

LENT 2017

Prepare your Holy Week by ...

taking time to read and study the readings for each of the days of Easter. Just try to do your best.

Prepare your Holy Week by ...

use your imagination and place yourself into Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, the crucifixion and the resurrection. What do you see and what do you hear?

Prepare your Holy Week by ...

remembering that whenever one human being hurts another human being the suffering of Jesus is happening right among us.

Prepare your Holy Week by

planning your time and schedule to give your best attention to walking with Jesus during this Holy Week. This is very much your own walk.

HOLY WEEK DEMANDS OUR BEST EFFORT

One of the grandfathers was encouraging a very talented grandson in regard to his music: “Do you know you are going to get to Carnegie Hall?” If you are going to plan to have a successful music career you should try to aim for the top billing? Grandfather just looked at the fifteen year old. “You practice, you practice, you practice!”

Nothing is going to happen unless you give a lot of discipline and hard work. To the fifteen year old: no one was ever a successful musician without a lot of hard work! It is the same with our Holy Week.

No Christian is going to have a successful Holy Week unless they work hard at it. This is not something that the pastor and the music people do for us! It is a total church event. Everyone is meant to jump in with both feet.

These are the high holy days. Our faith is centered and nourished by the very death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Always think of Holy Week as one large smorgasbord. There is so much before you. You cannot eat everything that is placed before you. This year try to take in what you can handle. Catch the rest next year!

Holy Week is just like an intense retreat weekend. It takes a lot of energy. We are tired after it is over. But nothing happens if we (all the parish community together) invest themselves into this great week.. →



Holy Week is the very center of our Church’s life. Everyone is meant to enter into and share the very mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This involves everyone. You must jump into the liturgies and prayer of Holy Week. You must become an active player in these liturgies. There is no room for spectator sports here.



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GO TO THE BAPTISMAL FONT IN YOUR PARISH CHURCH....

Push your hands and arms into the waters of the baptismal font. As your hands and arms are getting wet, pray that your entire life is being soaked in the life and love of the Risen Jesus.

Your life is meant to be filled and moved by the great love of Jesus, lived out in his life and the cross.

Push deeper into sharing your life with the poor and the suffering of this world, as Jesus gave his life to the lepers, the blind and the vulnerable of this world.

Keep pushing your hands into the water and seeking to share a deeper friendship with the risen Jesus.

And then drink of the very spirit of the risen Jesus. Be filled with the divine life, shared and made manifest in the risen Jesus.



The very center of our faith happens in and through the death and resurrection of Jesus. We must never separate the death of Jesus from the resurrection of Jesus. Both events are the two sides of our hand. You can never have a one sided hand. Both sides belong together.

Everything in the life of Jesus must be seen through the lens of this salvific event. Many people are surprised when they learn that this is so clearly outlined in the Scriptures. In the letters of St. Paul in the New Testament he speaks only once of the birth of Jesus but always he centers on the death and resurrection of Jesus. When people think of Christmas we must always see it through the resurrection of Jesus. Our religion is living and sharing in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

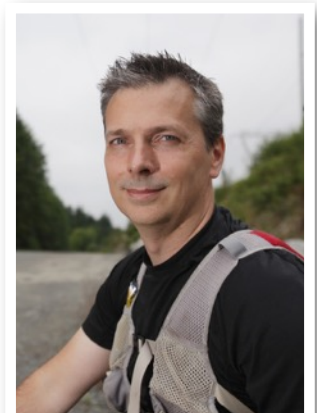
Over the centuries our attention has been given to the death/cross of Jesus and some attention to the resurrection of Jesus. This was not a balanced approach. This is why the restoration of the Easter liturgies are made of one event over the three days. The three days of Easter (also called the tridium) begins with the sharing of the Last Supper and the washing of the feet. We continue part two in the afternoon liturgy of Good Friday with the telling of the Passion of Jesus, the veneration of the cross and the ten solemn prayers. And

then we move into the great Vigil of Easter.

The Vigil begins with the new fire to highlight that the risen Jesus is our light. God's divine light has burst among us. The light of Christ always conquers the darkness of sin and greed. During the Vigil we tell the story of salvation (the nine readings). We come to the waters of Baptism for the new candidates and come to renew our own baptism. This is not only about those who would like to be a part of the Christian community, but this is a deepening of our own baptismal life.

We cannot stress strongly enough that there was a definite time when Jesus was raised from the dead. This is a historical event. But it must never stop there. We do not just remember a historical moment that God was working powerfully among humanity. The resurrection must now happen in the lives of each one of the believers.

The great Easter Vigil is to be a living sign that all the people who identify themselves as the followers of Jesus must be living sign of the resurrection. Jesus must live in and through them.



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THE LIGHT WILL BREAK UPON YOU

Our Bible came out of the Middle East. It is not a northern country where there are long sunrises and sunsets. The night is dark, dark. Then within minutes the sun arises and it is bright sunshine a few minutes after sunrise.

When you have such a strong contrast between light and darkness you can see why the Scriptures always picture God in light and sinful action in darkness. Darkness always stands for sin, evil and death.

Look back at the artist with her paintbrush. When she wants to convey that there is evil in the room she will paint very dark colors. The artist may not have any knowledge of the Scriptures but she is tapping

into a strong sense that evil is always threatening and could destroy humanity.

God and the workings of God are always in the light. Notice how the pictures of birth and the newborn baby are always in bright colors. This is a time of light.

As you prepare for the great Vigil think of the times that you experienced darkness in your own life. Perhaps your family experienced much darkness when there was a huge fight over Grandfather's will. Your uncles and aunts have not talked to each other in years. Is this not a time of darkness?

Think of every school shooting that you hear in the world. Is this not darkness bursting onto our communities?

What about the women and men who take advantage of other people, especially the vulnerable ones? Does not the darkness shine through their eyes?

The resurrection of Jesus means that evil will not have the last word. The power of evil has been overcome. Divine power has come to change all evil into goodness.

We will gather in the darkness (absolute darkness is preferable). And in the darkness (which is so physical) we will light the new fire.

The fire means that life has been changed. Jesus lives and rules. The risen Jesus is moving through our veins to make the world a place of peace and compassion. Where there is darkness, the risen Jesus has come to bring light.

Get in touch with the light.

Risen Jesus,

burst into our lives with energy to build peace and care for the little ones of this earth. May our lives be a living extension of your love and mercy to all human beings.

Risen Jesus,

may our lives be a fire of love and compassion for those who are forgotten and pushed aside in this society.

You are living the resurrection is you.....

- pray to share in the life and mission of Jesus Christ for the world.
- take to heart that you have been sent to a broken world by the risen Christ.

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The readings of the Scriptures are many and lengthy. Try to read all the readings for each of the liturgies. Become familiar with what will happen today. Use your imagination and place yourself within each of the readings. Ask what you are seeing? hearing? and looks on the faces of each participant with the reading.



STAND IN HOLY WEEK

1. Christ our teacher, for our sake you were obedient even to accepting death,---teach us to obey the Father's will in all things.
2. Christ our life, by your death on the cross you destroyed the power of evil and death,---may we die with you, to rise with you in glory.
3. Christ our King, you became an outcast among us, a worm and no man,---teach us the humility by which you saved the world.
4. Christ our salvation, you gave yourself up to death out of love for us,---help us to show your love to one another.
5. Christ our Savior, on the cross you embraced all time with your outstretched arms,---unite God's scattered children in your kingdom of salvation