

# The Triduum Is for Children, Too

Greetings!

As Lent draws to a close, we begin to focus our attention on what we have been preparing for—the celebration of Jesus' passion, death, and Resurrection, and the new life that is offered to each of us in Christ.

In the Northern Hemisphere, this new life is paralleled in the natural world as it awakens from its winter sleep. We see this too in the secular symbols of Easter, with colorful bunnies and chicks everywhere we turn.

We might wonder, amid all this, how we can bring focus to the events of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

**Let your children have the opportunity to experience God in the Triduum as they are right now.**

As overwhelming as it may seem, a wonderful way to hand on the faith to children is to bring them to the liturgy of the Triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. Each of us is formed by what we experience in the liturgy, and the Triduum in particular contains signs that engage the whole person. I can hear the objections to this: Some of the services may last (and even begin) after bedtime. It is hard enough to make it through Sunday Mass. It is difficult for adults to feel prayerful while they have small children poking each other or playing with mom's earrings.

As a mother, I understand why many people shy away from bringing children to church during our holiest days. Children are not made to be still and quiet for long periods of time. But children respond readily to the signs of the Triduum. These signs engage our senses and hold our attention. Feet are washed, the cross is venerated, the new fire is blessed and the light is passed, adults and children are baptized, confirmed, and receive the Eucharist. The story of who we are as the People of God is told as we progress from darkness to light. The celebration is of the resurrection, the defining moment in history.

It is true that much that goes on during the Triduum that children, especially small children, cannot understand. Do we ever come to comprehend these events? If perfect



The signs and symbols of the Triduum help form children in the faith.

understanding is required, none of us could hope to participate. We connect to the liturgy as we are in a particular moment in time. It is a gift to provide that opportunity to children, just as it is a gift to have it ourselves.

Taking little ones to the Triduum requires flexibility and patience. Do not torture yourselves or them, and if it is not working, give yourself permission to change course. But it is valuable to give attending the liturgy a try. Your children will never be as they are in this moment again. Let them have the opportunity to experience God in the Triduum as they are right now. With children, it has definitely been worth it.