



**Vox Populi**

27 March 2024

This week, Holy Week, is the most solemn and also the most glorious week in Christianity. It is the pinnacle of the liturgical year when we commemorate the final week of Our Lord's life.

Sundown on Holy Thursday to sundown on Easter Sunday is the most solemn part of the liturgical year. This is known as the Paschal Triduum, and recounts the last three days of Jesus' life on earth, the events of his Passion and Resurrection, when the Lamb of God laid down his life in atonement for our sins.

The evening Mass on Holy Thursday is The Mass of the Lord's Supper. The Church relives the institution of the Eucharist and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at the Last Supper, as well as the institution of the priesthood, which took place the evening before Jesus was crucified.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper concludes with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament to the "altar of repose", a place where the consecrated Host is kept, away from the main altar.

Parishes create space for people to stay and pray with the reposed Eucharist late into the night, remembering Jesus' request in the Garden of Gethsemane for someone to "watch and pray" with Him.

Good Friday is the day of crucifixion, the day Jesus died for the sins of the world. It is a day of fasting and abstinence, mourning and prayer.

The altar is plain and bare; the candle by the tabernacle is out and the tabernacle doors left open to show it is empty. Jesus is not there.

The ceremony on Good Friday is not a Mass—it is a communion service using the consecrated hosts from Holy Thursday. Good Friday is the only day of the year on which no Masses are offered.

These Good Friday services often take place at 3 p.m., the hour that Jesus breathed his last on the cross. Often the priest will begin the service by prostrating himself in front of the altar. Veneration of the Cross usually takes place at this service, in which the priest and the faithful kneel before a cross and kiss it.

On Holy Saturday Christ is in the tomb.

There is no daytime Mass on Holy Saturday. It is still a day of fasting and sorrow before the Easter Vigil begins that evening.

In the time between his burial and Resurrection. Jesus descended to the realm of the dead, the temporary abode of the dead, not the eternal lake of fire, to save the righteous souls—the Old Testament patriarchs, for example—who died before his crucifixion.

Jesus' descent into the realm of the dead, "the last phase of Jesus' messianic mission," during which he "opened heaven's gates for the just who had gone before him."

Before Holy Saturday, there were no souls enjoying the beatific vision of God in heaven!

The Easter Vigil is held after nightfall on Holy Saturday, in celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. It is the most glorious, beautiful and dramatic liturgy for the Church. It is divided into four parts – the Service of Light, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Easter Sunday is the culmination of the Paschal mystery. The forty days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving during Lent was in preparation for this day.

May you all have a blessed Easter Season

