

RCIA Newsletter Keeping in touch.

Number 2

2nd April 2020

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our second edition of the RCIA Newsletter. Following on from last week's talk summary on Confession you will find below a number of questions and answers on the subject of Confession. This week's talk is on Holy Week and the Easter Triduum by Nick, our seminarian. It is in the form of a power point which you can open by simply clicking on to each attachment. This coming week - Holy Week - is a good opportunity to make it one of much prayer and reflection at a time when we have so much to think about.

Each of Nick's power point attachments has a number of suggestions for scripture readings which can be used for Lectio Divina.

May we all have a truly Blessed and Holy Week.

John de Waal

Palm Sunday - April 5, 2020

Palm Sunday is the final Sunday of Lent, the beginning of Holy Week, and commemorates the triumphant arrival of Christ in Jerusalem, days before he was crucified.

Palm Sunday is known as such because the faithful will often receive palm fronds which they use to participate in the reenactment of Christ's arrival in Jerusalem. In the Gospels, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding a young donkey, and to the lavish praise of the townspeople who threw clothes, or possibly palms or small branches, in front of him as a sign of homage. This was a customary practice for people of great respect.

The use of a donkey instead of a horse is highly symbolic, it represents the humble arrival of someone in peace, as opposed to arriving on a steed in war.

A week later, Christ would rise from the dead on the first Easter.

During Palm Sunday Mass, palms are distributed to parishioners who carry them in a ritual procession into church. The palms are blessed and many people will fashion them into small crosses or other items of personal devotion. These may be returned to the church, or kept for the year.

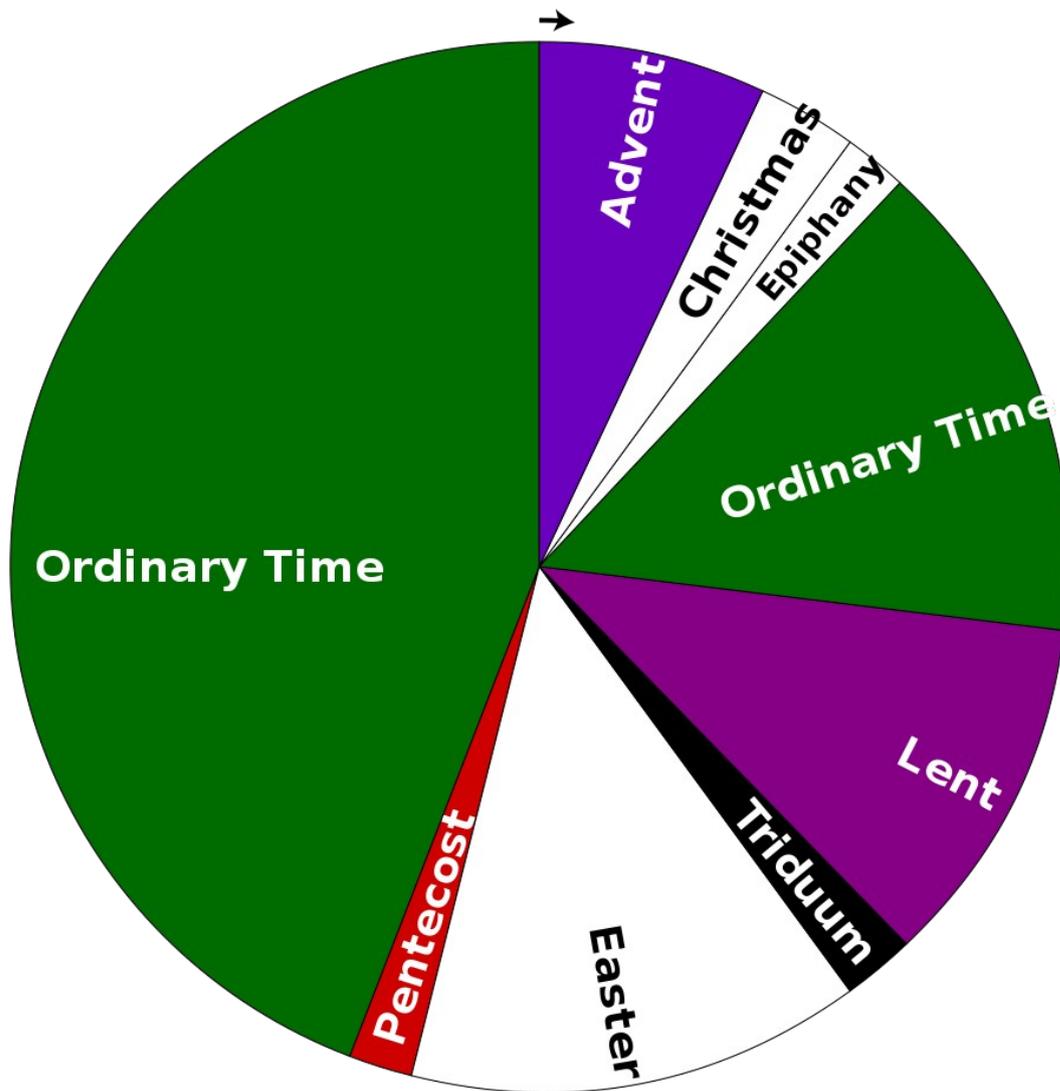
Because the palms are blessed, they may not be discarded. Instead, they are appropriately gathered at the church and incinerated to create the ashes that will be used in the follow year's Ash Wednesday observance.

