

# Liturgy Newsletter

**Lent/Holy Week 2009**

*News and Notes from the Liturgy Office*

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## Lent

### A Sense of the Season

The word Lent means springtime. This word comes from the same root as lengthen. Daytime lengthens during Lent. The northern hemisphere turns toward the sun, the source of life, and winter turns into spring. In Hebrew, the word for repentance is the same as the word that means to turn, like the turning of the earth to the sun, like the turning of the soil before planting.

“Even now, says the Lord, turn to me.” (Joel 2:12)

The word sin means separation. We are called to turn from our separate selves, from our sin, to come together in community. Self-denial is the way we express our repentance. In the lengthening brightness from Ash Wednesday until Holy Thursday afternoon, our holy Lent, we turn to God as our source of life.

Self-denial is threefold, advises Matthew’s gospel. We pray: “Go to your room, close your door, and pray to your Father in private.” We fast: “No one must see you are fasting but your Father.” We give alms: “Keep your deeds of mercy secret, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.” Through the Lenten exercise of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we spring-clean our lives, sharpen our senses, put tomorrow in its place and treasure the day at hand.

Why are there forty days in Lent? It took forty days for sinfulness to drown in the flood before a new creation could inherit the earth. It took forty years for the generation of slaves to die before the freeborn could enter the promised land. For forty days Moses and Elijah and Jesus fasted and prayed to prepare themselves for a life’s work.

At the beginning of Lent the bishop calls out the names of the catechumens who seek to be baptized at Easter. Their names are written in the book of the elect, the chosen. God has chosen them, and they have chosen to turn to God. Lent is the forty days before the baptism of the catechumens. The already baptized can share the excitement and the struggles of the elect and rediscover the meaning of baptism in their own lives.

During the forty days, both catechumens and the faithful journey together to the holy font.

We keep Lent together. We put aside our business-as-usual to support each other in prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We turn to God to enlighten us and purify us throughout the lengthening brightness of our holy season of Lent. “For now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!”

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## Liturgical Calendar

### Stations of the Cross throughout Lenten Season

Every Friday, 7PM

*Pizza (cheese) prior to Stations at 6PM in the Hall*

### Mid-day Lenten Prayer

Every Wednesday, 12 Noon *Chapel*

### Exposition & Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Every Thursday, 7:30PM *Chapel*

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### March

March 1 <sup>st</sup>	First Sunday of Lent <i>Rite of Sending of the Catechumens for Election (9:30am)</i>
March 8 <sup>th</sup>	Second Sunday of Lent
March 15 <sup>th</sup>	Third Sunday of Lent <i>Celebration of First Scrutiny with the Elect (9:30am)</i>
March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Taize Prayer 7PM <i>Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation available</i>
March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Fourth Sunday of Lent <i>Celebration of Second Scrutiny with the Elect (9:30am)</i>
March 29 <sup>th</sup>	Fifth Sunday of Lent <i>Celebration of Third Scrutiny with the Elect (9:30am)</i>

April

April 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday, 9:15AM (Church)  
**Living Stations of the Cross**  
 Presented by SMM Catholic School 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Reconciliation Weekend (April 3/4)  
**Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation**

April 3 (Fri) 7PM – 9PM (chapel)  
 April 4 (Sat) 9am – 3PM (chapel)

April 5<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion

**Holy Week**

**Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation during Holy Week (in Chapel)**

April 6<sup>th</sup> (Mon) 8:30AM – 9:30AM; 7PM – 8PM  
 April 7<sup>th</sup>, (Tues) 8:30AM – 9:30AM; 7PM – 8PM  
 April 8<sup>th</sup>, (Wed) 7PM – 8PM

**Sacred Triduum**

**A Sense of the Season**

The word Triduum comes from the Latin and means “three days.” It is commonly pronounced “TRIH-doo-uhm” and is usually used in reference to the Easter Triduum, the three most sacred days in the church year. The Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, reaches its high point at the Easter Vigil and concludes with evening prayer on Easter Sunday. Often there is confusion about how that block of time can be counted as three days. The traditional Jewish practice of counting days from sunset to sunset is used during the Triduum. Thus, Holy Thursday evening to Good Friday evening is the first day, Good Friday evening to Holy Saturday evening is the second day and Holy Saturday evening to Sunday evening is the third day.

