

LITURGY BYTES

Happy Easter



Our Palm Sunday column dealt with Holy Week and the three most important days of the Church year – the Triduum. We concluded with Good Friday, and so today we begin with Holy Saturday.

Holy Saturday is typically a day of preparation for Easter Sunday. In parishes, this day is also the time to prepare for the Easter Vigil which takes place in the evening. The Easter Vigil is the most beautiful and lengthy liturgy that begins in darkness, like the darkness of the tomb. We renew our baptismal promises and people are received into the Church, receiving all three Sacraments of Initiation or, in some cases, just Confirmation and Communion if they were already baptized. It is such a joyful experience from start to finish. There are additional prayers, more Scripture readings and lots of music. We hear the Gloria and the Alleluia verse once again. A new Paschal candle is blessed and presented as we sing Christ, Our Light! This is a very moving, high point of the Church year for all who participate and attend.

For many, it is Easter Sunday when they gather at Mass, viewing the beauty of the spring flowers and colorful banners. The penitential rite is replaced by a sprinkling rite as we renew our baptismal promises. The Gloria is sung, and we hear the Alleluia verse before the Gospel reading, once again. Truly, it is a great celebration of Our Lord's Resurrection – the most important teaching of our faith – Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead so we could share eternal life with him in heaven. Easter focuses on hope and our thankfulness for the gift of God's son, Jesus.

May you celebrate this beautiful Easter season with much joy and be a beacon of light to all you encounter! Happy Easter~~~~~ *Michele Hall*