

Our Lady Immaculate and St Andrew Parish

- Hitchin -

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES - 2019 -



Thy Kingdom Come!

Services of Reconciliation

Wednesday 10th April 7.30pm & Thursday 11th April 2pm

Saturday 13th April & Monday 15th April – Wednesday 17th April
Reconciliation after Morning Mass (*Please see the Priest in the sacristy after Mass to let him know you want the sacrament.*)

From Thurs 18th April, the Sacrament of Reconciliation is not celebrated again until Sat of the 2nd Week of Easter 4th May

PASSION SUNDAY: 14th April 2019 (1¼ hours)

Jesus has reached Jerusalem: the goal of a journey which forms the biggest part of Luke's Gospel. The liturgy begins with a 'Transfiguration moment' (i.e. anticipated glory) the exuberant procession in which we are encouraged to acclaim in triumph 'Hosanna to the son of David!' It all changes after that. Today really is Passion Sunday; Jesus' sufferings are portrayed starkly today, not, as on Good Friday, as a triumph. The first reading shows the Servant of the Lord meekly accepting suffering. The Psalm allows us to use Jesus' own words (we may think Jesus was just 'quoting the bible' but his cry was surely heartfelt); this goes some way to counteracting the later shouts of 'Crucify him!', words which we should tremble to utter. We take various roles today: singing 'Hosanna !' gives us the opportunity to think what would our own response have been if we had been there - cheering with the crowds or denying our Lord? Only found in Luke's passion account are the following: Jesus' forgiving attitude to the sleeping disciples; healing the high priest's servant's ear; Jesus looking at Peter after his denial; the trial before Herod; the daughters of Jerusalem; the 'good thief'. This is not a 'sad' day, though; it is the way to glory



Procession and Blessing of Palms at all Masses

Weather permitting we will start in the front garden
Saturday 6 pm, Sun 8.30am, 10.30 am (Sung Mass), 5 pm

15th – 17th April Mass at 10 am

Mon 15th April 7.30pm: Celebration of the Passover Meal: in the Hall
We prepare for the Last Supper of Jesus, by reliving the Freedom Celebration of the Passover.

Tues 16th April 12pm: Mass of Chrism: Westminster Cathedral

The Easter Triduum is the culmination of the liturgical year. It begins with Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper (on Holy Thursday), reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil and closes with Evening Mass on Easter Sunday. It is the church's solemn festival of the Paschal Mystery, the Mystery of our faith.

The Easter Triduum is one whole celebration, not a series of separate elements. Each celebration sheds light on the others and flows to and from them. They are not intended to be thought of as a chronological re-enactment of events as if we had no idea of what might happen next (i.e. to celebrate Good Friday rather like a funeral, as if we had never heard of the Resurrection).

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 18th April

10 am: Morning Prayer



8 pm: MASS OF THE LAST SUPPER

(1¼ hours)

To show that this is only the first part of a three-day liturgy, a passage through death, the first reading is about the Passover, which until the time of Jesus was the definitive ritual of rebirth. We see what is meant by discipleship, by Jesus' own example, in word and deed. The Last Supper could have been the climax of Jesus' life and work; most people would say there is nothing more God needs to do than kneel and wash our feet (we dramatise the Gospel with the washing of feet), and to give us a means (the Eucharist) by which he can be present to us for ever. This is enough to demonstrate what love means, surely. The gift of the Eucharist means emptying ourselves out, in service of those around us: we need His Body and Blood to enable us to do this.

The practical outcome of witnessing the act of service in the footwashing, is the collection of money and gifts, especially those gathered during Lent as the fruit of penance, which today is directed to be given to the poor. These gifts are brought up in the Procession, while Ubi Caritas is sung. This follows the Holy Oils, blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass, which are received at this time.

