

HOLY WEEK

Make This Your Holiest Week

by Fr. Ed Broom, OMI

Each year God showers us with countless blessings, especially in the Season of Lent, Holy Week, culminating in Easter—the Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, His triumph over sin, the devil, and death itself.

However, the effects of these Holy days are in direct proportion to our interior disposition of soul, openness to God's grace, and docility to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. In other words a fervent practicing Christian will reap a much more abundant harvest than a non-practicing Christian.

Magnanimity. This is a key word to Ignatian spirituality. In simple English it means generosity of spirit. St. Ignatius of Loyola, in the *Annotations for the Director of the Exercises*, emphasizes the primary importance of the Exercitant (he who is making the Spiritual Exercises) to enter in with Magnanimity.

Likewise, we should enter into Holy week with the same disposition of spirit: *Magnanimity*. If you like, we should enter into these sacred Paschal mysteries of the suffering, passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus with an ardent longing to truly love God totally, unreservedly, with every thread of our being! We should live out this Holy Week as if it were to be the last in our lives.

Live Out The Easter Triduum to the Max

The Easter Triduum consists of three days culminating in Easter (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday)—the Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let us offer some short and simple ideas, reflections and challenges to derive the most abundant fruit from these holy days and arrive at an authentic transformation of our lives. May we be able to say with St. Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."

Holy Thursday

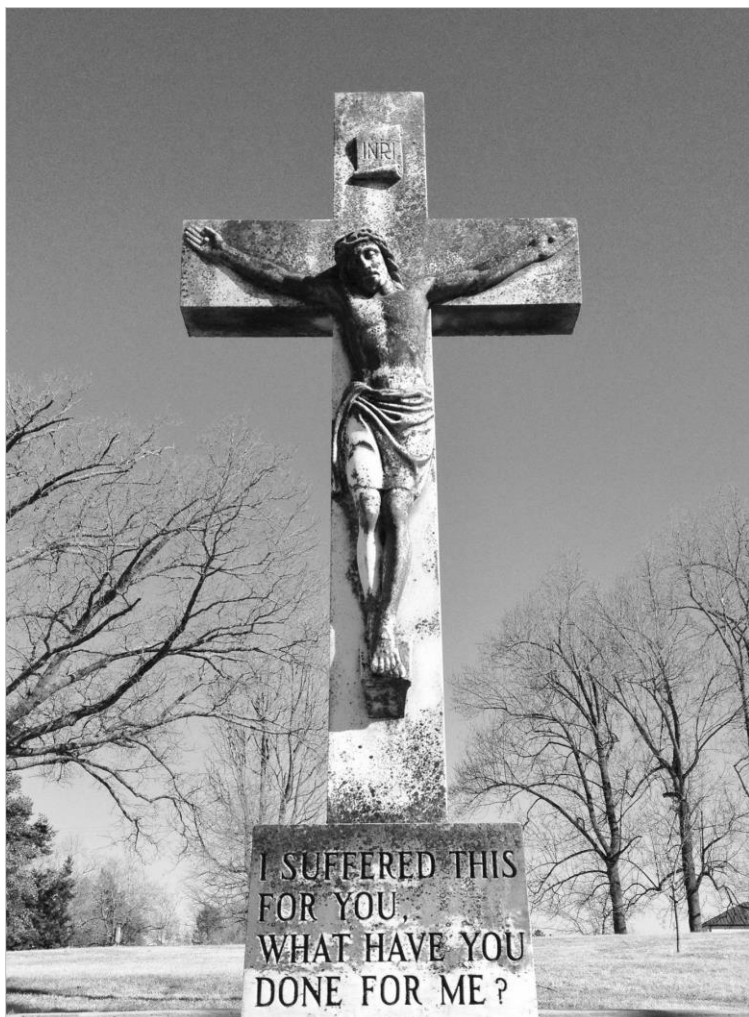
On this day we commemorate with love, awe, tenderness, and gratitude beyond human expression the institution of two Sacraments, generously given to all of humanity from the depths of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus for our sanctification and salvation: The Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist, and Holy Orders (The Priesthood). The most logical disposition and movement of our hearts should be to praise and thank Our Lord Jesus for having bestowed upon the Church until the end of the world the greatest of all gifts—the most Holy Eucharist, that we can receive in Holy Communion every day (if we are properly disposed). The most Holy Eucharist is truly and substantially the Body, Blood, and Divinity of Jesus the Lord. "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving".

