

This week the Church enters the most sacred time of the year. The Holy Triduum begins on Holy Thursday, continues through Good Friday, and culminates in the joy of Easter. These days invite us to walk slowly with Christ through His final hours—through service, suffering, surrender, and ultimately resurrection.

For many people in recovery, this journey feels familiar. Our own stories often include moments of brokenness, humility, and surrender before new life begins. Holy Week reminds us that transformation rarely happens instantly. God often works through the very experiences we once tried hardest to avoid.

The Gospel for Holy Thursday begins with a striking description of Jesus' love for His disciples (John 13:1):

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.

Knowing that betrayal and suffering lie ahead, Jesus chooses to express His love in a deeply humble act. During the Last Supper, He rises from the table and washes the feet of His disciples (John 13:4–5):

He rose from supper and took off his outer garments. 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.

In the ancient world, washing someone's feet was the task of a servant. Yet Jesus, the Lord and Teacher, chooses this act to show what love truly looks like. His example challenges the way we typically think about strength, dignity, and leadership.

Recovery communities reflect this same spirit of service. Many of us discovered that our own healing began when someone who understood our struggles extended compassion rather

than judgment. A sponsor answered a late-night phone call, a fellow group member shared honestly about their experience, or someone who had walked the road before us reached out to help.

This spirit of service becomes a powerful part of recovery. We learn that helping others strengthens our own sobriety and spiritual growth. The Twelve Steps remind us that carrying the message to others keeps us grounded in gratitude and humility.

Yet Holy Week also brings us face-to-face with suffering. On Good Friday, we remember the moment when Jesus willingly embraces the cross. His sacrifice reveals a love that does not run from pain but transforms it.

Many people in recovery know something about this kind of suffering. Addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments often left wounds in the form of broken trust, damaged relationships, and deep shame. Facing these realities can feel overwhelming at first. Yet recovery invites us to bring those wounds into the light rather than hiding from them.

The cross reminds us that suffering is not the end of the story. What appears to be defeat becomes the doorway to resurrection.

As Holy Week unfolds, we move gradually from the darkness of Good Friday toward the light of Easter. The Resurrection proclaims that God can bring life out of what once seemed hopeless. It does not erase the wounds of the past, but it transforms them into signs of grace.

12-step recovery reflects this same mystery. The very experiences that once caused pain can become the foundation for compassion, humility, and service to others. When we allow God to work through our lives, our past struggles can become a source of hope for those still searching for freedom.

This week invites us to stay close to Christ through every step of the journey. We remember His love, His sacrifice, and His victory over death. As we walk through the events of the Triduum, we are reminded that new life can begin in places where we once thought everything was lost.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced acts of service or compassion in recovery that reminded you of Christ washing the disciples' feet?

- How has facing painful truths in your life opened the door to deeper healing or freedom?

- Where are you noticing signs of new life or hope emerging in your recovery today?

HOLY THURSDAY EVENING MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14

RESP. PS. Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

GOSPEL John 13:1-15

