

You will find that St. Margaret Mary is a parish where the fullness of the Truth of Jesus Christ is taught and lived, under the protection of our Patroness, St. Margaret Mary.

St. Margaret Mary Councils

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Judy Clyne, Chair 4:30pm
Phyllis Benbow 4:30pm
Dan Little 8:30am
Tom Schodorf 8:30am
LeAnn Wilson 11:00am
Jesse Boeckermann 11:00am
Cesar Cueva 1:00pm
Salvador Figueroa 1:00pm

Contact any parish council member with topics you would like discussed at their next meeting.

FINANCE COUNCIL

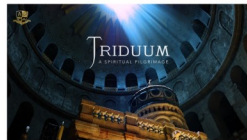
Doug Thigpen, Chair
John Czarnecki
Ernie Reynolds
Finance Council meets quarterly.
Next meeting is May 13, 2025.

To contact any Council Member, please send an email to: office@saintmmc.com.



This Week on Formed

Week of April 13, 2025



Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage

Triduum: A Spiritual Pilgrimage cinematically walks through the locations of the Holy Week story, representing the most important days of human history. Immersed in the Holy Land, the pilgrim is brought tangibly nearer to the story, the landscape, and the reality of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.



The Last Days: The Passion and Death of Jesus the Christ w/ Jonathan Roumie

This filmed presentation of the theatrical production movingly recreates the final moments of Jesus' earthly ministry as a teacher through His crucifixion and death. The play has been seen by thousands worldwide, not only as a live performance but also in live streams and televised broadcasts.



How to make a Palm Sunday Cross

Have you ever wondered how to make a cross with palms? Join Lyn Dam from the Archdiocese of Denver on how to make a palm leaf cross for Palm Sunday!

Our parish has a Formed subscription.
Visit signup.formed.org and select our parish name.

How do parishioners register to use our FORMED subscription?

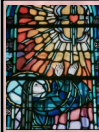
Registering for FORMED is easier than ever:
Go to formed.org/signup:



1. Select our Parish by name;
2. Register with your name and email address;
3. Check your email account for a link to begin using FORMED;
4. Scan the QR Code to download the FORMED app.

It's free! Download books, watch great

Women of St. Margaret Mary



OUR MISSION

Our women's group is a service organization created to support the mission of our parish and our pastor's initiatives, and to promote individual spiritual growth through prayers, reflection, and action.

BECOME A MEMBER!

Catholic women 18 years and older are invited to join. Our group gives women the opportunity to fully live their Catholic faith by sharing their gifts and talents with our parish, the community, and each other.
Questions? Email LeAnn at stmargaretmary1936@gmail.com.

Knights of Columbus

The Knights of Columbus is a global Catholic fraternal order founded by Fr. Michael J. McGivney in 1882 to assist families upon the death of the main income earner. The organization has grown to become the world's largest Catholic fraternal service organization. Knights support vocations, charitable outreach, professional insurance programs and more. Knights are dedicated to the principles of unity, charity, fraternity, and patriotism. Membership is open to practical Catholic men, aged 18 years or older. Learn more about the Knights of Columbus, by contacting Peter Graham at 828-989-2505 or email wpgraham912@charter.net.



St. Vincent de Paul Society



The St. Vincent de Paul Society helps families and neighbors in crisis with rent, utility bills, auto repairs and other essential needs.

Thank you for your generous gifts and prayers to support our ministry. If you would like to help us continue our mission of serving our neighbors, the SVP poor boxes are in the church vestibule and in the overflow seating entrance.

Donations may also be mailed to PO Box 4, Swannanoa, NC 28778 or online through the parish website saintmmc.com by choosing the fund St. Vincent de Paul Society.

For more information or assistance with food, finances, etc., call 800-862-1633

"Lord, help me to make time today to serve you in those who are most in need of encouragement or assistance."
~ St. Vincent de Paul

Catholic Charities Asheville

Catholic Charities serves the poor and vulnerable regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion. We offer financial help, burial assistance, bilingual licensed clinical mental health counseling, elder ministry, immigration services, and a food pantry at our Asheville office.



We couldn't do what we do without our caring, dedicated volunteers and your generous donations.

Donate at www.ccdoc.org/give
Join our volunteer team by contacting Hilary Kalisch at HRKalisch@rcdoc.org.



