

EASTER TRIDUUM

Easter Triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on HOLY THURSDAY and concludes on EASTER SUNDAY evening. The Latin word *Triduum* means Three days. Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday are important days in this sacred three-day period of prayer and Christian devotion. During these days, we remember and re-live Jesus' passing from life and death to the glory of the resurrection.

EASTER THURSDAY

On Easter Thursday we commemorate the Lord's Supper, the institution of the Holy Eucharist. The Lord took the bread in His sacred hands, consecrated it, broke it and shared it to all, that all may have life: His life, Eternal life. He will continue to be "with us until the end of time." He remains for us in the Eucharist (in the Blessed Sacrament); no more in His humanity but in the form of Bread and Word. Remember He was the Word and the Word became flesh. On Holy Thursday, He also instituted the Priesthood. He will continue to be visible in His disciples through their healing, forgiving, teaching, preaching, charitable and liberating ministries. Before He broke and shared the Bread, He took a towel, tied it around His waist and bent before each of His disciple to wash their feet. It shocked them! Participate in the Eucharist only if you are willing to wash, feed, cloth, visit and be with Him in the distressing disguise of the poorest of the poor. Do we see any of these qualities in Judas Iscariot? Though we are churchgoers and communicants, we cannot ignore the fact that Judas Iscariot (our attitude and priority) can become a possibility in us! Here Eucharist proves the quality of a believer. No wonder why many stumble upon the Eucharist and hate it!!! It is good to read and meditate on: "Many shall be purified, cleansed and refined, but the wicked shall continue to act wickedly. None of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand." (Daniel 12:10) "He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Rev. 2:29) It is because Jesus paid so much to become Eucharist for us!

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday readings from the Scripture highlight the suffering He underwent before His death – all because "...He loved His own and loved them till the end." (Jn 13:1) All because "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (Jn 15:13) Then we go up to the front to venerate the Crucifix. Each takes his time to be with Jesus, kissing the feet or embracing the Crucifix (those who are not having the opportunity to celebrate it in the Church, please do it at your home). We remember that salvation came through the folly of the cross, the love shown in accepting the Cross. Then there are the intercessions placing our needs, the needs of others, the church, and the world before God. And finally the communion service takes place.

HOLY SATURDAY

On Holy Saturday, the people of God in Hope wait for the Lord's Resurrection. All the daylong believers remain in meditation of the Love of Jesus manifested on the cross. It is a waiting time in a silent prayerful and reflective mood. We wait with Jesus with the knowledge that He will rise! Our faith tells us that we too will rise from what we are, from where we are to experience the fullness of Jesus offered through His death and resurrection.

“The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” (Lk 24:5) If you search for Jesus in the tomb, you will not find Him there but everywhere else in different life situations, struggles, trials and failures of the people. For example, He is there with those two disciples, who are sad and lost hope, on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13 - 32); He is there with those who locked themselves in a room out of fear (Jn 20:19); He is there with those disciples who went to catch fish by losing hope in Him - He is there in the futility of their work (Jn 21:1 - 13); He is there with Thomas who doubted Him (Jn 20:26 - 27), He is there among the praying community through His Spirit (Act 2:1 - 3); He allowed them to see His ascension - it is the Hope and return of the hope of everyone (Act 1:6 - 11)! Etc. That means, today Risen Christ is with you active and alive whatever may be the situation in which you are! All glory to God. Today onwards let us not search for Him among the dead.

The Gospel of John 20:7 tells us that the cloth which had been placed over Jesus' face was not just thrown aside, but was neatly folded. Why? I read it from a book: According to the tradition of that day, after a servant set the dinner table, he would wait, just out of sight, until the family had finished eating. If one of them was done, they would rise, wad up the napkin and toss it onto the table - the signal to clear their setting. However, if they got up from the table, folded their napkin and laid it beside their plate, the message was "I'm not finished yet." The folded cloth served to whisper to those who listened: "I'm coming back!"

Fr. Anthony Saji VC

VPH, Lavington