Paul reminds us in the earliest account of the Eucharist, this was also 'the night he was betrayed.' After an unmistakable demonstration of his

love, all the twelve (not just Judas) abandoned him. The question for us is 'Can you not watch an hour with me and pray?' (You are invited to watch with Jesus in the hall for a half-hour or more until midnight.) It was not a simple meal Jesus was giving us, but his life, of which the meal is a sign. We strip the altar to show the depth of our sorrow. Jesus is no longer in the tabernacle and the church is emptied.

The Washing of the Feet
Welcome to the Holy Oils
Stripping of the Altar
Procession to the Altar of Repose
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament till Midnight

GOOD FRIDAY: 19th April

10 am: Morning Prayer

10.40am: Procession of Witness through Hitchin, from Bancroft Park.
Service in the Market Place at **11 am**

12pm: Live streaming of **The Passion of Christ** from Trafalgar Square
in the church (1¼ hours)

3 pm: Solemn Liturgy of the Passion (1½ hours)

Today we see the Triumph of the Cross. Jesus is not dead and we should not pretend that he is. St John shows Jesus as 'reigning from the tree'; much is made of the sign 'The King of the Jews'; Jesus commends his mother and the beloved disciple to each other (a scene only found in St John), and knowing that all has been accomplished, he bows his head and gives up his spirit. Before this, we hear about the servant of God who took the world's sins on him (Isaiah), and about Jesus our High Priest who understands our human condition because he humbly submitted to temptation and suffering (Hebrews). We hear the Passion Narrative, for our reflection on Jesus' love for us. After this, we pray the great Prayer of Intercession for the world.

Today's liturgy has unique features which date back many centuries. It begins with the simplest of opening rites: a procession and a prayer. The General Intercessions are a model of what such prayers should be: an intention is proposed; we pray in silence; the priest 'collects' our prayer. It is clear that it is the whole congregation which prays. The Veneration of the Cross was already in existence in the 4th century,

though the Reproaches are more recent. The Communion came later, and now forms an integral part of our service as we venerate the Cross and then receive Communion, directly sharing in His Passion, before the blessing to send us out to continue our prayer - in life!

The liturgy begins and ends in silence, which makes it a bridge from Thursday to the Vigil. As said above, Jesus is not dead; though we wait until Sunday to sing it, Jesus is risen. But the important thing is to recall the journey that Jesus made. Indeed we make it ourselves. If we say at Easter that we are risen with Christ, today we die with him.

6.30pm: An Hour with the Cross led by Parishioners with reflections written by Mary Deuchar.

HOLY SATURDAY: 20th April

10 am: Morning Prayer around our Cross, shrouded from the previous day.

8pm: The Easter Vigil (*1½-1¾ hours*) (we gather outside the church on the street side around the fire in the garden)

THIS IS THE NIGHT *when Jesus Christ conquered death, and Christians everywhere come together in vigil to honour the memory of his raising to life. It is the night when new Christians are made, and 'old' Christians retrace their own journey from baptism to the Table of the Lord. Those to be baptized pass into the tomb, die with Christ to sin and rise to new life; and the already baptized relive their own death to sin by renewing Baptismal Promises. The candidates are confirmed by the Holy Spirit, and then come to the Eucharist for the first time, which is what this night is directed towards. The liturgy has three main parts: Word, Baptism, and the climax, EUCHARIST. They are approached through the year's most splendid entrance rite: the liturgy of LIGHT. (This year we do not have any candidates for baptism, confirmation or reception)*



LIGHT *This is a combination of the ritual of the evening **lighting of the lamps** (Lucernarium) which dates from the earliest centuries of the Church, and the kindling of new fire. The **Fire Rite** has varied origins, which include pre-Christian ones, and has had many interpretations, but it is seen now as a sign of Christ's power over the forces of darkness, which is why this liturgy takes place at night. The fire gives light to the candle which is inscribed with the marks of Christ's passion and his*

lordship over all time. Christ's people walk behind the candle, as the Israelites walked behind the pillar of fire. The first announcement of the Resurrection is in the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) which was originally called 'The Praise of the Candle'.