Saint Margaret Mary Catholic Church

Serving the Swannanoa Valley since 1936

April 13, 2025

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Most Rev. Michael T. Martin, Bishop
Rev. Brandon H. Jones, Parochial Administrator

Rev. Mr. Dan Hoffert, Deacon
Rev. Mr. Ralph Eckoff, Deacon (Ret.)

Claudia G. Graham, Office Manager
Jennifer Puzerewski, Admin. Assistant & Stewardship Coordinator
Taylor D'Abbraccio, Youth Formation
Karen Parsons, Organist

102 Andrews Place
Swannanoa, North Carolina 28778

Website: www.saintmmc.com

www.facebook.com/stmargaretmaryswannanoa

Celebration of the Sacraments

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil (Anticipated Mass): 4:30pm

Sunday: 8:30am & 11:00am; 1:00pm (Spanish)

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 12noon

Holy Days: Check website

CONFESSION

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 11:30am

Saturday: 3:30-4:00pm (check website for updates)

BAPTISM:

Contact the office to obtain the necessary forms.

Baptisms will be scheduled once forms are completed and returned to the office.

FIRST COMMUNION & CONFIRMATION:

Email: stmmcfait@gmail.com.

MARRIAGE: An appointment with a priest or deacon must be scheduled at least *twelve months* before the intended wedding date.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK: If a Catholic is in danger of death needing the Anointing of the Sick call the office during regular hours (828-686-8833) and press 4; **after** hours, press 2. If there has been a terminal diagnosis, please call the office as soon as possible to schedule an anointing early in the illness.



As he rode along, the people were spreading their cloaks on the road; and now as he was approaching the slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy for all the mighty deeds they had seen. They proclaimed: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."

~ Luke 19:35-38

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9:00AM - 3:00PM
Friday: Closed

OFFICE: 828-686-8833, press 4 for Front Desk
Por información en español oprima 3

FAX: 828-686-8832

E-MAIL: office@saintmmc.com; bhjones@rcdoc.org

SACRAMENTAL EMERGENCY (danger of death):

828-686-8833, after business hours press 2

WANT TO BECOME CATHOLIC? Join O.C.I.A.! OCIA is Order of Christian Initiation of Adults. We welcome those who desire to learn more about the Catholic faith, who desire to become Catholic, or who have been away from the church and would like to return. If you want to know more, please email Deacon Dan and Linda Hoffert at hofferts@bellsouth.net.

ADULT CHOIR/SCHOLA: Call the office at 828-686-8833.

VISITS FOR SICK & HOMEBOUND: Call parish office.

CATHOLIC FORMATION: Contact the Catholic Formation Team at: stmmcfait@gmail.com.

April 13, 2025

St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church - Diocese of Charlotte

Mass Intentions

| | | | |
|------|-------|---------|--------------------------|
| Sat | 04/12 | 4:30pm |† Russell Gambini |
| Sun | 04/13 | 8:30am | Pro Populo |
| | | 11:00am |† Julie Howachyn |
| | | 1:00pm | Souls in Purgatory |
| Mon | 04/14 | 12:00pm | NO MASS |
| Tue | 04/15 | 12:00pm | NO MASS |
| Wed | 04/16 | 12:00pm | NO MASS |
| Thur | 04/17 | 6:00pm | Michael Puzerewski |
| Fri | 04/18 | | NO MASS |



Please Pray for...

Those who are sick or have special needs:

Shaun Benbow, Susan Blanchard, Kate Bogush, Dana Breeding, Joseph Buttera, Donna Collins, Barry Cook, Jack Crowley, Carolyn Dickenson, Maureen Flannigan, Patricia Grace, Roz Greenspan, Allison Hoefling, Don & Priscilla Kuffel, Jim Lauer, Lane Lehman, Janet Linda, Dan Little, Meghan McGinnis, Cecelia Meredith, Lori Owensby, Lindsey & Jordan Owensby, Marilyn Rebholz, Rhonda Rivera, Linda Robinson, Dennis Sadelson, Roger Salten, Sally Schoen, Marellen Struhar, Betty Testa, Arlene Turner, Vickie Wright, Toddler Vivienne Joy, Sandy Yacovelli.

Homebound or in Assisted Living:

Marian Bogdanowicz, Dorothy Kelly, Margaret Morrow

Our Family Members Serving in the Military:

Chief Petty Officer Chris Balot, son of Randy Balot
Staff Sgt. Jordan Owensby, grandson of Don & Linda Gurecky. **David Woodward**, serving in Afghanistan-friend of Samuel Medlin. **First Lieutenant Christian Kimball**, son of Kristy Kimball. **Airman Jack Vess**, son of Eric & Christine Vess.

