



ST. PHILIP INSTITUTE OF CATECHESIS AND EVANGELIZATION

What is the Triduum?

The Paschal Triduum is the three-day celebration immediately preceding Easter. It is, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the source of light for the entire liturgical year. The Triduum consists of three sacred feast days: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

Holy Thursday

The Gospels record the Last Supper with the 12, gathered together to celebrate a Passover meal. The Old Testament Passover ritual consisted of breaking unleavened bread, eating the flesh of a sacrificial lamb, bitter herbs, the singing of psalms, and the pouring out of the blood of the lamb in the Temple. What Catholics celebrate on Holy Thursday is the fulfillment of the Passover. We consume the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, and partake of his blood. Following the Holy Thursday Mass, the Eucharist, Christ's body, is taken out of the Church to an altar of repose. This symbolizes Christ going to the Garden of Gethsemane where he endured the agony of his forthcoming Passion.

Good Friday

On Good Friday, the Church enters into the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus on the Cross. Catholics celebrate a special service consisting of the veneration of the Cross, where we are invited to kiss the Cross of Jesus as an act of devotion. Most Catholic churches also have a prayer of the Stations of the Cross. Each year, Good Friday represents the Church re-living and recalling the brutal death Christ suffered for us, so that we might all have eternal life. It is marked by fasting, prayer, and an attitude of silence.

Holy Saturday

On Holy Saturday, the Church celebrates the victory of Christ over sin and death and his Resurrection. After his death and burial, Christ becomes the light of the world and conquers the darkness of evil and suffering. This is represented in the liturgy by the use of fire and the Paschal candle. The liturgy of Holy Saturday includes a wide range of readings from Scripture, which trace salvation history; it then moves to the celebration of Baptism and Confirmation, where the divine life is poured out into souls, and culminates with the celebration of the Eucharist.