

Three Days to Live....

The heart of every year for Christians is Easter

But Easter doesn't take just one day

It takes three days to live

Three days roll into one day

We begin on Maundy Thursday in the evening

We continue on Good Friday

We gather before the sun rises

Easter morning.

Three days are one day for us

These are the great days

The three great days

Triduum

for us.

One out of three is not enough

Two out of three is not enough

We have three days to live.

These are the days we come to LIFE!



Come to life on Maundy Thursday....

We gather at 7pm.

Young and old and everyone in between do these things together because together we are the church.

The hangings are red. Since Passion Sunday and the palm procession we are on the way to the cross. Red is the colour of blood, the colour of our salvation. But the vestments are white because tonight we celebrate. Tonight we share Christ's gift to us, the bread and wine. This is the **Supper of the Lord**. At the Last Supper Jesus said, *"Do this in remembrance of me,"* and that is what we do.

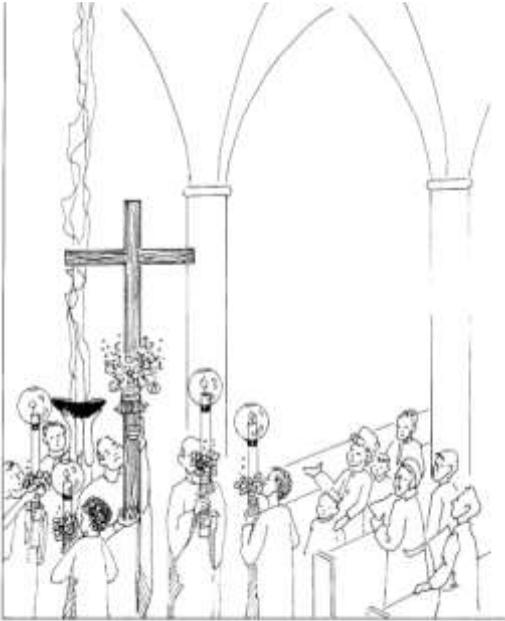
Tonight we wash feet as Jesus did. On this night Jesus knelt like a slave and washed the tired, dusty feet of his friends and said, *"I have given you an*

example" We follow that example. The children bring in the basins, jugs and towels ready for those who would like to join in the washing of one another's feet. This is the way we begin with this sign of loving service to one another. On this night Jesus said, *"Love one another as I have loved you."*

We listen to the Word and reflect again in wonder on God who rescued the Israelites from slavery and who rescues us from our bondage to all that destroys us. We marvel that God comes to us not as one high and lifted up but naked and kneeling at our feet.



Come to life on Good Friday.....



At 10am we gather again.

On Good Friday we come face to face with the cross. Today we proclaim the death of Christ. But this liturgy is not doom and gloom. It is not a funeral liturgy. It is *Good* Friday because here we see the endless love God has for us. Death and sin are defeated by surrender. No human evil, not death itself, can defeat the love of God. God in Christ suffers and dies, bleeds for us but never retaliates, never punishes, never stops loving. This love redeems the world because it is only and ever love.

We listen to the Passion according to Saint John, the story of the cross. The cross is held high and three times we say: “We adore you O Christ and we bless you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.”

Around the cross we remember the sin of the world. We remember our own part in it. We pray for the world. We pray for ourselves. We remember that every act of fear or hatred crucifies Christ afresh.

We bow before the cross in love, in repentance or simply in a prayer that we might come closer and understand more. We surrender ourselves to live as followers of the crucified.

We come to the table and break bread and drink wine. Today Christ’s blood is poured out and his body is broken for us.

The liturgy does not end. We leave quietly ready to continue on Easter morning.

(Note: This service lasts about an hour. It is not the old 3 hour service some of us remember!)

Come to life on Easter morning....

At **6am**, at dawn, we come and gather outside the church.

A large fire is burning. We bless this new fire and light the Paschal or Easter Candle. We place the five nails in the candle, one for each of the wounds in Christ's hands, feet and side. We name the new year of grace - 2010. We mark the alpha and the omega, Christ the beginning and the end of all time. The candle is carried into the darkened church and three times we stand still to sing: "*The light of Christ.*" "*Thanks be to God.*"



We each come and light our candles from the Easter candle. The paschal candle is placed in the stand in the midst of the people. With only the light of candles burning in the early morning we listen to the singing of the Exsultet, the beautiful sound of a single voice singing the song of Easter praise. We then listen to the scriptures. We hear the story of the Israelites passing through the waters of the Red Sea. Paul speaks to us in Romans about dying and rising in the waters of baptism. The gospel of Mark tells the story of the resurrection this year. The light increases. We bless the waters of the font now brim full. We renew our baptismal promises. We come to the table and celebrate our Passover from life to death. The risen Christi is known to us in the breaking of the bread. By now the sun has risen and the early morning light fills the church. Our hearts too are filled with light. Christ is the firstborn from the dead, the first of many brothers and sisters. We remember all those we love who have died. We rejoice in God's deathless love.

Our fasting ends and we share breakfast together.

At **9.30am** there is another celebration of Easter in the full light of day. Again we light our candles from the Easter candle. We hear the scriptures. We baptise. We renew our baptismal vows and break the bread of life in the company of the risen Lord.

Christ is risen. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Christine Simes, parish priest