Easter Egg Hunt!

After all Masses on Sunday, April 20th
(For ages 12 and under)

Parents: Everything will be provided by the Parish, so no need to bring anything!

(If you are staying for the Egg Hunt, please park so you are not blocking others from leaving.)



IMPORTANT DATES!

April 15: 10am Diocese of Charlotte Chrism Mass at St. Mark's in Huntersville, NC

April 20: Easter Egg Hunt after ALL Masses

April 24: 11am St. Vincent de Paul Mtg (PH)

April 26: 11am Prayer Vigil at Planned Parenthood

April 27: 9:45am & 2:15pm School At Nazareth Mtg (PH)

(PH = Parish Hall)

Scriptures for the Week

MON Apr 14
Isaiah 42: 1-7; Ps 27: 1, 2, 3, 13-14; John 12: 1-11

TUE Apr 15
Isaiah 49:1-6; Ps 71:1-2, 3-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15 & 17;
John 13:21-33, 36-38

WED Apr 16
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Ps 69:8-10, 21-22, 31 and 33-34; Matt 26:14-25

THUR Apr 17 Holy Thursday
Exodus 12: 1-8, 11-14; Ps 116: 12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18;
1st Cor 11: 23-26; John 13: 34; John 13: 1-15

FRI Apr 18 Good Friday - Day of Abstinence from Meat
Isaiah 52: 13 - 53: 12; Ps 31: 2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25;
Hebrews 4: 14-16; 5: 7-9; Philippians 2: 8-9; John 18: 1 - 19: 42

SAT Apr 19 Holy Saturday
Gen 1: 1 - 2: 2 or 1: 1, 26-31a; Ps 104: 1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35; Gen 22: 1-18 or 22: 1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Luke 24: 1-12

SUN Apr 20 The Resurrection of Our Lord & Savior Jesus Christ
Acts 10: 34a, 37-43; Ps 118: 1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Col 3: 1-4 or
First Corinthians 5: 6b-8; 1st Corinthians 5: 7b-8a;
John 20: 1-9 or Matthew 28: 1-10 or Luke 24: 13-35

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord



There is both great joy and terrible sorrow associated with this day, the Sunday that begins Holy Week, the Sunday that portends the crucifixion of Our Lord.

It is a time of despair, perplexity and contradiction. The very people who applaud Christ's entrance into Jerusalem that morning, shouting out "Hosanna" and words of adoration will, within a week, be crying, "Crucify Him." They will go from acclaiming Him as the new King of Israel to urging His life be traded in favor of a convicted criminal; they will first praise Him and then mock Him. Even friends entering Jerusalem at His side will desert Jesus. All this discord will take place during one week beginning on what we call Palm Sunday.
~Simplycatholic.com



The Divine Mercy Novena begins on Good Friday, April 18th.

There are 'take home' Novena booklets in English and Spanish in the church entrance.

We need your HELP!

If you are an Usher, Lector, Sacristan or Altar Server, please sign up to help with the Holy Week and Easter Masses. A Flocknote sign up has been sent out.

Stewardship

Stewardship Reflection



April 13, 2025
Palm Sunday

"The Lord has given me a well-trained tongue that I may know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them," says Isaiah in today's first reading. The gifts God has given us are likewise given for the good of others. How am I using my gifts?

Seminarian Education Collection

Second Collection-April 19-20, 2025

Please support our seminarians. The seminarian education program is primarily funded through the DSA, the seminarian education campaign, and next week's 2nd collection. Your generosity and prayers to this collection is an important part of educating our 40 seminarians.

You may donate online at
<https://saintmmc.com/online-giving>

April Wedding Anniversaries!

Mike & Carol Sobol ~ 46 years

Peter & Claudia Graham ~ 38 years

Jake & Julie Hansbury ~ 15 years

Francisco & Marisol Bonilla ~ 13 years

John & Maureen Czarnecki ~ 11 years

Happy Anniversary!

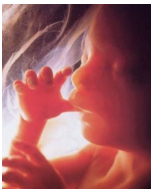
Join us Holy Saturday at noon for the Traditional Easter Food Basket Blessing.

