

Holy Week Draws Christians Closer to Life in Christ

Greetings!

Even at a young age, children will be aware of some of the differences with the liturgy during Holy Week. Parents, grandparents, and others who guide them in the faith will want to explain that the liturgical calendar reminds us that all times and all seasons belong to God. In each liturgical year, we have the opportunity to celebrate the entirety of Jesus' earthly life, from the Annunciation and Mary's yes to his Ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Each liturgical year begins with the First Sunday of Advent and ends with the week of the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. At the beginning of Holy Week, the Church is still in the season of Lent, but at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, the liturgical season of the Sacred Paschal Triduum begins.

As Holy Week approaches, and we prepare for the holiest days of the liturgical year, our celebrations become more distinctive. Historians tell us that because this time is so sacred, many of its traditions come to us from very early in Christian history.

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The movement of the processions of Holy Week, from Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday, may entrance children. These processions help us to enter into the celebration of the Paschal Mystery. All of Holy Week makes present the greatest events in history so that we, the people of today, might encounter Jesus as the people present in Jerusalem two thousand years ago were able to do. Through this encounter we come to believe in him, to recognize our vocation to bring his love to all people, and to hope that where he has gone we shall follow.

At the beginning of Mass on Palm Sunday, we gather for the blessing of palms and we sing Hosanna, praising Jesus, the one who saves, as he comes into Jerusalem. We are part of the crowd praising him as the Savior. At the end of the



As each candle is lighted at the Easter Vigil and light fills the church, we anticipate light filling the world.

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, we process with the Blessed Sacrament and are invited to remain in prayer with Jesus as his friends did after the Last Supper. On Holy Saturday, we begin at the new fire, where the Paschal candle is blessed and we process behind it into the dark church. As the people of Israel followed the pillar of fire to salvation from slavery, we follow the light of Christ, which leads us to salvation. As the light comes to each person, one by one, we see the light of Christ spread throughout the Church as we hope it will spread through the whole world, until God will be all in all and his Kingdom will have no end.

As the Paschal Mystery is made present to us today, we encounter the person of Jesus Christ, through whom comes our salvation.