

Holy Week quiz

How much do you remember about the people and events of Holy Week? Here's a little quiz to test your knowledge. The answers are at the bottom of this page.

1. Where did the Agony in the Garden take place?
2. Who betrayed Jesus?
3. Who denied Jesus three times?
4. Who ordered Jesus to be scourged?
5. What criminal was released instead of Jesus?
6. How many Stations of the Cross are there?
7. How many times does Jesus fall on the way to Calvary?
8. Who helped Jesus carry his cross?
9. Who wiped the face of Jesus?
10. What did the sign on the cross say?
11. Who made arrangements for the burial of Jesus?
12. Who was the first to discover that Jesus had risen?

The Seven Last Words of Jesus

Taking time to meditate on the seven last words of Jesus is a traditional devotion during Holy Week. Here are the last words spoken by Jesus with their Scripture citations. You might want to read the passages from your Bible and then ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what meaning these words have in your life today:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

(Lk 23:34)

“Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

(Lk 23:43)

“Behold, your mother!”

(Jn 19:26-27)

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

(Mt 27:46)

“I thirst!”

(Jn 19:28)

“It is finished!”

(Jn 19:30)

“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

(Lk 23:46)



YOUR GUIDE TO HOLY WEEK

Celebrations of Our Lord's passion and his glorious resurrection date to earliest days of Christianity

In the first century, the early Christians celebrated every Sunday in commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus. By the second century, they established a particular day for the celebration of the resurrection, which was connected to the Jewish Passover.

Their observance began at sundown on Saturday evening. They called it the Night of the Great Vigil, a time of remembrance and expectation that lasted throughout the night so they could sing “alleluia” at dawn on Easter morning. It was

during the Night of the Great Vigil that new Christians were received into the Church.

By the fourth century, it became customary for people to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate what was called the “Great Week,” which included Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. The diary of a woman named Egeria in 381 contains the first accounts of the special rites, prayers and devotions that took place in Jerusalem during the Great Week.

Over time, the practice of observing Holy Week spread throughout the Christian world, with prayers, historical re-enactments and special liturgies. During the Middle Ages, the celebration of the Easter Vigil gradually fell out of practice. The important days of the week were Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

In 1955, the Vatican re-established the Easter Vigil as an important part of Holy Week observances.

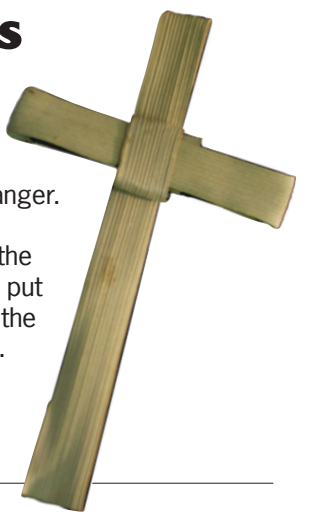
During the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the bishops

called for the restoration of the early Christian rituals for receiving new Christians into the Church at the Easter Vigil. In 1988, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was issued.

Today, Easter Vigil with the Easter fire, the lighting of the paschal candle, the reading of salvation history, the celebration of the sacraments of initiation for catechumens and renewal of baptismal promises for the faithful is once again an integral part of Holy Week celebrations.

Holy Week customs

Palm crosses: From medieval times, people have believed that blessed palms formed into the shape of a cross would protect them from danger. The easiest way to make a cross from blessed palms is to cut two pieces of the palm, arrange in the shape of a cross, put a thumbtack in the middle, and attach the cross to a doorway or a bulletin board. Check the Internet for directions on how to braid or weave palms into more decorative crosses.



Housecleaning: In many cultures the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week are designated as days for vigorous housecleaning in preparation for Easter. This custom probably evolved from the Jewish custom of ritual cleaning before Passover.



Coloring eggs: Decorating eggs was a pagan symbol of rebirth at springtime for the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians and even the Chinese. Christians adopted the colored egg as a symbol of new life which comes with the Resurrection.

Visiting churches: The custom of visiting several churches to say a prayer on Holy Thursday was a tradition that evolved from the practice of making pilgrimages to holy places.



Blessing of Easter baskets: In many cultures, families bring food that will be eaten on Easter Sunday to church in a basket for a special blessing on Holy Saturday.

Easter lilies: The tradition of buying Easter lilies during Holy Week for use as decorations in homes and churches came into practice in the 1800s. The white flower is a symbol of purity and new life that heralds the resurrection of Jesus.



Sweet breads: In many cultures, Holy Week was traditionally a time for baking sweet breads, cakes and pastries that would be served on Easter Sunday.



New clothes: From the time of the early Christians, the newly baptized wore white garments made from new linen. In medieval times, it became a tradition for people to wear new clothes on Easter Sunday, symbolizing the “new life” that comes with the Resurrection. In some places it was believed that bad luck would come to those who could afford new Easter clothes but refused to buy them.



Holy Water blessings: Some families bring holy water containers to Mass on Easter so they can bring home some Easter water, which is blessed during the Easter Vigil, to bless their homes.



EYEPIX

The Chrism Mass

During Holy Week bishops bless sacred oils in the diocesan cathedral at a special liturgy known as the Chrism Mass.

The oil of chrism is used during baptisms, confirmation, ordination and the consecration of altars. The oil of catechumens is used at the Easter Vigil. The oil of the sick is used to anoint people during the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

The oils are then distributed to the parishes for sacramental celebrations throughout the year.

As part of the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, the renewal of priestly promises was incorporated into the Chrism Mass.

The Chrism Mass is an ancient celebration that traditionally takes place on Holy Thursday morning. But in recent years, many dioceses celebrate the Chrism Mass on an evening earlier in Holy Week so that more people can attend.

12 ways to make Holy Week more meaningful

THINK PRAYER. If you have to work or go to school during Holy Week, think about how you can incorporate prayer breaks into each day.

MAKE AN ADDITIONAL SACRIFICE by fasting and abstaining from meat on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday in addition to Good Friday.

DON'T WATCH TELEVISION from sundown on Holy Thursday until Easter morning.

GO to confession.

SET ASIDE 10 minutes every day to read Passion accounts in the Gospels.

Make it a point to **FORGIVE** someone on Good Friday.

PRAY the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary.

OFFER UP any pain or difficulties you experience during Holy Week and unite your sufferings with the pain of Christ.

PRAY the Stations of the Cross.

ATTEND all of the Triduum liturgies.

INVITE family members, friends and neighbors — especially people who have strayed from the church — to come to church with you.

VOLUNTEER to help decorate your parish on Holy Saturday for Easter.

The Sacred Triduum

The word “Triduum” comes from the Latin word meaning “three days,” and encompasses the three most sacred days in the Church year. It begins at sundown on Holy Thursday, reaches a high point at the Easter Vigil, and concludes with evening prayer at sundown on Easter Sunday.

The liturgical celebrations during the Triduum on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday are rich with symbolism and flow from

one to another in a seamless way. While it may appear as if these liturgies are separate and distinct, they are actually intended to be one continuous celebration that commemorates the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

For this reason, Catholics are encouraged to observe the entire Triduum by attending all of the liturgies. For more on the liturgies of the Sacred Triduum, see Page 12.

Answers to quiz: 1.) Gethsemane or the Mount of Olives; 2.) Judas; 3.) Peter; 4.) Pontius Pilate; 5.) Barabbas; 6.) 14; 7.) three; 8.) Simon of Cyrene; 9.) Veronica; 10.) King of the Jews; 11.) Joseph of Arimathea; 12.) Mary Magdalene.