

# Understanding Holy Week



Holy Week is the week immediately preceding Resurrection Sunday, the last week of Lent.

Holy Week is observed as a time to commemorate and enact the suffering (Passion and death of Jesus) through various observances and services of worship.

Holy Week observances began in Jerusalem in the earliest days of the Church, when devout people traveled to Jerusalem at Passover to reenact the events of the week leading up to the Resurrection. A need was felt to hold a separate commemoration for each event at the Holy place where it had occurred.

Dates: The dates of **Holy Week** for the current year are:

**April 5 - 11, 2020**

## Special Days:

Palm Sunday

Maundy Thursday

Good Friday

Holy Saturday

Resurrection "Sunday"



Note: The time from sundown Maundy Thursday to sundown on Resurrection Day is also known as the Triduum, which means three days.

## *Palm Sunday (Passion Sunday)*

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Palm Sunday observes Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, that was marked by the crowds who were in Jerusalem for Passover waving palm branches and proclaiming Him as the king. The irony of this acceptance of the new king (Mark 11:10) was that it was in the midst of the crowds that would only five days later cry for his execution. Traditionally, worshippers reenact the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem by the waving of palm branches and singing songs of celebration.

Palm Sunday is also known as Passion Sunday to commemorate the beginning of Holy Week and Jesus' final agonizing journey to the cross. The English word passion comes from a Latin word that means "to suffer," the same word from which we derive the English word patient.

*"Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." ~John 12:13~*



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## *Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday)*

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Maundy Thursday is the last day before Jesus was arrested. There are a variety of events that are clustered on this day. These include the last meal with the disciples, the institution of Communion, the betrayal by Judas, and Jesus praying in Gethsemane while the disciples fell asleep.

During His final earthen days, Jesus and His disciples steadily journeyed from Galilee to Jerusalem. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem had been marked by a joyous welcome. But in Jerusalem there was a growing darkness among the crowd. There was an ominous tone in the murmuring of the Sadducees and Pharisees who were threatened by the new future Jesus proclaimed. It was later that night, after the meal, as Jesus and His disciples were praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, that Jesus was arrested and taken to Caiaphas the High Priest.

The term Maundy comes from the Latin word *man datum*, that means "to give", "to entrust," or "to order." The term is usually translated, "commandment," from John's

account of Thursday night. According to the Gospel of John, as Jesus and the Disciples were eating their final meal together before Jesus' arrest, He washed the disciples' feet to illustrate humility and the spirit of serving one another. After they had finished the meal, they walked in the night toward Gethsemane where Jesus taught his disciples a "new" commandment (John 13:34-35): "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, you also ought to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."



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### *Good Friday (Holy Friday)*

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Friday of Holy Week has been traditionally called Good Friday or Holy Friday. On this day, the church commemorates Jesus' arrest, his trial, crucifixion and suffering, death and burial. Services of worship are normally aimed at allowing worshippers to experience some sense of pain, humiliation, and ending in the journey to the cross. One traditional use of Scripture is reading the Seven Last Words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel tradition:

Father forgive them...(Luke 23:24)

This day you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43)

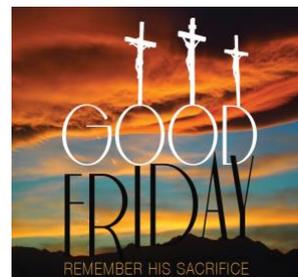
Woman, behold your son...(John 19:26-27)

My God, my God...(Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)

I thirst...(John 19:30)

It is finished! (John 19:30)

Father into your hands...(Luke 23:46)



Good Friday is not a day of celebration, but of mourning, both for the death of Jesus and for the sins of the world that His death represents. It is a solemn time, but not completely without joy. The somberness of Good Friday should always be seen with the hope of Resurrection Sunday.

## *Holy Saturday*

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This is the seventh day of the week, the day it was suspected that Jesus rested in the tomb. In the first three Gospel accounts, this was the Jewish Sabbath. While some church traditions continue daily services on Saturday, there is no communion served on this day.

This is traditionally a day of quiet meditation as Christians contemplate the darkness of a world without a future and without hope apart from God and His grace.

While Good Friday is a traditional day of fasting, some also fast on Saturday as the climax of the season of Lent. An ancient tradition calls for abstaining from food for 40 hours before sunrise on Sunday.

Holy Saturday is a time of reflection and waiting, the time of weeping that lasts for the night, while awaiting the joy that comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5)



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## *The Love Feast*

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A love feast is a devotional service, which generally precedes the administration of the Lord's Supper.

Eating together is a universal sign of friendship and goodwill. The feast is an ancient, symbolic meal in which Christians join together to share fellowship, exchange Christian experiences, and rejoice in the Lord. It began in early Christianity. The Love Feast is not a Sacrament, as is the Lord's Supper.

One of the characteristics of the Love Feast is that it is not restricted by historic or customary rules or interpretations. It can mean what those present want it to mean. It may be conducted by members of the congregation, with or without the leadership of an ordained minister.



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## *Resurrection Sunday*

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*The angel said to the women, “do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; **He has risen**, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples: “He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him.’ Now I have told you.” (Matthew 28: 5-7)*



On Resurrection Sunday -”*Sunday*” we rejoice in the resurrection of our Lord. Resurrection is the rising again from the dead and the evidence of eternal life to every believer.

According to scripture Jesus rose from the dead on the first Sunday following Passover.

Easter is the name often used by Christians, which is a Christian feast commemorating the Resurrection of Jesus. In Hebrew, this is known as pascha, which is commonly translated into Passover. It is Redemptive Life’s practice to not call it Easter, but Resurrection Sunday.

The traditional Christian celebration gives expression to the joyful celebration of salvation through Jesus’ death on the cross and resurrection on the third day.



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