In many Eastern European countries, it's a tradition to have a basket of food blessed on Holy Saturday. This Catholic ritual has been cherished for centuries among many families. It has now been adopted by people of all ethnic backgrounds who enjoy this richly symbolic custom. Traditional Easter Food Basket information sheets are in the church entrance.



St. Margaret Mary parishioners are participating in a 1-hour prayer vigil on the fourth Saturday each month at 11am at Planned Parenthood in Asheville.

Your presence is needed on Apr. 26th!



Offertory for the Month and Year to Date

| APR. GOAL | MONTH ACTUAL | % OF GOAL |
|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| \$26,000 | \$6,955 | 27% |

Offertory - Fiscal Yr To Date Jul 1 - Apr 9

| GOAL | YTD ACTUAL | % OF GOAL |
|-----------|------------|-----------|
| \$338,000 | \$244,392 | 72.3% |

Donate online at saintmmc.com or here
May God bless you for your financial stewardship!



Reflecting God's Light



2025 DSA Collected: \$19,291.00
2025 Goal: \$35,506.00
% of Goal: 54%



Schedule for the Week

This week the office is open Monday-Wed. 9am-3pm
The church is open for prayer during office hours.

Mon Apr 14 No Mass or Confession
7pm Reunión del grupo masculino (PH)

Tues Apr 15 No Mass or Confession

Wed Apr 16 No Mass or Confession

Thur Apr 17 Thursday of the Lord's Supper
Church and Office Closed
6pm Mass of the Lord's Supper
7pm-9pm Eucharistic Adoration (PH)

Fri Apr 18 Friday of the Passion of the Lord
Church and Office Closed
1pm-2pm Confession
3pm The Celebration of the Passion of the Lord (CH)
5:30pm Living Stations of the Cross at Grovemont park (Bilingual)

Sat Apr 19 The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night
12noon Traditional Easter Food Basket Blessing
7:30pm The Easter Vigil

Sun Apr 20 Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
8:30am Mass (Incense)
11:00am Mass
1pm Mass Español (Incense)
Easter Egg Hunt following each Mass!



Please Note our Remaining Confession time before Easter:

April 18th at 1pm-2pm

To examine themselves, to repent, to accuse themselves in Confession and to ask pardon of God, and in this way even every day profit from the Sacrament of Confession, was something natural for the saints. How fortunate they were to be capable of so much! The fruits of sanctification were constant and abundant because the purity of soul with which each saint welcomed into himself Jesus, “*the Wheat of the elect*,” (Zach. 9:17) was like the good ground “*... which brings forth fruit in patience*” (Luke 8:15).

St. Anthony Mary Claret illustrates this fact very well: “*When we go to Holy Communion, all of us receive the same Lord Jesus, but not all receive the same grace nor are the same effects produced in all. This comes from our greater or lesser disposition. To explain this fact, I will take an example from nature. Consider the process of grafting, the more similar the one plant is to the other, the better the graft will succeed. Likewise, the more resemblance there is between the one that goes to Communion and Jesus, so much the better will the fruits of Holy Communion be.*” The Sacrament of Confession is in fact the excellent means whereby the similarity between the soul and Jesus is restored.

For this reason **St. Francis de Sales** taught his spiritual children, “*Go to Confession with humility and devotion ... if it is possible, every time that you go to Holy Communion, even though you do not feel in your conscience any remorse of mortal sin.*”

In this regard it is well to recall the teaching of the Church. Holy Communion must be received only while one is in the grace of God. Therefore, when one has committed a mortal sin, even if one has repent-

“for no crime is there heavier punishment to be feared from God than for the unholy or irreligious use by the faithful of that which ... contains the very Author and Source of holiness.”

— Catechism of the Council of Trent

ed of it and has a great desire to receive Holy Communion, it is **necessary** and **indispensable** to confess oneself first before receiving Holy Communion, otherwise one commits a most grave sin of **sacri-**



lege, for which Jesus said to **St. Bridget**, “*there does not exist on earth a punishment which is great enough to punish it sufficiently!*”

St. Ambrose said that persons who commit this sacrilege “*come into church with a few sins, and leave it burdened with many.*” **St.**

“Sacrilege is a grave sin especially when committed against the Eucharist, for in this sacrament the true Body of Christ is made substantially present for us.”

