

THE 'TRIDUUM - THREE DAYS TO SAVE...AND SAVOUR

A Reflection by Gabe Huck (adapted)

What we do from Holy Thursday to Holy Saturday

Holy Thursday brings the end to Lent. That night we begin the *Three Days* that are the centre of our year. Why are these *Three Days* so important? What do they mean for you? You are invited to make these *Three Days* different from all the days of the year.

Adults in our community are invited to plan ahead so that the whole time from Thursday night until the Easter Vigil is free of social engagements, free even of work, free of entertainment, free of meals except for the simplest nourishment. We are asked to fast during Good Friday and to continue fasting, if possible, all through Holy Saturday as strictly as we can, so that we come hungry and full of excitement to the Easter Vigil. We make Good Friday and Holy Saturday free for prayer and reflection and preparation and silence. The church is getting ready.

Whether you are young or old, currently active in the parish or not, please set these days aside. All of us should know that our presence for the liturgies is not just by invitation. We are all needed here. All of us need this whole community together on its greatest days.

On these *Three Days*, we gather a number of times. Together we hear some of the church's most beautiful prayers and scriptures and we make some of our finest music. Please look closely at the parishes' schedule and make plans to take part in the various liturgies and other gatherings of Holy Thursday night, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Above all, come on Saturday night for the Vigil.

We Begin as Holy Thursday Ends

Thursday evening we enter into this Triduum together. After listening to the scriptures, we do something strange: We wash feet. Some of us go down on our knees with pitchers of water, basins and towels. Jesus gave us this image of what the church is supposed to look like, feel like, act like. This is rehearsal for Christian life, as is the next thing we do, a gathering up of SCIAF boxes.

Later we celebrate the Eucharist. The evening liturgy has no ending: Whether we stay to pray awhile or leave, we are now in the quiet and peace and glory of the Triduum.

And we continue through Good Friday and Holy Saturday

We gather quietly on Friday and listen to Scripture. We pray at length for all the world's needs. Then there is another once-a-year event: the holy cross is held up in our midst and we come forward one by one to do reverence with a kiss or a bow or a genuflection.

We continue in fasting and prayer and vigil, in rest and quiet through Saturday. This Saturday for us is like God's rest at the end of creation. It is Christ's repose in the tomb.

Until the Night between Saturday and Sunday

Hungry now and excited, the church gathers in the darkness and lights a new fire and a great candle that will make this night bright for us. We listen to some of the most powerful scriptures in the Bible, then we pray to all our saints to stand with us as we go to the font and bless the waters. There the catechumens and candidates are baptised and anointed. These are the moments when death and life meet, when we reject evil and give our promises to God. Together we go to the table and celebrate the Easter Eucharist. Easter Sunday begins and we are ready for Fifty Days of rejoicing.