



FIAT

Faith in Action Today

Annunciation Parish, Clifton

Cincinnati, Ohio

Dying and Rising with Christ

At sundown Holy Thursday, March 20th this year, the Season of Lent comes to an end. It is with the entrance antiphon at the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper on this evening that we begin the great Paschal Triduum, what you could say are the "high holy days" at the center of our entire Church Year. Over the next three days we will celebrate in a profound way the passover of our Lord Jesus Christ from death to life.

The Hebrew word for passover is *pesach*, which is also where we get the words *pascha* and *paschal*. Pascha and paschal are words for Easter. The Paschal Mystery - the Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascen-

sion into Spirit-filled Glory of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ - is at the very center of our Christian faith.

The word *triduum* is Latin for *three days*. Three is a significant number. Recall, for example, that Jonah was in the whale's belly for three days (Jonah 2:1).

We measure the three days of the Triduum from sundown to sundown, as Jewish people do. So, as said, the Triduum begins at sundown March 20th this year, and it concludes at sundown March 23rd this year (Easter Sunday).

In our experience of liturgy we enter eternal time. Unlike a Civil War reen-

actment, the Triduum liturgies are not a historical account of past events in Jesus' life. Rather, we are experiencing these events *now*. The sacrifice Christ made once and for all is happening today in us. That is why at Easter we can sing out with joy that *Jesus Christ is Risen Today!* (*Surrexit Christus hodie*, Latin, 14th century).



See the Place Where the Lord Lay
16th Century Icon
Theophanes the Cretan

Three in One

While the Triduum is three days, liturgically it is best viewed as a whole. Thinking in musical terms, the three days are like various movements of one composition. This becomes very obvious if you think of how our liturgy is structured. Take, for example, the celebration of the Mass, which has four parts: The Introductory Rites, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of

the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rite. While the Triduum begins with Introductory Rites at the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper, there is no "dismissal" at the conclusion of this Liturgy. Nor is there either an entrance antiphon or a dismissal at the celebration of the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion. And again, there is no entrance antiphon for the Easter Vigil, the first

Mass of Easter. It is not until the conclusion of the Easter Vigil that we are "dismissed" or "sent."

The liturgies of the Triduum are like the various movements of the one musical composition. While each movement has its own beauty, it is difficult to truly appreciate the entire composition without experiencing it in its totality.

March 13, 2008

Volume 2, Issue 2

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Special points of interest:

- Lent ends at sundown Holy Thursday, when we begin the Paschal Triduum - the three days at the very center of our entire Church Year.
- The Paschal Triduum is counted from sundown Holy Thursday through sundown Easter Sunday.
- Easter is a season, not a day. It is fifty days, concluding on the fiftieth day, Pentecost.

Sundown Thursday to Sundown Friday

The very early Church celebrated the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord at the one Easter Vigil celebration. But from the 4th century, what was celebrated at the Easter Vigil became part of a Triduum, or three-day celebration.

As we reflect on the Triduum, let us keep in mind the metaphor of a musical composition. The first movement in this composition is sundown Thursday-sundown Friday, the first of the three days. In measuring time in this manner, we realize something interesting. The Liturgy of the Lord's Supper on Thursday evening and the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion on Friday afternoon

are part of the same "day," the same *movement* in our musical composition.

This can be very helpful in understanding the gift of himself Jesus gives us in the Eucharist. We talk of the Eucharist being a meal, and we talk of the Eucharist being a sacrifice. When we look at the flow of this first "day" of the Triduum, we can see clearly this unity of meal and sacrifice.



Mystical Supper
14th Century Icon
Heritage: Macedonian

The meal, the "last supper" which Jesus shares with his disciples, anticipates his upcoming death. And Jesus' death gives profound meaning to this meal. As Jesus' body is broken and his blood is poured forth for us, a new and everlasting covenant is established.

We who eat and drink at the Eucharistic banquet know that we, too, must be broken and poured forth in total self-sacrificing service. We must be Christ for others.

