

THE BULLETIN

Christ Church - Passiontide Supplement



Some Signs and Symbols of the Season



As we enter Passiontide and approach the celebration of the Sacred *Triduum* (literally, Three Days: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday), it is good for us to consider the meaning of some of the liturgical signs and symbols we encounter in church during this period. Firstly, from the Fifth Sunday of Lent, it is traditional to veil statues and crucifixes in purple, (though not the Stations of the Cross); they remain veiled until the Mass of the Resurrection on Holy Saturday night, with the exception of the principal crucifix which is brought into church for veneration during the Solemn Liturgy on Good Friday.

The veiling of decorative images during Passiontide underlines the solemnity of the season, whilst the veiling of crosses and crucifixes, to which we can easily become blasé, helps us to focus more fully on that cruel instrument of torture and death during the Solemn Liturgy on Good (or Holy) Friday (2pm). More specifically, the practice of veiling during Passiontide, expresses the humiliation to which Our Lord subjected himself, hiding himself when the people threatened to stone him, as is related in the Gospel: 'They picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.' (*John 8:59*)

On Maundy (or Holy) Thursday (7.30pm) we celebrate the Mass of the Last Supper when Our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist; so the colour of the Mass is white but crosses remain veiled. Bells are rung at the Gloria (and during the Liturgy of the Sacrament, as usual) but then remain silent until the Gloria of the Mass of the Resurrection. A *crepitaculum* or rattle accompanies the Sacrament to the Altar of Repose, indicating that this is also a period of mourning for the Church – the night Our Lord was betrayed, abandoned by his disciples and imprisoned before being put to death the next day. In some churches the sign of peace is not exchanged during this service, since Judas the traitor used the sign of friendship (a kiss) to make it an instrument of death.



Following the procession to the Altar of Repose, the high altar is stripped to show that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is interrupted and will not be offered again until the Mass of the Resurrection on Holy Saturday evening.

Those willing to have their feet washed on Maundy Thursday should speak with Tony Winslade (Head Server).

HOLY WEEK - Key times:

Palm Sunday: Sung Mass, with Liturgy of Palms and Procession - 11am

Maundy Thursday: Mass of the Lord's Supper - 7.30pm

Good Friday: Solemn Liturgy - 3pm

Holy Saturday: Easter Vigil and First Mass of the Resurrection - 8pm

(followed by fireworks and party at the Vicarage)

Easter Day: Sung Parish Mass - 11pm