



Our Holiest Week (Part II)

Good Friday is the most somber day of the entire Church year. The liturgy is very restrained and straightforward. The altar is bare, without cloth, candle or cross. There is no Mass on this day, according to the church's ancient tradition. We simply come and prostrate in humble submission before the Word and glorious cross of Christ.

The climax of the first part of the Good Friday liturgy is the proclamation of the Passion of Jesus. In St. John's Gospel, Jesus' power and majesty shine through. Jesus reigns in glory from the cross. We then come to the solemn Universal Prayer. We pray that the glory of the cross be realized in our day. The veneration of the cross follows. If it were not for the eyes of faith, we could never understand this action of seeing glory in the cross. The third part of this liturgy is the distribution of Holy Communion (with the Eucharist consecrated at the Holy Thursday liturgy.)

At noon on Holy Saturday, we have the blessing of Easter food. People come with their baskets full of food that will be served at their Easter dinner. The eggs, butter lamb, sausage, bread, horseradish and salt symbolize the events of the Easter story.

The Easter Vigil begins with a light service. We gather around a fire outside the church and think of Christ, the light of God's glory. From this fire, we light our Paschal Candle. We sing, "Jesus Christ our King is risen!" Our Scripture readings recall the creation and passing through the Red Sea. St. Paul says that this is our resurrection night. After the catechumens are Baptized and Confirmed, all of us are asked to renew our Baptismal promises. We all acclaim to each of the questions, "I do!"

In our Holy Week services, we enter the death and resurrection of Jesus and allow His life to grow within us. All are encouraged to participate as much as possible in the Sacred Triduum, the climax of Holy Week.

Father David

Next week: Easter glory!