After centuries of neglect, Pope Pius XII in 1955 restored the Triduum liturgies to their rightful place as the culmination of the entire liturgical year. Although we talk of the three days, our Triduum prayer is best understood as one liturgy in three interlocking movements. The death and resurrection of the Lord cannot be separated.

The meaning of these days is distorted when we imagine that the liturgy re-enacts the final events in the life of Jesus in a sort of historical review. We miss the point in that case. The mystery of Jesus’ death and resurrection is a present reality; the boundaries of time, and the boundaries of death, have no power here.

Our past, present and future are irrevocably marked by our own immersion into this mystery through baptism. We wash one another’s feet, reverence the cross, light fires in the night and proclaim the stories of our salvation with an awed awareness that this is what it means to be baptized. The Easter Vigil then is the premier time to welcome new members into the church through baptism, confirmation and Eucharist.

Ideally, no other parish events are scheduled on these three days; the presence, time and energy of every person in the community are needed for what we do here. Yes, this may be inconvenient, but birth and death are rarely convenient! Our forty days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving lead us to the Triduum—beyond its history, into its mystery.

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**Holy Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

Morning Prayer 8AM (Chapel)  
 Mass of the Lord’s Supper 7:30PM  
*Washing of Feet; Eucharistic Procession, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament*

**Good Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**

Morning Prayer 8AM (Chapel)  
 Stations of the Cross 12N (Church)  
 Good Friday of the Lord’s Passion 3PM; 7:30PM

**Holy Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>**

Morning Prayer 8AM (Chapel)  
 Holy Saturday Night: The Easter Vigil 8PM

**Easter Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>**

Mass: 8AM; 9:30AM; 10:45AM; 12N; 6PM





## ...notes from the Ordo...

The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better, as one “great Sunday.” The first eight days of the Easter season make up the octave of Easter and are celebrated as solemnities of the Lord. During these liturgies of the octave, a double *Alleluia* is added to the dismissal and its response. The sequence, *Victimae paschali*, is obligatory at Mass on Easter Sunday.

The paschal candle, a symbol of the presence of the risen Christ among the people of God, remains in the sanctuary near the altar or ambo through Vespers on Pentecost Sunday. Its use is encouraged at all liturgical celebrations.

Beginning with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, it is recommended that the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water take the place of the Act of Penitence at the beginning of Mass. Such a rite might begin around the font containing the water blessed at the Easter Vigil.



## Which Three Days Are The Three Days?

There’s a lot of talk in church now about “the Three Days,” or in Latin, the “Triduum.” These are our most holy of days. They make up our most important single celebration of the year: Easter. But exactly *which* three days make up the Triduum?

At first this sounds like a stupid question such as, “What color was Napoleon’s white horse?” or “Who’s buried in Grant’s tomb?” Actually, it’s a trick question. Most would say that the Three Days are Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. And that’s wrong! (How could Easter Sunday *not* be one of the Three Days?!)

The three days of the Triduum are counted using the Jewish way of keeping time: from sunset to sunset. So the first day of the Triduum is from sunset on Holy Thursday until sunset on Good Friday. The second day is from sunset on Good Friday until sunset on Holy Saturday. The third day is from sunset Holy Saturday (the great Easter Vigil) to sunset Easter Sunday (Paschal Vespers).