Holy Orders. On the same day and in the same historical context Jesus instituted Holy Orders—the Catholic Priesthood. This was in the Upper Room (Cenacle), at the Last Supper which was the first Mass when Jesus said the words: "Do this in memory of me". At that precise moment the Apostles were transformed into the first priests as well as the first Bishops.

Every Holy Thursday, while participating in the Mass of the Last Supper and the washing of the feet, we should pray for priests. Our prayers should be universal! That is to say we should pray for vocations to the priesthood; we should pray for seminarians who are preparing for Holy Orders—the Priesthood. Equally important, we should pray for priests that are already ordained. Our prayers should be lifted on high for young priests, for elderly priests, for sick priests. Furthermore, we should pray for tempted priests, priests that have many doubts, as well as for priests that have fallen so that they will return to Jesus the Good Shepherd of their souls. With a heavy heart Jesus prayed, "The harvest is rich but the laborers are few; ask the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers to work in his vineyard." So many souls are at risk and jeopardy for the lack of laborers, for the lack of holy priests.

Good Friday

On Holy Thursday we contemplated Jesus at the Last Supper blessing us with the two Sacraments of the Eucharist and the Priesthood. On Good Friday our attention, gaze and contemplation is lifted on high to the cross. Let us unite our hearts with the famous prayer attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi: "We adore you O Christ and we bless you because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world."



Contemplate the Cross and Resurrection. Spend some time in silence and contemplation before a graphic image of Jesus crucified. One specific aspect worthy of meditation and contemplation is the Precious Blood of Jesus!

With love, reverence, devotion and a spirit of reparation, contemplate the various outlets of His Precious Blood. Start with His Thorn-crowned Head. The pierced brow, penetrated by long and piercing thorns almost arriving at the brain allows for a constant flowing of Blood; the Blood that He shed for your salvation. Jesus suffered His most excruciating Passion for all of humanity, but also for you and me personally.

If you were the only person in the whole created universe, Jesus loves you so much that He would indeed shed every drop of His most Precious Blood for the immortal salvation of your soul. How precious you are in the eyes of God!

Contemplate the nail-driven hands. These hands that blessed the little children, these hands that touched and restored sight to the blind, these hands that touched lepers healing them instantaneously of their incurable disease, these sacred hands that turned bread into His Body and Blood, these hands are now nailed to the cross from which His Precious Blood oozes out dripping to the ground.

Contemplate His feet. These were the feet that walked to bring good news to the aliens, the abandoned, the poor and despised.

He came to set the captives free. Now these feet can no longer move, but only shed blood so that we can walk the paths of purity, justice and peace.

His Sacred Heart. Finally let us contemplate His most Sacred Heart pierced with the lance. From this fountain of life, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, after being pierced with the lance, Blood and Water came gushing forth, the source and fountain of our sacramental life. The water is symbolic of the Sacrament of Baptism and Confession. The Blood is symbolic of the most Holy Eucharist! In all of our troubles, fears and sufferings, may we seek our refuge in the pierced and open Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Holy Saturday: The Sorrowful Heart of Mary

One short suggestion: live out Holy Saturday with the Blessed Virgin Mary!

The Tone and Sentiments for Holy Saturday. For many Holy Saturday is barely understood! This is the tone and sentiments that we should cultivate on Holy Saturday. Fasting? Good Friday fasting is obligatory. Holy Saturday the church encourages fasting, but it is not obligatory. This day should not be full of unnecessary noises, but silence. Why? To cultivate a contemplative spirit of prayer.

Our Thoughts and Heart. Our thoughts and our heart should be with the Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Sorrows! The Church recommends that we spend some quality time with Our Lady reliving what happened a few hours earlier. That is to say, we should enter into the Sorrowful Heart of Mary, who stood at the foot of the cross and relive the Passion, suffering and death of Jesus. In a word, on Holy Saturday, we should contemplate in our hearts the passion of Christ through the eyes and heart of Mary! Nobody ever penetrated the height, width, and depth of the suffering and passion of Jesus better than His Immaculate Mother Mary.

In conclusion, let us live out the Easter Triduum with Magnanimity. Let us enter into the Triduum with great love and gratitude for Jesus who gave Himself up for me, shedding every drop of His most precious Blood for me as if I were the only person in the created universe. How great is the love of Jesus for you and for me!

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