!

Good Friday

Passion of Christ, Veneration of the Cross

There is no Mass on this day, the only day when not even a priest celebrates Mass. Jesus is dying on the cross. We should fast especially on this day, offer sacrifices for the One who gave up His own life for each one of us. If you remember from previous years in the liturgy this day, there is also no singing. We also read the passion of Christ according to John and then we come up to venerate or kiss the cross. During this lockdown when we can't be at Church, we can still make this Good Friday a holy and special time for us and our families.

We all have crucifixes in our homes; they all are different: small or big, made of wood or plastic or metal, very simple or expensive and very decorative, but we all have them- this is the symbol of our faith, of our belonging to Christ. Maybe on Good Friday this year we can look at our crucifix, wipe the dust off our crosses and venerate it like we would do in our Church, by kissing it, touching it, or simply looking at it and simply praying to Jesus for a moment, asking Him to help us to bear our crosses during the pandemic and also our fears and uncertainties for tomorrow. Then take the gospel and read the chapters of the passion of our Lord. You can read it alone, or maybe with your family members by choosing some of them to read Jesus's lines, or the crowds, or the narrator and so on. Let's make this Good Friday even holier than years before!

Holy Saturday, Easter Vigil

Blessing of the water, blessing of the light, joy of the resurrection.

On this most special evening we usually begin the liturgy with a blessing of the newly lit fire and by carrying the paschal candle in procession all the way to the front of the Church. (I need to tell you that for this year we purchased a very beautiful paschal candle that will be burning on every baptism and funeral that takes place at St. Thomas). When the candle is brought and all the congregation have their candles, the “Exultet” is solemnly sung. It is the joyful proclamation of Easter. We then read several selections of scripture before we sing the Gloria once again after 40 days of Lent and the whole Church is lit up again. During this beautiful and symbol-filled liturgy, we also bless the water and welcome into our Christian family any newly baptized and confirmed candidates. They now take their rightful place among the members of our Church.

Christ is truly risen, we can rejoice, we can sing, we can celebrate!

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be together again on that day? As I have mentioned before, it would have brought even more joy to me, being with you on this Easter day for the very first time here at St. Thomas. But I need to wait for that moment a little longer too.

But even though we can't be at Church together, we still should be joyful, we should smile, we should celebrate even in our own homes. We need to tell the world around us that Christ is truly risen, there is no more death. After 40 days in the desert, after 3 days in the tomb, there is now light, there is joy, there is happiness. We will fight that virus and we will win! We will fight the cancer and we will win! We will fight any illness and disease and threat of evil and sin, and we will live with Christ. This is our hope today, the great hope of someone who truly believes in Jesus' promises. So, for us Christians, there is no lasting death; there is resurrection for all. Even if you are currently sad or unsure about the future, or about being locked down in your homes, on Easter Day play some Easter music, play the “Exultet”, decorate your home inside and out. Make this day special as it should be. Then we can make this Easter even more special than all the years before.