

Holy Week



This week we enter the summit of the liturgical year—Holy Triduum—which spans from the evening of Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday. We celebrate the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Thursday, honor Jesus' death on Good Friday, and rejoice in the Resurrection during the Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday. Before we delight in the empty tomb, it would be prudent to prayerfully reflect upon the last days of Jesus.

The closer Jesus got to the cross, the more his expression of love for the people he calls "his own" grew. The Holy Thursday Gospel Reading begins:

*Before the feast of Passover,
Jesus knew that his hour had come
to pass from this world to the Father.
He loved his own in the world and he loved them to
the end.*

Fully aware of what would be coming next, including betrayal from his own friends, Jesus rose from the table and showed what love looks like.

*He took a towel and tied it around his waist.
Then he poured water into a basin
and began to wash the disciples' feet
and dry them with the towel around his waist.*

At the center of Christian faith stands the belief that Jesus Christ sacrificed his own life to atone for the sins of the world. Our proclivity for habitual sin is manifested through addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments. Jesus, our Savior, bore the suffering of the world to set us free. His model of perfect love includes not only sacrificing his life for us, but washing the feet of his disciples so that we may know we are loved and capable of loving.

He asks us to do the same for our fellow brothers and sisters. Recovery fellowships maintain this kind of outward-looking love that seeks self-sacrifice to care for those who are still struggling. Jesus loved his disciples as friends by getting to know them, praying with them, seeing goodness and beauty within them, and drawing it out by pouring more love and service into them.

Before this, Jesus repeatedly said that he had not come to be served but to serve. He washes the feet of the disciples with the cloth of divinity, backing his words with action. The same cloth will dry the water of new life poured out upon the newly baptized this Easter. We welcome them into the Church, eager to serve as Christ calls us to.

*So when he had washed their feet
and put his garments back on and reclined at table
again, he said to them,
"Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me 'teacher' and 'master,' and rightly so,
for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher,
have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another's feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you, you should also do."*

The best way for one addict to maintain freedom is by reaching a hand out to another. Sharing the burden and pain of others, particularly the guilt that we know so well, aligns us with the mission of Christ and gives us a platform to do the will of God. As we reflect on the final days of Jesus, let us never forget that through his full experience of suffering he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey (Heb. 5:9).

Reflection Questions

- How have you experienced Christian service from others in recovery and/or in the Church? In other words, who has washed your feet?
- What kind of transformation have you experienced through sacrifice and service to others?
- When has your suffering led you to the source of eternal salvation?

Living the Steps Begins April 1

*Join the Catholic in Recovery community
as we journey together through the Twelve Steps*

- Gatherings will take place via Zoom Mondays at 6:30p ET/3:30p PT for 22 weeks (ending late September)
- Participate with others to work through the Twelve steps of recovery through a sacramental lens using *The Catholic in Recovery Workbook* as a guide
- Small group breakouts based on addiction type and gender
- Visit catholicinrecovery.com to learn more and register

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Gospel: John 13:1-15