

From the Vicar's Desk

*Easter is next Sunday. So the days of our spiritual voyage are all but over. The three holiest days of the liturgical year begin at dusk this Thursday and end at dusk on Sunday. They are the "Triduum" (TREE-DO-UM), "three days" in Latin. **One should make every effort to be present in church and to participate during these most sacred of ALL times in the life of our Church.***

A brief explanation of the Triduum Liturgies

Holy Thursday: *At the Last Supper, Our Lord gave us the Sacrament of the Eucharist (Holy Communion), the Sacrament of Holy Orders, (Priesthood), the Mass, and a wonderful example of service, the 'Mandatum' (washing the apostles' feet). On Holy Thursday evening, 7 p.m., I will imitate Our Lord by offering Mass and washing the feet of 12 parishioners, representing the 12 apostles. After Communion, the Holy Eucharist is "Transferred" to a side altar for Repose. Then, for a short period, remain after Mass and witness 'The Stripping of the Altar.' There will be the "Night-watch," private adoration throughout the night (until midnight).*

Good Friday: *This day Our Lord suffered His passion and death on the Cross. At 2 p.m. (1:30-SIJ), we will have the reading of the Passion in 3 parts. Then, after prayers, Fr. will exit the altar and re-enter the church from the rear. During this interval, a collection for the Holy Land will be taken. Proceeding down the main aisle with the crucifix held high, I will stop 3 times and sing out: "Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world." After all venerate (kiss) the cross at the Communion Stations, there is a simple Communion Service. No Mass is celebrated anywhere in the world on this grim, BUT indispensable day!*

Holy Saturday: *This Easter Vigil Mass is the most profound Mass of the year! It begins at 8:30 p.m., purposely after sunset. No lights will be on in the church. (All vigil candles will be extinguished.) The liturgy begins in darkness with the building of the First Fire (outside, at the front entrance). I will then inscribe and light the 'Easter Candle' (used at all baptisms & funerals), which represents Christ, the Light of the World, dispelling sin & darkness. Proceeding down the main aisle of the darkened church with the candle held high, I will stop 3 times and sing out (in contrast to the Good Friday intonations), "The Light of Christ." The people light their votive tapers from the Easter Candle. Once the Easter Candle is in its stand, the ancient "Exultet" will be sung, 3 pages long! It recounts the history of salvation: from Adam & Eve, the first Christmas, Calvary, and Easter to the present. After several readings, the "Gloria" is intoned, the Opening Prayer is recited, and the Mass begins! A particularly important part of this Mass is the renewal of our own baptismal vows, our Official initiation into the family of God, and thereby, heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven, as God's adopted children.*

The liturgy will last over 1^{1/2} hrs. It is remarkably beautiful, BUT ... not for the very young or faint-hearted. It is one of the most beautiful and complicated of all liturgies & well worth the experience if one is properly prepared. After all, what hope would there be for any meaning in life were there no Easter? It would all end at the tomb with an empty, meaningless casket-thud. BUT alas, Jesus has loved us to death. He is the glorious truth, the way, & the (eternal) life!

*In Him—born on Christmas, died on Friday, rose on Sunday! —
Your vicar, fr.t.*