

# THE HISTORY OF THE TRIDUUM

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By the second century, Christians celebrated the great Easter Vigil, an event which began the night of Holy Saturday, continuing until dawn on Easter morning. During the vigil, Christians commemorated salvation history, awaited the return of Jesus and celebrated the resurrection of Jesus at dawn on Easter Sunday. At the vigil, catechumens, after a three year period of catechesis, were baptized and received first communion. At the time, the Easter Vigil was the most important celebration of the liturgical year.

Eventually Christians expanded this

celebration to a three-day commemoration of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, with the Easter Vigil being the high point of the three day commemoration known as the *Triduum* (Latin for "three days"). Over time, as the liturgical year expanded, the Easter Vigil lost its preeminence, although the three days commemorating Jesus' passion still held an important place in the Church year. However, since the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the Easter Vigil, and the Triduum, have regained their position of prominence in the Western Catholic liturgical calendar.



## *Celebrating the Triduum*

### at Church and at Home

Many parishes have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as part of their **Holy Thursday** celebration. Spend some extra time in silent prayer before the Eucharist.

Stations of the Cross are particularly appropriate on **Good Friday**. By calling to mind the steps in our Savior's journey to Calvary, we can better appreciate what he did for us. Group or individual recitation of the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary is another powerful way to call to mind Jesus' sacrifice.

**Good Friday** is also a day of fast and abstinence: Those 14 and older are to abstain from eating meat, and those aged 18-59 are to fast by taking only one full meal with two smaller meals (no snacks in between).

**Holy Saturday** features no morning liturgy but some parishes might gather on Holy Saturday morning for Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. This is a good day to schedule at least some time of prayer in silence.

**The Easter Vigil** is a richly symbolic celebration of our belief in the Resurrection and the history of our salvation. Many parishes schedule baptisms for the Easter Vigil liturgy as a concrete representation of salvation through Christ.

**Easter Sunday** is the preeminent Sunday, reminding us of why we celebrate Mass and worship the Lord throughout the year. "Alleluia" is the word for the day. Sing or repeat it to yourself often as you go through the day's festivities.

# TRIDUUM PRAYER

Almighty God, you gather your Church  
in solemn celebration of the mystery of our Redemption.  
Open our hearts and minds as we remember the dying  
and the rising of Jesus so that we may appreciate  
more deeply the mystery of our own baptism.  
May these days remind us that we are not alone  
in our suffering nor without hope.  
May the joy we share strengthen us  
to be witnesses of the Gospel throughout the year.  
We ask this in the name of your Son and our Lord,  
Jesus Christ. **Amen**

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## Lenten Reflections

The **TEACHING** of Jesus—Daily Bible Readings for Lent  
*Teachings on Following Through* **Jesus speaks about the humble reward.**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Maundy Thursday	Good Friday	Holy Saturday
Matthew 21:28-32	Luke 14: 28-33	Mark 14:12-25	Luke 9: 57-62	Mark 14:32-42	John 19:28-30	John 12:1-8
<i>Do what you say.</i>	<i>Finish what you start.</i>	<i>Keep following me EVERY DAY.</i>	<i>Don't look back.</i>	<i>Know when it is time to get going.</i>	<i>It is finished.</i>	<i>Prepare for my burial.</i>