

The Triduum is the collection of the three holiest days in the Christian calendar: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday.

On Holy Thursday, we commemorate the Last Supper. At this meal, Jesus institutes the Eucharist. It is when He takes the bread and gives us the words, "Take this all of you and eat of it, this is my body, which will be given up for you," and similar words turning the wine into His Precious Blood. At this meal, Jesus also washes the disciples' feet and instructs us to do likewise for each other. Washing another's feet is a great act of loving service, and we commemorate this action at the Holy Thursday liturgy by having representatives from the parish volunteer to have their feet washed by the pastor. After the meal, Jesus retires to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mountain of Olives where He prays before being arrested. At the end of the Holy Thursday liturgy, the Eucharist is removed from the tabernacle, which is left open and empty on Good Friday as a reminder of Jesus' death.

On Good Friday, we remember Jesus' trial and crucifixion. Jesus was condemned by the Jewish council, who brought Him before Pontius Pilate, demanding He be executed. During this ordeal, the people who once revered Jesus turn on Him. He is crowned with thorns, mocked, lashed, and given a cross. The Stations of the Cross are the traditional memorial of the steps along Jesus' journey to crucifixion. When He arrives on Golgotha, He is stripped and nailed to the cross. He assures the repentant thief that he will join Jesus in paradise, He gives Mary to John and to the Church as our Blessed Mother, and, having fulfilled His duty, He surrenders His spirit to the Father. Our sins also die with Jesus. His death, the death of God incarnate, is the perfect sacrifice that can atone for the sins of the world. On Good Friday, there is no mass but a liturgy in which churches offer the Veneration of the Cross to express sorrow and gratitude at Jesus' death by coming forward to solemnly touch or kiss the cross.

Holy Saturday, often overlooked, is a sustained period of mourning at Jesus' absence from the world. On Easter Sunday, Jesus rises from the dead. The central point of the liturgical year and all of salvation history, in rising from the dead, Jesus conquers death for all of us. The Resurrection is the defining belief of all Christians, the ultimate symbol of the Gospel, of God's great love and care for us, of the possibility of the forgiveness of sins and life after death. Without Easter Sunday, we are simply followers of an ascetic ethics teacher. With the Resurrection, we are able to rejoice in the triumph of life over death, in the good will of a God who is the Good Shepherd and overcame death to save us all. Easter Sunday celebrations start at the Easter Vigil, in which extra readings account the key points of the Biblical story, the Paschal Candle is lit, candidates are baptized and confirmed in the Church, and all of heaven and earth rejoice once more in God's eternal glory.

Mr. Rick Ley
Computer Science and Math Teacher
Asst. Volleyball Coach