



# The Word

*May Mary, Undoer of the Knots, bless you forever!*

The Holy Father's Intentions for the Month of April 2017

**That young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.**

## *Liturgical Reflections*

Holy Week is the last week of Lent before Easter Sunday; it begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Holy Saturday. Holy Week is the section of the Church Year where Jesus' final moments are commemorated. The final three days of Holy Week are part of the Paschal Triduum. Holy Week consists of the following events

Palm Sunday:

On the sixth Sunday of Lent we commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Worship services include blessing of the palms and a procession. The liturgical color is red.

Spy Wednesday:

This is an old and uncommon name for the Wednesday of Holy Week, which commemorates Judas' agreement to betray Jesus (see [Matthew](#) 26:3-5, 14-16).

Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday):

The name "Maundy Thursday" is derived from Jesus "mandate" to love one another as he loves us. This day celebrates the institution of the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Ordination. Also known as "Shear Thursday."

Good Friday of the Lord's Passion:

A Fast day of the Church commemorating Jesus' crucifixion and death. Worship customs include Veneration of the Cross, communion from the reserved Maundy Thursday host, and the singing or preaching of the Passion (reading or singing excerpts of the Passion story from John's gospel). In the Catholic Church, the liturgical color was formerly black, but is now red.

Holy Saturday:

This is the final day of Holy Week. There are few specific customs associated with Holy Saturday, except that it is the final night before the Feast of the Resurrection, which begins at the Great Easter Vigil.

Other customs and events, including Tenebrae, have developed as Holy Week customs. Generally Holy Week is a busy time for Catholic and Orthodox Christians, as we build up to the Queen of all Church Feasts, Easter Holy Week, i.e. the series of pre-Easter festivities commemorating various events of the final days of Christ's life, probably developed in 4th century Jerusalem, possibly beginning with St. Cyril of Jerusalem. Christians from all over the world would take pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and the Church of Jerusalem provided rites and worship dedicated to reenacting the final events of Christ's life. The first account we have of such rites is the diary of the pilgrimage of Egeria to Jerusalem around AD 381.

The Easter Vigil is the "Mother of All Vigils." Easter Sunday, then, is the greatest of all Sundays, and Easter Time is the most important of all liturgical times. Easter is the celebration of the Lord's resurrection from the dead, culminating in his Ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. There are 50 days of Easter from the first Sunday to Pentecost. It is characterized, above all, by the joy of glorified life and the victory over death, expressed most fully in the great resounding cry of the Christian: Alleluia! All faith flows from faith in the resurrection: "If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, is your faith." (1 Cor 15:14)

The octave of Easter comprises the eight days which stretch from the first to the second Sunday. It is a way of prolonging the joy of the initial day. In a sense, every day of the Octave is like a little Sunday.

The word "Easter" comes from Old English, meaning simply the "East." The sun which rises in the East, bringing light, warmth and hope, is a symbol for the Christian of the rising Christ, who is the true Light of the world. The Paschal Candle is a central symbol of this divine light.

**MINISTRY MUSINGS****REJOICE AND TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF THIS EASTER SEASON**

**Preventing Burnout Through Spiritual Self-Care**  
**An increasing number of people live lives that are stressed and burning out.** Victor M. Parachin

Sadly, an increasing number of people live lives that are stressed and burning out. Characteristics include a weakening of spirit and energy, a decreased capacity to care or a decreased capacity to be filled with loving-kindness, patience, humility, joy and altruism. An effective antidote to personal and professional burnout is spiritual self-care something promoted by Jesus who asked: "Are you tired? Worn out? . . . Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me — watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. . . Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly" (Mt 11:28-30, The Message Bible). Spiritual self-care is not something that just happens. People must mindfully apply themselves to practices that will result in personal transformation. Here are some ways for priests, religious and other spiritual workers to engage in spiritual self-care.

**Begin your day with praise to God.** Take your cue from the Psalmist who wrote: "O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise" (Ps 51:5). "O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth" (Ps 8:9). "I will praise you, O Lord, with all my heart . . . I will be glad and rejoice in you" (Ps 9:1-2). Let the first words of your day be addressed to God expressing joy for a new day, for life, for health, for work, for family, friends, colleagues. Follow that by repeating this affirmation to yourself: "God is with me and within me. All actions I take today are my offerings of praise to the Divine." Starting your day with a few words of praise to God generates an enthusiasm for your daily life and work.

**Observe the Sabbath day.** Exodus 20:18 reads: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord Your God. On it you shall not do any work." This may seem absolutely preposterous given the use of modern technologies (such as cell phones and email) which mean we can be reached 24/7. Yet, consider this insight from a Rabbi who serves a large synagogue in America's fourth largest city (Houston).

Married with six children, every Friday this busy rabbi and his family turn off their cell phones, computers, televisions, radios. Then, they share a ritual meal together. Their Sabbath lasts a full 24 hours. When he was asked, "Didn't your kids rebel when you turned off the TV?" he responded: "No, they loved it!" Consider making yourself unavailable to work demands by giving yourself the gift of a Sabbath one day each week

**Be a person of prayer.** The busier we become the easier it is to let daily prayer slip. Yet, it is when our energies are most taxed that we need to be in touch with God. Avoid neglecting prayer.

Be guided by this wisdom from Martin Luther who said: "I am so busy now that if I did not spend two or three hours each day in prayer, I would not get through the day." St. Francis of Sales expressed a similar view: "Every Christian needs a half hour of prayer each day, except when he is busy, then he needs an hour." The point of their advice is not the amount of time spent in prayer but the fact that prayer should never be sidelined because we are feeling swamped. It is prayer which connects us to a power greater than ourselves. Through prayer our energies can be replenished, our vision restored, our anxieties eased, hope refreshed, and our confidence renewed.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Claudia McDonald and Gloria Castro our newest Pastoral Care Ministers!!!!

**Pastoral Care debriefing Saturday April 1, 2017****PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING!!!!**

We have an approved Pilot Bereavement Program for our parish. We are now awaiting approval of room reservations for our first sessions to begin in April. More news will follow.

