



# Holy Week

**Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April - Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> April**

## Holy Week

Holy Week is the time when Christians re-live the events of Jesus' last week on earth: his triumphal journey into Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, celebrating with the disciples the Passover Meal, his betrayal, praying in the garden of Gethsemane, trial, Peter's denial of Jesus, crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection. Holy Week is a time to join with others to worship and remember.



### Palm Sunday: 5<sup>th</sup> April

Holy week begins on Palm Sunday, sometimes called Passion Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem where the crowds welcome Him with shouts of joy and waving palm leaves. The service also tells the story of Christ's passion and death. Sometimes the service begins with a procession where palm leaves are carried and the worshippers may carry small crosses made out of palm leaves. The palms and crosses are blessed. Several Old Testament scripture passages tell about processions to honour kings. Matthew and John quote Zechariah's prophecy of God's victory (9:9).

Rejoice greatly,  
O daughter Zion!  
Shout aloud,  
O daughter Jerusalem!  
Lo, your king comes to you;  
triumphant and victorious is he,  
humble and riding on a donkey.



**Reflect:** As we begin our journey with Christ into Holy Week quietly reflect on the change in the crowd's reaction towards Jesus from praising God and welcoming Him into the city of Jerusalem with shouts of 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord,' to, within a short space of time, calling for Jesus to be crucified.

Like the crowd we too can be at fault, when, for example, we speak on the one hand with conviction about our faith and then on the other hand show doubt and question our faith in God.

**Read:** Matthew Ch.21 v 1-11 Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

**In prayer:** Father we ask that you help us to remember that your ways are much greater than our ways, your thoughts and plans go far deeper than ours.

Through your love for us you had a plan to redeem us and make all things new. When we have doubts or fears we pray that you strengthen our faith and bring us closer to you.

## Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April

**Reflect:** In a quiet space, sit and look at the picture of Mary anointing Jesus' feet. Why do you think she did this?



*(Washing the feet of people was a very unpleasant job to do and was left for the lowest of the servants to do).*

It's interesting to note that John also records in the following Chapter (Ch.13) that Jesus washes the feet of the disciples to illustrate the act of service, one to another.

Mary's natural instinct of showing Christ her love for him by anointing and washing his feet raises an interesting question. Could this loving action of Mary's have inspired Jesus to do likewise? In Mary's selfless action Jesus saw how he could help His disciples understand what serving one another really meant. If He, their teacher, washed their feet then they could wash the feet of others.

**Read:** John Ch. 12 v 1-11

**In prayer:** Father we ask that we will always respond in a positive way to those who need our help and not look for thanks or acknowledgement for our actions. In faith and love for you may we always be a humble servant.

## Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April



### Reflect

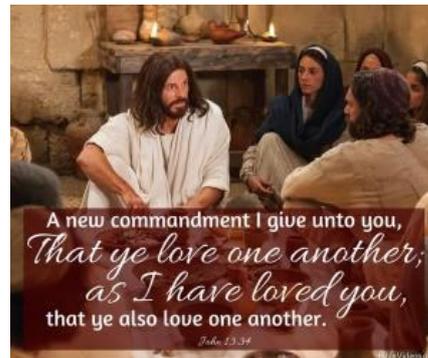
Jesus said it was time for him to be glorified, but he meant his death! To attain victory over sin and evil and to return to full glory as the Son of God at the Father's right hand in Heaven Jesus had to die. His death was the supreme act of obedience to the will of God the Father. Only if the seed of

wheat dies will there be germination for a great crop; only if Jesus dies will there be a great harvest of saved and righteous people. Jesus' death brings about the harvest, and without it the harvest would not occur. Could you explain it to someone else?

**Read:** John Ch.12 v20 -36

**In prayer:** Father as we reflect on this reading we give thanks that you love us so much that you sent your Son to show us not only how we should live out our lives but also because we are human and let you down through sin, you sent him to willingly die to win victory over sin and evil. We ask that you will strengthen us in faith especially when we fail to live as you would want us to.

### Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> April



**Reflect:** Sit in quiet and reflect on the two pictures above. The first portrays Jesus with Judas sharing the dipping dish. The second shows Jesus speaking to his disciples, telling them that He won't be with them much longer and giving them a new commandment.

**'That you love one another as I have loved you.'**

**Read:** John Ch. 13 v 21-32

**In prayer:** Father your Son asked us to love one another. We ask that you help us to fulfill this command and realise that love has no boundaries. To serve and support each other through acts of kindness and love is how you want your people to live. We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us and that we are strengthened by your presence.

## The Main Three Days of Holy Week

### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April: Maundy Thursday



Maundy Thursday takes its name from the Latin word for commandment, *mandatum*. At the Last Supper Jesus said;



"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another". (John Ch.13 v 34)

Sunset on Holy Thursday through to sunset on Easter Day, are the climax of Lent and of the Christian year. These three days proclaim the paschal mystery, the saving events of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services may be connected by a prayer vigil that lasts through Holy Saturday (when Jesus lay in the tomb) until the first service of Easter.

On Maundy Thursday we commemorate Jesus' Last Supper when during the Passover Meal, he broke bread and gave the cup of wine to his disciples, initiating the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper. It's during this Passover Meal that St. John's Gospel also recalls the account of Jesus washing the disciples feet in an extraordinary display of humility and giving them a new commandment. The Maundy Service of worship can include both the washing of feet of parishioners and Holy Communion.

**Reflect:** Jesus' command to 'love one another as I have loved you,' raised the definition of love in that Jesus sacrificially met his followers' deepest need, that of new spiritual life and forgiveness of sins. Christ not only loved his followers but also loved his enemies and He calls us to show love today to all people even if they appear not to want it. Salvation is a wonderful gift to humanity given by God's grace and generosity, a gift we don't truly deserve. Christ's triumph over death gives us the opportunity for a new life in Him, to participate and continue His work here on earth, to be spiritually strengthened and brought closer to God.

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." (Titus Ch.2 v 11-14).

**Read:** John Ch. 13 v1-17

**In prayer** Father we thank you for the life and example your Son has given. We ask that through your grace and love for us, your children, we may through the help of the Holy Spirit follow Christ's example.

### **Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April: Good Friday**

Following Communion on Holy Thursday or on Good Friday evening some churches have a service of Tenebrae or "Darkness", which originated in the Twelfth century. As Jesus' sufferings are recalled from betrayal to burial in the tomb, candles are extinguished, one by one, leaving the room in darkness.



It is on Good Friday that we remember Jesus' death on the cross. Many Churches have three-hour services from noon to three focusing on Jesus' words from the cross. Others have evening services. Good Friday may once have been God's Friday because Jesus' death shows God's love and salvation offered to the world.

**Reflect:** Read this extract from Hebrews Ch. 10 16 18 and think about its content

'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds',

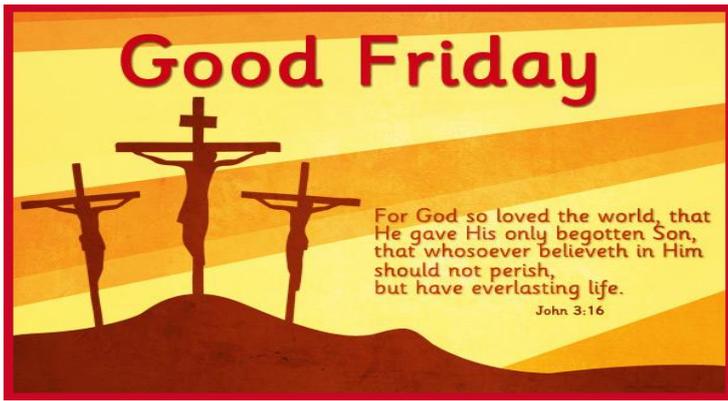
He also adds,

'I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.'

Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

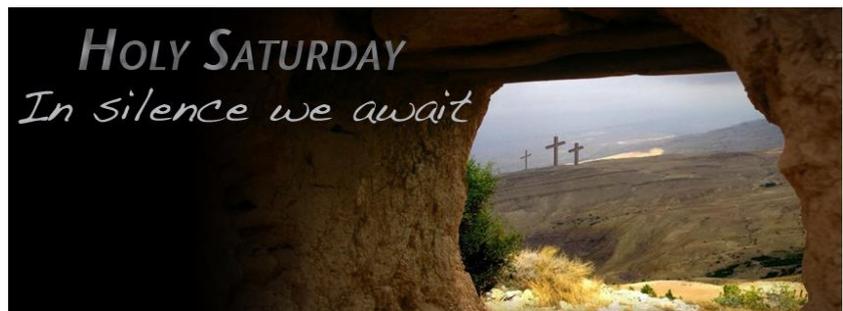
**Read:** John Ch. 18 v1 –end of Ch. 19

**In prayer:** Father we remember the ultimate sacrifice of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Although innocent he was led like a lamb to the cross. Clothed in humility and grace, he willingly offered himself to death so that we might live forever. We are truly thankful for the extent of his love, stretched out on the



cross. We reflect on the pain he bore for us and are truly grateful for the forgiveness that he offers. Through our worship and praise today, we ask that you help us to live in the wonder of this goodness and marvel at his endless grace.

## Saturday 11th



**The Paschal or Easter Vigil:** During the earlier centuries the events of Holy Week were celebrated in a single service, a vigil that began on Saturday night and would continue until dawn, greeting the first moments of Easter Sunday morning. The service would celebrate with great joy the history of Christ's saving work. It was also during this time that many baptisms would take place.



*Adult Baptism*

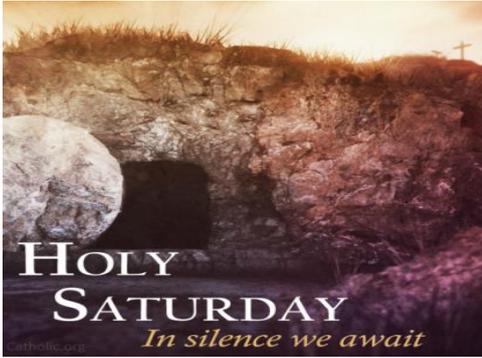


*Dawn First Service of Easter Day*

**Reflect:** The Burial of Jesus in Matthew Ch. 27 v 57 – 61. In silence sit and reflect on this account. How do you think the disciples and followers of Jesus would feel at this moment?

**Read:** John Ch. 19 v 38 to the end

**In prayer:** Father when we feel alone and have no-one to turn to help us remember that you are always there, a light in the darkness. You are ready to



listen and support us no matter what it is we fear, or what troubles we may have. Whatever our burden nothing can separate us from your love.

### **Sunday 12th April: Easter Day**

The date of Easter was agreed on in the West only after centuries of discussion and debate. Easter Sunday is the first Sunday after the full moon that occurs on or after 21st March, the spring equinox. So Easter can be anytime from 22nd March through to 25th April.

### **Easter Colours and Candle**

White and gold are the colours seen in Church on Easter day reflecting a time of celebration. You will see these colours throughout the Easter season on cloths for the altar, pulpit, lectern on vestments and banners. A large white candle called the Paschal Candle is lit at the first service of Easter. The word paschal (pertaining to Easter or Passover) is from pesah, the Hebrew word Passover. In the eighth century, Venerable Bede wrote that the English word Easter came from Eastre, the Anglo-Saxon goddess whose holiday was on the spring equinox, 21st March.

**Reflect:** Today we rejoice at Christ rising from the dead enabling us to receive through God's grace the forgiveness of our sins. Let us think quietly on God's great love for us as his children.

**Read:** John Ch. 20 v 11-18

**In prayer:** Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life, grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