WORD *The Liturgy of the word is in two blocks, Old and New Testament. The Gloria comes in the middle and the Gospel Acclamation marks the return of the Alleluia after a forty-day fast. The history of salvation from Genesis to Ezekiel will be listened to in a darkened church, though enlightened by the Light of Christ in the candle; Resurrection light then illuminates the celebration. Among those listening tonight are people waiting to be baptised, still learning and wondering.*

WATER *Happy our community which welcomes new members tonight - please God it might be an annual occurrence! This is almost the end of the Lenten journey, but more than that it is the fulfilment of the Genesis creation reading (a New creation), the parting of the waters (Exodus), the 'clean water' of Ezekiel, the joining with Christ in death (Paul) and the springing from the tomb (Gospel.)*

EUCCHARIST *Eucharist is not an afterthought after the 'exciting' part of this liturgy, but the whole point of it: it is what the whole Vigil builds up to. This is what Christ came to earth for. He is not dead; he is with us till the end of time, in the form of bread and wine as he said at the Last Supper. If we had any doubts, or felt his absence, we can recognise him again tonight in the breaking of bread. For the new initiates this is their first Eucharist, the pinnacle of initiation; for the whole Church it is the 'source and summit.'*

Blessing of the Fire

Liturgy of the Word

Gospel of the Resurrection

Liturgy of Blessing of the Baptismal Water

Celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation

Renewal of Baptismal Vows and Sprinkling with Easter Water

*Our Easter Joy is brought to its fulfilment in
the Celebration of the First Eucharist of Easter*

EASTER SUNDAY: 21st April

Masses 8.30am - 10.30am - 5pm

Renewal of Baptismal Vows at all Masses

Many people saw Jesus die. We venerated an image of his cross two days ago. Crosses and crucifixes are the central symbols of Christianity. No-one saw him rise again, and only the eyes of faith can sustain us in our belief that he overcame death. In the Gospel this morning, the voice of Jesus is not heard - as at Christmas, the second greatest feast of the year. Women are the first to hear the news of the Resurrection. Mary of Magdala is mentioned by three evangelists as one of the first to see the empty tomb, but does not know what it means: she only thinks Jesus has been taken away. In the Vigil gospel of Luke, read last night, Mary is one of several women who are told by the angels that Jesus is risen; and in today's Gospel of John, she is the first to see the Lord. Peter doesn't understand either; it is only the beloved disciple who realises what 'rising from the dead' means. Nevertheless Peter is seen in the first reading preaching as a witness to the risen Christ - he has 'eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection.' If we feel rather bereft - they have taken the Lord away - we can learn from the reactions of the people who were there, and follow their journey to faith, through amazement and fear to joy. We too have eaten and drunk with Jesus. We do it at every Mass.

EASTER WEEK: Mass at 10 am

Frs Tom, Euloge, and Andrew, and our Pastoral Assistants, Susanna and Trish, would like to wish you and yours the joys, blessings and peace of Easter!



The Lord is Risen - He is risen indeed: ALLELUIA !

Timetable of events *at a glance*

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| 10 April | Reconciliation Service 7.30 pm |
| 11 April | Reconciliation Service 2 pm |
| 14 April | Palm Sunday Masses Sat 6pm, 8.30, 10.30, 5pm |
| 15 April | Passover Meal 7.30 pm |
| 18 April | Maundy Thursday Morning prayer 10 am Mass of the Last Supper 8 pm |
| 19 April | Good Friday Morning prayer 10 am followed by Walk of witness 10.40am Streaming of the Passion from Trafalgar Square 12pm Liturgy of the Passion 3 pm Stations of the Cross 6.30 pm |
| 20 April | Holy Saturday Morning prayer 10 am Easter Vigil 8 pm |
| 21 April | Easter Sunday Masses 8.30, 10.30, 5pm |
| 22-27 April | Mass 10 am |



Commentary is extracts from Liturgy Planner by Stephen Dean