Liturgy of the Lord's Supper

On Holy Thursday evening, March 20th this year, the Triduum begins with the celebration of the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper. There will be no other Mass in the parish on this day, i.e., no morning Mass. It is presumed that the **entire** parish will come together to celebrate the Triduum liturgies.

The entrance antiphon for the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper speaks of the centrality of the cross of Jesus (see Galatians 6:14), and therefore sets the

"theme" for the entire Triduum.

At the Liturgy of the Word this evening we hear of religious rituals: the prescription for the Passover ritual (Exodus 12:1-8,11-14); the institution of the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 11:23-26); and Jesus' washing the disciples' feet (John 13:1-15). The homily this evening is followed by the washing of feet.

It is presumed that the entire parish community will come together to celebrate the Triduum liturgies.

We are to be servant leaders, following Jesus' example of humble service to others with charity and love.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy of the Eucharist this evening, the Mass ends with the Prayer after Communion. There is no concluding rite or dismissal.

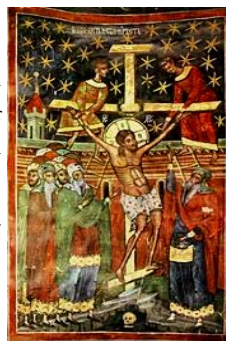
There is a procession as the Eucharist is transferred to an altar of reposition, where the faithful are encouraged to pray in adoration.

Liturgy of the Lord's Passion

The second major liturgy of this first "movement" or "day" of the Triduum is the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, March 21st this year. This liturgy most appropriately takes place in the afternoon at 3:00 p.m.

The sanctuary is "stark." The altar was previously stripped. There are no "Introductory Rites" for this Liturgy. The priest (and deacon) enter in silence, and approach the altar where they perform an act of reverence, usu-

ally a full prostration. There is then a prayer, and we immediately begin with the Liturgy of the Word. The Liturgy of the Word concludes with the general intercessions. There are ten intercessions this day, which come to us from the very early Church and follow a very set formula.



Nailing to the Cross
15th Century icon
Heritage: Rumanian

The second part of the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion is the Veneration of the Cross.

The third part of this Liturgy is Holy Communion. This is **not** a Eucharistic celebration. We commune from the Blessed Sacrament which was reserved at the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper. Following a prayer over the people, all depart in silence. There is no concluding rite.

Sundown Friday to Sundown Saturday

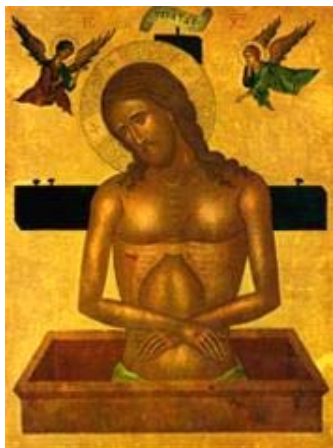
In the Nicene Creed, we profess that Jesus “suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he arose again...” In the Apostles’ Creed, between these two sentences, we profess that “He descended to the dead”, or “He descended into hell.”

The Descent into Hell is a difficult concept to grasp, unless we understand that here *hell* refers not to a place of eternal punishment, but rather *Hades*, the underworld or the place of the dead (see Philippians 2:10).

The gates of paradise were closed following the expulsion of Adam and Eve, and were not yet open to those who had died.

Notice in the icon to the left that Jesus’ eyes are closed in death. His body bears his fatal wounds. There is a silence as he descends to the realm of the dead.

This is the silence that the Church keeps this second full day of the Triduum, sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. Christ is in the tomb. Christ descends to the dead. Christ has died, but has not yet



Extreme Humility
14th Century Icon
Heritage: Russian

risen.

There are no major liturgical celebrations during this time.

We continue to keep the Paschal Fast. We fast not just from food, but from the noise and business of everyday life. In our prayer and in our daily lives we are very attuned to the stone-cold silence of the tomb.

Sundown Saturday to Sundown Sunday

The third “day” of the Triduum, the third and final movement, if you will, of our “musical composition,” goes from sundown Saturday to sundown Sunday.