— Catechism of the Catholic Church

Cyril wrote something yet stronger: “*They who make a sacrilegious Communion receive Satan and Jesus Christ into their hearts — Satan, that they may let him rule, and Jesus Christ, that they may offer Him in sacrifice as a Victim to Satan.*”

Thus the **Catechism of the Council of Trent** (De Euch., v.i) declares: “*As of all the sacred mysteries ... none can compare with the ... Eucharist, so likewise for no crime is there heavier punishment to be feared from God than for the unholy or irreligious use by the faithful of that which ... contains the very Author and Source of holiness.*”

On the other hand, Confession made before Holy Communion to render a soul already in the state of Sanctifying Grace more pure and more beautiful, is something precious even though not required. It is precious because it clothes the soul with a more beautiful “*wedding garment*” (cf Matt. 22:12) with which it may take its place at the table of the angels.

For this reason the most conscientious souls have always made frequent use (at least once a week) of the sacramental cleansing of absolution, even for venial sins. If you want great purity of soul in order to receive Jesus, no purity shines brighter than that which one obtains when he makes a good confession, where the cleansing Blood of Jesus renders the repentant soul divinely bright and beautiful. “*The soul that receives the Divine Blood becomes beautiful, as being clothed in a more precious garment, and it appears so beautiful aglow that if you could see it you would be tempted to adore it,*” declared **St. Mary Magdalene di Pazzi**.

Imprimatur ✠ Antonius Zama,
vic. generalis Naples, 21 April 1973



The definitive guide to Holy Week

CHARLOTTE — What are you doing for Holy Week?

It's OK if your Holy Week list includes coloring eggs, cleaning and baking for Easter, shopping for new outfits, traveling to a relative's home or going on a spring vacation. There's nothing wrong with secular Easter activities. But it's important to keep in mind that there is also a profound spiritual basis for the holiday celebration. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday and ends at sundown on Easter Sunday.

Our remembrance of the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus makes Holy Week the most sacred time of the year for Catholics. How will you balance the sacred part of Holy Week with all of the other things you will be doing? All of it is important in your life and in the lives of your family members. But keeping a balance between the spiritual and the secular will require a little planning on your part.

Start by making a list of everything that needs to be done during Holy Week. Then block out time in your busy calendar for attending Holy Week liturgies. Be sure to set aside specific times every day during the week for Lenten devotions, quiet prayer, Scripture reading and meditation. Your greatest temptation will be scrimping on your spiritual needs because there is so much going on! If you let that happen, your Easter celebration may look perfect on the surface, but will feel spiritually unsatisfying.

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, the Sixth Sunday of Lent, marks the beginning of Holy Week. The Mass on this day commemorates the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem when people waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna." Before Mass begins, palms are blessed, and there is a procession that symbolizes the beginning of the spiritual journey into the Paschal Mystery that will unfold throughout Holy Week. During the Mass, the full Gospel account of the passion and death of Jesus is read. The priest usually takes the lines attributed to Jesus. Several lectors take other parts. The people in the pews read the lines attributed to the crowd. The Mass continues with the celebration of the Eucharist. People are encouraged to take the blessed palm branches home where they can be fashioned into crosses or placed behind a crucifix. The blessed palms that are left in the church are burned and used for ashes the following year on Ash Wednesday.

Monday of Holy Week

The Gospel reading this day, John 12:1-11, recalls the woman who anointed Jesus with oil.

Tuesday of Holy Week

Today's Gospel -- John 13:21-33, 36-38 -- offers a hint of the events to come as Jesus predicts the betrayal of Judas and the denial of Peter.

Wednesday of Holy Week

This day is traditionally referred to as "Spy Wednesday" because it recalls the decision of Judas to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

The Chrism Mass

During Holy Week, bishops bless sacred oils in the diocesan cathedral at a special liturgy known as the chrism Mass. The oil of chrism is used during baptisms, confirmation, ordination and the consecration of altars. The oil of catechumens is used at the Easter Vigil. The oil of the sick is used to anoint people during the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. The oils are then distributed to the parishes for sacramental celebrations throughout the year. As part of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the renewal of priestly promises was incorporated into the chrism Mass. The chrism Mass is an ancient celebration that traditionally takes place on Holy Thursday morning. But in recent years, many dioceses celebrate the chrism Mass on an evening earlier in Holy Week so that more people can attend.

Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper

The Mass of the Lord's Supper commemorates the Passover meal that Jesus shared in the Upper Room with the apostles on the night before he died. Before the meal, he washed their feet to impress upon them the call to serve others. The church recognizes the Last Supper as the institution of the Sacrament of Holy Orders. During the meal, Jesus also instituted the Eucharist by transforming bread and wine into his own body and blood. After the meal, Jesus went to Gethsemane where he suffered the agony in the garden, the betrayal of Judas and the brutality of being arrested. The Mass of the Last Supper is a dramatic liturgy with the priest washing the feet of 12 parishioners. After Communion, the altar and sanctuary are stripped and there is a procession with the Blessed Sacrament, which is taken to a separate altar of repose, usually located on a side altar or in a chapel. There is no dismissal or final blessing. It is the last time the Eucharist will be celebrated until the Easter Vigil. People leave in silence, but continue to keep a vigil with Jesus in their hearts in anticipation of the events that will take place on the next day.



Good Friday

The Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday is a somber service (not a Mass) that commemorates the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus. Because it is considered a continuation from the night before, the liturgy begins in silence. The priest enters and lies prostrate at the foot of the altar.

The service begins with the Liturgy of the Word, which includes a reading about the suffering servant in Isaiah, a psalm, a reading from the book of Hebrews, and the account of the passion and death of Jesus from the Gospel of John. During this part of the liturgy there are special prayers for all the people in the world. The second part of the liturgy is the veneration of the cross, an ancient practice that allows each person to touch or kiss the instrument of torture that leads to salvation. The third part of the liturgy is a Communion service with hosts that were consecrated the night before. Afterward, the tabernacle is left empty and open. The lamp or candle usually situated next to the tabernacle, denoting the presence of Christ, is extinguished.

People leave the church in **silence**, but continue to keep a vigil with Jesus, who has entered the tomb and will rise on the third day.

Good Friday fasting regulations

Only one full meal is permitted on Good Friday for Catholics between 18 and 59. Two smaller meals are allowed, but they should not equal a second full meal. Drinking coffee, tea and water between meals is allowed, but eating snacks between meals is not.

All Catholics who have reached the age of 14 must abstain from meat on Good Friday.

Easter Vigil

In the first century, the early Christians celebrated every Sunday in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus. By the second century, they established a particular day for the celebration of the resurrection, which was connected to the Jewish Passover. Their observance began at sundown on Saturday evening. They called it the Night of the Great Vigil, a time of remembrance and expectation that lasted throughout the night so they could sing "alleluia" at dawn on Easter morning. It was during the Night of the Great Vigil that new Christians were received into the church.

By the fourth century, it became customary for people to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate what was called the "Great Week," which included Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. The diary of a woman named Egeria in 381 contains the first accounts of the special rites, prayers and devotions that took place in Jerusalem during the Great Week.

Over time, the practice of observing Holy Week spread throughout the Christian world, with prayers, historical re-enactments and special liturgies. During the Middle Ages, the celebration of the Easter Vigil gradually fell out of practice. The important days of the week were Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

In 1955, the Vatican reestablished the Easter Vigil as an important part of Holy Week observances.

During the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the bishops called for the restoration of the early Christian rituals for receiving new Christians into the church at the Easter Vigil. In 1988, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was issued.

Today, the Easter Vigil begins the Easter fire, the lighting of the paschal candle, the reading of salvation history, the celebration of the sacraments of initiation for catechumens and renewal of baptismal promises for the faithful is once again an integral part of Holy Week celebrations.

As with Good Friday, the celebration begins in silence with people waiting in darkness.

The first part of the Vigil is the Light Service, which begins outdoors with the Easter fire and the lighting of the paschal candle. The candle is carried into the dark church as a symbol of the Light of Christ, a powerful reminder that Jesus is light in the darkness. The individual candles, held by people in the pews, are lit from the paschal candle. By the time the procession reaches the altar, the church is bathed in candlelight.

The Exultet, an ancient song of proclamation that gives thanks and praise to God, is sung.

During the Liturgy of the Word, Scripture readings and psalms help people reflect on all of the wonderful things God has done throughout salvation history.

Then the baptismal water is blessed, the candidates and catechumens receive the sacraments of initiation, and the congregation renews baptismal vows.

During the Liturgy of the Eucharist, people share in the body and blood of Christ.

The mystery and ritual of the Easter Vigil touch the deepest part of people's souls with elements of darkness, light, silence, music, fire, water and oil, along with bread and wine that become the body and blood of the risen Lord. They are reminded that new life in Christ can never be overcome by darkness or death.

Easter Sunday

For the early Christians, the celebration of Masses on Easter morning developed as a way to accommodate people who were unable to attend the Easter Vigil.

