

HOLY WEEK



LAZARUS SATURDAY AND PALM SUNDAY

Only one short-lived weekend in the life of Jesus stands out as a time of clearly perceivable, earthly triumph. This was the weekend known today in the church as Lazarus Saturday. On Lazarus Saturday He miraculously raised His friend Lazarus from the dead in a manner specifically aimed at “the people standing by, that they might believe that thou didst send me.” (John 11:42) On Palm Sunday He Himself sent for the colt on which He would enter

Jerusalem. His entry was one of the rare occasions during which He permitted Himself to be publicly hailed as the Son of David and King of Israel: The Messiah.



THE FIRST THREE DAYS OF HOLY WEEK

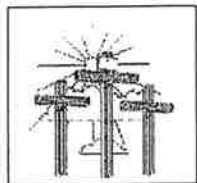
The first three days of Holy Week are the days to “The End”. Jesus was walking into the very midst of those who sought to take His life. He experienced deep anguish within Himself (John 12:27). Despite the triumph of the Palm weekend, the Lord had already told His disciples that He “... must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.” (Matthew 16:21)



HOLY THURSDAY

On Holy Thursday Jesus ate with His disciples what is commonly known as the Last Supper. More than a common supper, it was their last Passover Meal together. The Passover Meal was a very important annual event. It was a meal of thanksgiving during which the Jews remembered their deliverance by God

from the Egyptian bondage. It also pointed to the future fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to deliver Israel from all its enemies. During the meal a specially slaughtered Passover lamb was eaten; bread was broken and wine was distributed to everyone at ritually ordained moments. The Last Supper was the institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the Divine Liturgy. At the meal Jesus revealed himself as the fulfillment of all that the Jews had both remembered and anticipated. He was the new and final Passover, the Passover from death to life and from earth to heaven.



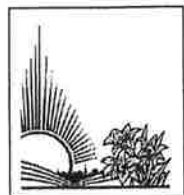
HOLY FRIDAY

On Holy Friday Christ died on the Cross. He gave up His spirit with the words “It is finished.” (John 19:30) The mission for which Christ had been sent into the world by the father was accomplished. He accepted the whole human condition, including suffering and death: not just death, but the awful death on the Cross.



HOLY SATURDAY

Holy Saturday is the day on which Christ reposed in the tomb. It is quite a neglected day in our present church life. Few people attend the Services, if they are offered at all. Holy Week is reduced to Palm Sunday, may be Holy Friday, and Easter Sunday. Christ, the triumphant King is dead and then suddenly alive again. Great sorrow is suddenly replaced by great joy. In the understanding of the Church, sorrow is not replaced by joy. It is transformed into joy. The distinction indicates that it is precisely within death that Christ continues to effect triumph.



EASTER SUNDAY

The resurrection of Christ stands as the center of the Christian faith. It is the supreme confirmation of his Messianism. It verifies all that had gone before, and it lends unshakable confidence to all that lies ahead. Only as the Son of God, having life in Himself, could He lay down His life voluntarily, and then take it up again.