

LITURGY BYTES

Between Palm Sunday and Easter

There is so much that occurs between the above mentioned events that are very moving experiences of importance to us as Catholics. They are solemn and glorious in the same breath – the pinnacle of the liturgical year! It is more sacred than Christmas. This is because Holy Week commemorates the final week of our Lord’s life, the very purpose for which Christmas happened.

The final three days of Holy Week are a separate liturgical season known as the Triduum. The word “triduum” comes from the Latin word meaning three days. Basically, the Triduum is one great festival recounting the last three days of Jesus’ life on earth, the events of the Passion and Resurrection, when he laid down his life in atonement for our sins. Regarding the Triduum, the US Catholic Conference of Bishops tells us, “Though chronologically three days, it is liturgically **one** day unfolding for us the unity of Christ’s Paschal Mystery.”

The term Paschal Mystery is the ultimate fulfillment of the ancient Jewish Passover which itself was a recollection of how God brought the Jews out of their slavery in Egypt. The spotless lamb was slaughtered at the Passover meal and consumed. That same night the destroying angel “passed over” the homes marked with the blood of the Passover Lamb, and those covered by the blood were saved. This was the Old Testament prefigurement of Jesus’ work at the Last Supper—where he inserted himself as the Paschal Lamb—and Calvary, where the sacrifice was offered to save us from our slavery to sin. The Paschal Mystery is, therefore, God’s plan of redemption for the fallen human race through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is one event stretched out over three days. In the next few columns, we’ll reflect on what takes place in Church on each of these three days.



Holy Week

Have a blessed, safe, and healthy week! ~

Michele Hall