It is important to keep in mind how we are reckoning time - we are counting these days from sundown to sundown. Therefore, the Easter Vigil - the pinnacle of not only the Triduum but the entire Church Year - is the first Mass of Easter Sunday. The Easter Vigil **must**

take place entirely at night, beginning after sunset. This year’s Vigil is at 8:30 p.m. March 22nd.

In the early Church, through the end of the fourth century, the Vigil lasted

the entire night, and therefore there was no evidence of another Mass on Easter day. This is difficult for us to imagine, since for many of us Mass on Easter Sunday morning was the highlight of Easter.

The Easter Vigil, what Saint Augustine called “*the mother of all holy vigils*”, is the highpoint of the entire Church year.

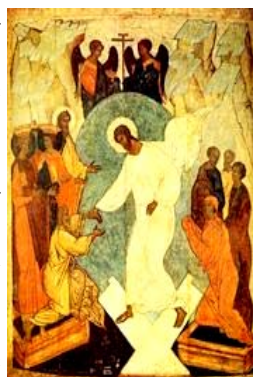
The Paschal Triduum ends at sundown Easter Sunday, March 23rd this year.

The Easter Vigil, what Saint Augustine called “the mother of all holy vigils”, is the highpoint of the entire Church Year.

The Easter Vigil

There are four parts to the Easter Vigil, the first being the Service of Light. The church is in total darkness, and the assembly is gathered around a large Easter fire burning outside of the church. The fire is blessed, and the Paschal Candle is prepared and lighted from the Easter fire. The Easter candle is carried in procession into the darkened church. The assembly then follows in procession. All the baptized hold candles which are lighted from the Paschal Candle. The light of Christ shines forth in the darkened church!

Once the Paschal Candle has been placed in the sanctuary, the Easter Proclamation (the *Exsultet*) is sung. This is a beautiful proclamation extolling the Passover of our Lord from death to life. When the *Exsultet* is concluded, we move into the second part of the Easter Vigil, the Liturgy of the Word.



Resurrection
16th Century Icon
Heritage: Russian

The readings this night proclaim salvation history from creation through Christ’s resurrection.

The third part of the Easter Vigil is the Liturgy of Baptism.

The fourth part of the Easter Vigil is the Liturgy of the Eucharist, which proceeds in the usual manner.

Tonight, for the first time in the Triduum, we will be “dismissed” - instructed to go. We are sent to serve others as Christ.

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It's Happening at Annunciation!

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There are many Holy Week, Triduum and Easter Season liturgies being celebrated and Faith Formation initiatives happening at Annunciation Parish! Don't miss out—mark your calendars now for some of our upcoming events and celebrations...and for more information read our weekly Sunday Bulletin!

- ◆ On Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (March 16th), Blessed Palm Branches will be distributed at each Mass. There will be a Procession with Palm at our 11:00 a.m. Mass.
- ◆ Liturgy of the Lord's Supper will be celebrated at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 20th. Our Operation Rice Bowl offering will be collected at this liturgy. The church will remain open after this liturgy for private prayer until 10:00 p.m. when we will celebrate Night Prayer.
- ◆ Liturgy of the Lord's Passion will be celebrated at 3:00 p.m. on Friday, March 21st.
- ◆ The Easter Vigil - the first Mass of Easter and the highpoint of the Triduum and the entire Church Year - will be celebrated at 8:30 p.m. Saturday, March 22nd.
- ◆ Morning Mass on Easter Sunday, March 23rd, will be at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
- ◆ Our Parish Easter Season Easter Egg Hunt will be at 12:00 Noon on Sunday, March 30th.
- ◆ On Monday, March 31st, we will celebrate our Parish Feast Day, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord (transferred this year from March 25th to March 31st due to the date of Easter), with Mass and a Feast Day Social at 7:00 p.m.
- ◆ Our parish-wide May Crowning Celebration will be at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 4th, and will be followed by a Social.
- ◆ First Communion will be celebrated at our 11:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday, May 11th (Pentecost Sunday).



Annunciation Parish
Photo courtesy of Diocesan Publications