Today, Easter Sunday Masses are joy-filled celebrations of the risen Lord with the singing of the Gloria and alleluias, the renewal of baptismal vows, and a sprinkling with Easter water. After sharing in the Eucharist, people go forth strengthened in faith to serve the Lord and one another.

Easter Sunday marks the beginning of the Easter season, which will last the next 50 days and include the celebration of Jesus' ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

— Lorene Hanley Duquin. Catholic News Herald (online)

The Purity of Soul Necessary for Holy Communion

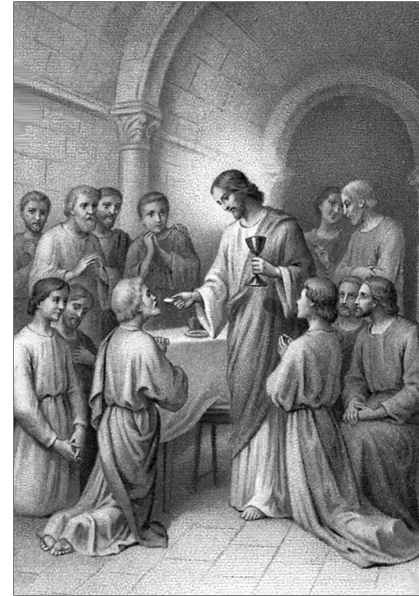
For Catholics to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in Holy Communion while in the state of mortal sin (having committed a mortal or grave sin which has not been confessed and forgiven in Sacramental Confession) is itself a mortal sin — a mortal sin of Sacrilege.

by Father Stefano Manelli, O.F.M. Conv., S.T.D.

What is there to say about the great purity of soul with which the saints approached to receive the bread of Angels? We know that they had a great delicacy of conscience which was truly angelic. Aware of their own misery, they tried to present themselves to Jesus “*holy and immaculate*,” (Eph. 1:4) repeating with the Publican, “*O God, be merciful to me a sinner*” (Luke 18:13), and having recourse with great care to the cleansing of Confession.

When **St. Jerome** was brought Holy Viaticum at the end of his life, the Saint prostrated himself on the ground in adoration and he was heard to repeat with profound humility the words of **St. Elizabeth** and those of **St. Peter**, “*How is this, that my Lord should come to me?*” “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*” (Luke 5:8). And how many times was the angelic and seraphic **St. Gemma** tempted to not receive Holy Communion, holding herself to be nothing else than a vile “*dunghill?*”

Padre Pio of Pietrelcina used to repeat with trepidation to his



“They who make a sacrilegious Communion receive Satan and Jesus Christ into their hearts — Satan, that they may let him rule, and Jesus Christ, that they may offer Him in sacrifice as a Victim to Satan.”

— St. Cyril

brethren, “*God sees blights even in the angels. What must He see in me!*” For this reason he was very diligent in making his sacramental Confessions.

“*Oh, if we could only understand Who is that God Whom we receive in Holy Communion, then what purity of heart we would bring to Him!*” exclaimed **St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi**.

For this reason **St. Hugh**, **St. Thomas Aquinas**, **St. Francis de Sales**, **St. Ignatius**, **St. Charles Borromeo**, **St. Francis Borgia**, **St. Louis Bertrand**, **St. Joseph Cupertino**, **St. Leonard of Port Maurice** and many other saints went to Confession **every day** before celebrating Holy Mass.

St. Camillus de Lellis never celebrated Holy Mass without first going to Confession, because he wanted at least “*to dust off*” his soul. Once, at sundown in a public square in Livorno, before taking leave of a priest of the same religious order, foreseeing that he would not have a priest to confess to on the following morning before his Mass, paused, took off his hat, made the sign of the Cross and went to Confession right there in the square to his confrere.

Also **St. Alphonsus**, **St. Joseph Cafasso**, **St. John Bosco**, **St. Pius X**, and **Padre Pio of Pietrelcina** went to Confession very often. And why did **St. Pius X** wish to lower the age for First Holy Communion to seven years, if not to allow Jesus to enter into the innocent hearts of children, which are so similar to angels. And why was **Padre Pio** so delighted when they brought him children five years old who were prepared for First Holy Communion?

The saints applied to perfection the directive of the Holy Spirit, “*Let everyone first examine himself, and then eat of that Bread and drink of that Chalice; because he who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks unto his own condemnation*” (1 Cor. 11:28-29).