The colors of the Mass on Palm Sunday are red and white, symbolizing the redemption in blood that Christ paid for the world.

The Triduum.

The rites of Holy Week are the means by which we enter into the mysteries of Christ's passion and resurrection.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us (CCC 1168), "Beginning with the Easter Triduum as its source of light, the new age of the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance. Gradually, on either side of this source, the year is transfigured by the liturgy. It really is a 'year of the Lord's favour' (Lk 4:19)." This is how each liturgical year unfolds (image from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liturgical_year).



The Paschal Triduum (“The Three Days’- Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday) is the heart of the liturgical year, the heart of our faith and also the heartbeat of all the other seasons. What is this heart of our faith? The paschal mystery of Jesus Christ: His life, passion, death, and resurrection.

The Triduum is celebrated as one great liturgy; from the greeting and Sign of the Cross on Holy Thursday until the Solemn Blessing and double Alleluia Dismissal at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. (There is no final blessing or dismissal on either Holy Thursday or Good Friday and Good Friday has no greeting either).

Please see the accompanying two PowerPoints for more information:

<http://ourladyofransom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Holy-Thursday.pptx>

<http://ourladyofransom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Good-Friday-RCIA.pptx>

Q & A on Confession.

1. What is the “Seal of the Confessional?”

This is the practice that Catholic priests must never divulge what they are told by anyone during Confession. Confidentiality is absolute. If a priest broke “the seal” he would be excommunicated.

2. What is “face to face” Confession?

Usually Confession takes place in the Confessional Box with the anonymity of the penitent being preserved by the priest being unable to see whose confession they are hearing. Many prefer this - even though confidentiality is absolute (see Question 1). It is often possible, however, to have “face to face” confession - with priest and penitent sitting facing each other. There is no attempt to being anonymous. This can be very beneficial for building up an understanding over time, especially where the priest acts as a spiritual director or guide. The choice is the penitent’s.

3. What is “General Absolution?”

There are a number of ways that the Sacrament of Confession can be arranged. Usually the Confession is in the privacy of the “box” or “face to face” where the penitent has prepared individually and has “gone to Confession” at a time set aside by the priests of the parish - although anyone can ask a priest for Confession outside of the set times.

Another way to arrange Confession is to attend what is called a “Penitential Service” with other people. In this case the preparation for the sacrament is conducted together with appropriate readings, prayers and words of encouragement from the priest. There then follows individual confession as described in the usual form above. The only difference is the preparation.

Yet another way is called “General Absolution”. In this case the preparation is with other people but there is no individual confession of sins, but the priest gives absolution - the prayer of sacramental forgiveness - to everyone at the same time. This extraordinary form is exactly that : extraordinary, where circumstances make individual confession very impractical and the danger of death imminent. It has been used in times of war when many soldiers are going into battle and there is insufficient time for a priest to hear so many individual confessions. If this form is used and an individual has committed a serious sin they should still try to go to individual confession as soon as possible.

4. Do priests have to go to Confession?

Yes, all Catholics are expected to go to Confession - at least once a year - in the case of serious sins. All priests will have their own spiritual directors. This includes the Pope. We are all sinners to a greater or lesser extent. Frequent confession is a good practice to encourage growth in holiness - even when sins are not serious.



The Pope goes to Confession.

The Donkey by G.K.Chesterton

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood,
Then surely I was born;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me: I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.



Fools! For I also had my hour;
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

A timely thought :

Love your neighbour like Jesus, but wash your hands like Pontius Pilate!