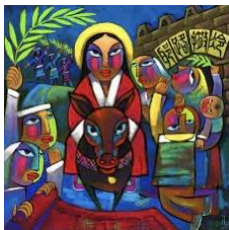




Preparing for the Three Great Days of Easter (The Paschal Triduum) 2023 at St. Michael & All Angels

(Please Note: the following is provided as a means of preparation for the pinnacle of festivals in the Christian year. We hope you will be able to join us for as much of this sacred time as possible. ***You are invited, each time you come to a service, to consider bringing a small offering for the Sharing Food Cupboard.*** In place of an over-abundance of Easter flowers, your planning team has chosen to decorate with such gifts that we may bring in the service of others. A collection basket will be made available and, on Easter Sunday, an area around the altar will be used for the placement of these gifts.)



April 2nd at 8 & 10 A.M. Passion Sunday with the Liturgy of the Palms.

Although not actually in Holy Week, this Sunday is the threshold towards the Great Three Days. The service begins with the blessing and waving of palms representing the branches that welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem. Some individuals may like to “force” forsythia branches in the week before and bring them as well. The service then turns to a communal reading of the Passion Narrative as we reflect on what it means in terms of personal risk and sacrifice to follow Jesus on his Passion journey.

The Paschal Triduum - *The Great Three Days of Christ's Passion and Resurrection* - recall God's work of salvation in Christ Jesus and embody the entire meaning of Christian life and faith: “Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.”

Early Christians borrowed from Jewish custom and the three days are counted from sundown to sundown. The **first day** is from sundown on Thursday before Easter Day until sundown Friday. The **second day** occurs from sundown on Friday before Easter

Day to sundown Saturday. The **third day** begins after sundown on Saturday until sundown on Easter Sunday.

The images, symbols, ceremonies and rites, Scriptures and music of this weekend express for us the meaning and mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection. They disclose, too, our identity as Christians: *"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his."* Romans 6:3-5

Although the Triduum is three days; it is one continuous liturgy flowing from day to day with the purpose of our formation as Christians.



April 6th - Maundy Thursday at 7:00 P.M.

Preparing for the First Night of the Triduum

Consider joining in an Agape meal (Gk=highest form of love; God for us, we for God) of soup, bread and cheese at 6:00 P.M. in the Parish Hall, from which we will proceed into worship in the church.

"Maundy" derives from the Latin *"mandate = commandment"*. It comes from the recollection of Jesus' "new commandment" to his disciples: how they should love one another and how Jesus embodies this in the action of washing the disciples' feet. This action continues to be present in the Triduum as a reminder for the followers of Jesus of the nature of our discipleship.

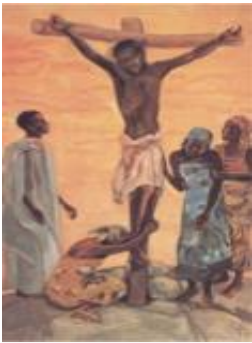
Those who come to a Maundy Thursday service will have the opportunity to participate in being washed and washing as the followers of Jesus. Of course, there is also the freedom to be an observer, participating in spirit. Consider prayerfully your part in washing feet and having feet washed. Participation in the ritual of washing of feet often raises issues of vulnerability, humility and being "good enough". Our feet are very personal and sometimes baring our feet means exposing imperfections along with feelings of embarrassment or even shame. Are we able to be so exposed and vulnerable to one another? Am I really struggling with being "good enough" to measure up? Can I humble myself before another's vulnerability? Is there any spiritual growth available to us in either or both of these actions: washing and being washed? Allow yourself to sit with these questions with God who, our stories teach us, was made known in Jesus kneeling at the feet of his friends (read: John 13) and in the unknown woman (perhaps Mary of Bethany) washing and anointing the feet of Jesus with her hair in preparation for his burial (read: John 12).

Come to the service in anticipation: What does it mean to be washed in service? What does it mean to wash others? What is the source of our discomfort?

Consider wearing easily removable footwear (and no pantyhose) to facilitate your choice of participation.

This is often a service where children participate with a freedom that instructs the adult. Consider this experience for children.

Maundy Thursday also commemorates Jesus' gift of the Last Supper to his followers, which has become for us the "Holy Eucharist", "Holy Communion", or "the Mass". After sharing in the meal of Christ's presence, the Sanctuary is solemnly stripped as we move into the silence of the following day, recalling Jesus' betrayal and death on the cross. We leave the church in silence or remain in silent vigil.



April 7th - Good Friday at 10:00 A.M. Continuing the First Day of the Triduum

This is the day when God is silent. Jesus is crucified and lies dead in the tomb. We who gather at the foot of the cross and wait. "I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you which is the darkness of God...So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing." (T. S. Eliot, "East Coker")

Our unity with Christ finds expression in this Liturgy. First, we hear again the story of Christ's Passion for the world. Secondly, as those called to join with Christ in his Priesthood and interceding for the needs of the world, we share in the Solemn Intercession. Then, with the symbol of the Cross in our midst, we speak words of meditation upon the Cross and may come forward lighting a candle in adoration before this evocative symbol. Having venerated the cross, we leave again in the silence we are meant to carry throughout the second day. With the placing of stones, we seal the tomb. Although God is silent; God is acting. ***The second full day of the Triduum*** is traditionally spent in contemplation of Christ's "Harrowing of Hell", lifting the faithful dead into their living and eternal relationship with God.

You may wish to bring a personal cross, either jewelry or a wall or desk cross, to place on a table at the front of the church to be blessed by our liturgy.



April 8th - Holy Saturday at 7:00 P.M. A Deanery Service of the Easter Vigil at St. George's Church, Wharncliffe Road. The beginning of Third Day of the Triduum.

This night is the Christian Passover. Easter begins, central to the church's year.

Tonight, we gather in darkness. We kindle Easter fire, and we light the Paschal Candle outside the church. As the ancient Hebrews were led through the nighttime wilderness by a pillar of fire, so we process behind the paschal torch as those who are led by Christ, the Light of the world, to enter the church once more. We hear an ancient hymn in thanksgiving for this light.

We then hear the scriptures that are foundational to our life together: Salvation History through the Hebrew Scriptures and into the Christian experience. In response we gather around the font and there baptize and renew our baptismal covenant, remembering that through its waters we too have passed from death to life. An adult member of St. Michael & All Angels, Brittany Winton, will be baptized at this service. The First Eucharist of Easter feeds us with the life of our Baptism: Christ Risen in triumph over death.

The ***Third Day*** is then crowned with the ***Eucharist of Easter Day (8:00 & 10:00 A.M.) on April 9*** and the beginning of the Fifty Days of Easter that culminate in Pentecost.