Does this make any difference—or is it only good Catholic trivia? Here’s the difference that it makes. We

tend to think of the Three Days as commemorating separate, distinct events: On Holy Thursday we remember the Last Supper, on Good Friday we recall the passion and on Holy Saturday the resurrection. But in our liturgy, the church thinks about the Last Supper not as the last thing that happened on Holy Thursday, but as the *first* thing to happen on Good Friday. What new insights into the eucharist do you have when you think of it as the first act of Christ’s passion? What new understanding of Sabbath—the day of rest—do you have when you reflect on the fact that Jesus slept in death from sunset Friday and all through the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday? And how might we spend our Saturday nights if we understood them to truly be the beginning of Sunday—not just during the Triduum, but year round? What does it mean when the deacon or cantor sings at the Vigil that because of the resurrection, this night is brighter than any day?

These Three Days are a single moment. We walk (or crawl) into this moment on Thursday night and walk (or dance) out on Easter day. In between, there’s a flood of stories and songs, rites and rest, fasting and feasting. The Three Days are time out of time, the center of our year and of our life.

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## Symbols and Sacramentals



On Good Friday two crisscrossed planks of lumber were carried into church. A voice sang out, “This is the wood of the cross, on which hung the Savior of the world.” And all of us gathered there stepped forward to give glory to God by venerating this holy wood.

For us Christians, wood calls many things to mind: A cypress ark saved creation from the flood. Moses held high his walking stick to divide the sea. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, the boy carried the wood for his own funeral pyre. But God chose life, not death, for Abraham’s beloved son.

There is a legend that the cross of Christ was hewn from Eden’s long-dead tree of life. The blood of Christ brought this wood to life so that it flowered afresh.

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In your home, honor the life-giving cross. Hang it in the place you pray. If you have no cross, a couple of branches would make a fine one. During this Easter season keep some spring flowers alongside it.

Celebrate the resurrection by planting a tree. Give God glory that two ordinary pieces of wood have become a promise of paradise.

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## Water

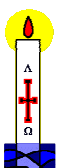
A glorious and lovely custom, the origins of the Easter bath date back a little more than thousand years, from the time that large numbers of eastern Europeans first accepted Christianity and were baptized into the faith.

Water is precious to Christians. It reminds us of the rivers of paradise, the great flood and the Red Sea. In baptism we enter those waters to be created anew. In baptism we are led safely to freedom. Baptismal waters are like a tomb. In them we die, are buried and are raised with Christ. The waters are like a womb. In them we are reborn.

Throughout Eastertime, the 50 days from Easter until Pentecost, on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord each January and on the actual anniversary of your own celebration of the first sacrament, remember and renew your baptism. Ask parents and godparents what they can recollect about it. What mementoes can you find—your robe, candle or certificate?

Set a small holy water font in your home. Morning and night, take some water on your fingertips and make the sign of the cross as a pledge of resurrection.

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## Wax

Eastertime is the 50-day-long season from Easter Sunday until Pentecost. Throughout this time the paschal candle shines in church. This candle is an image of the risen body of Christ. It was kindled and consecrated with great ceremony on Easter Eve.

When people are baptized into the church, they are given candles lit from the paschal candle. They are told to keep their lamps burning brightly throughout their lives.

At funerals the paschal candle shines on the dead, like a pillar of fire to guide them to the promised land.

A burning candle is a sign of self-sacrifice. It consumes itself in a blaze of glory. Traditionally, the church's candles are made from beeswax. A beehive is a symbol of the church, where everyone is called to work together for the common good.

Many households light a fine, fat candle every mealtime, and indeed, every time they gather to pray. It is a holy habit.

When you light a candle in prayer you might say, "Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light no darkness can extinguish." Or say the words proclaimed at the Easter Vigil, "Light of Christ! Thanks be to God!"

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## Incense

Let my prayer rise before you like incense." Each evening the church sings these words from Psalm 141. That's one reason we Christians praise God with incense: It is a sign of prayer.

The smoke of melting incense is also a sign of sacrifice, of purification, of homage, of mystery. It calls to mind the bright cloud of God's presence that filled the holy of holies within the Temple in Jerusalem. At the transfiguration and ascension of Jesus, his body was surrounded by a cloud. Perhaps that is why some people imagine heaven to be a place of shining clouds where the angels glorify God with incense.

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