

**Entering Into The Great Feast**  
*A Reflection on the Triduum*  
for  
**Nazareth Farm, 2026**  
by  
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Let's start with a basic Question: When does LENT end? Palm Sunday with the beginning of Holy Week? Holy Thursday? Good Friday? After the Easter Vigil? Easter Sunday morning at sunrise? Other ideas?

“Holy Week” is complicated, because it is indeed a holy week. There is Palm Sunday – The Chrism Mass – Mass of the Lord's Supper – Good Friday – Saturday cemetery Services at noon – Easter Vigil – Sunday services & mass! So, Holy Week seems to be a good title for this period.

But it is, contrarily, as misleading title because this week is really broken into two seasons, and probably shouldn't be thought of as one continuous week – It is a week divided!

Lent ends precisely on “Holy Thursday” at the beginning of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Lent ends and we are immediately drawn into the great three-day feast (and season) of the Triduum! It's a Latin word that means, “The Three Days.” It is ONE feast and should be seen and celebrated as such. But most people seem to disconnect the days as if Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday masses are separate, stand-alone events. They are NOT! And as long as we see it that way, we miss the power of the event.

This reflection is to help you stay engaged in the ONE FEAST since it is the feast of our salvation. One final note before we start; to really touch the soul of the Triduum is to embrace it, NOT as a simple recollection of the past Jesus events, but rather as OUR salvation! The very first words at the opening of the Mass of the Lords Supper, while profoundly connecting us to the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, directs us to PERSONALLY enter in. It is OUR celebration of salvation.

*My brothers and sisters, we have completed the forty days of Lent and so now let us rise.*

*And enter upon this Paschal Triduum, the Easter Three Days, celebrating the Lord's passion and resurrection.*

The invitation is clear: while we certainly celebrate Jesus' passion & resurrection, it is each of us who is being asked to enter into our own story of salvation.

To use this most effectively, first open-up each of these sections as directed, taking some time to read and think about the summary. You may be asked do the first part either individually or with the group. Then, second, at the time specified, stay with each of the reflection questions privately and respond. I suggest using the journaling technique by writing your thought, but equally as important, your feelings, being aware of movements and perhaps even unexpected thoughts and emotions.

Making past events real and present does not come naturally to us living in the western cultures. But listening to the opening words of the Easter Vigil, this is exactly what the church is asking us to do. To drive this home, hear the words proclaimed at the lighting of the Easter Vigil Fire:

*Dear brothers and sisters, on this most sacred night, which our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life ... this is the Passover of the Lord.*

The words are specifically in the present tense! So, as this is the Passover of the Lord, then this is MY Passover – and YOUR Passover! This is OUR salvation story!

## Palm Sunday Evening

While Palm Sunday is not part of the Triduum, it is the doorway through which we begin our passage from Lent to the Triduum.

Palm Sunday Gospel; Mt 21:1–11

*When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And he will send them immediately.” This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:*

*“Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”*

*The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”*

*When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”*

The Gospel of the Lord

Jesus did not want any fanfare! He was only recently run out of Jerusalem with threats from the Jewish leadership. He knew that his return would put him in grave peril. Yet he was bound by Jewish Law to go to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Some of the Apostles and many of his followers wanted him to proclaim that he was the long-awaited Messiah, probably for all the wrong reasons. And so, he is surprised when greeted by a throng of people proclaiming as such.

### Group Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think Jesus was feeling when the crowds surrounded him and proclaimed him as the *one who comes in the name of the Lord*?
2. If you were one of the Apostles, what would you be feeling or experiencing at this event?
3. Think of this entrance and compare / contrast it to an entrance of a typical king.

### Quiet Private Reflection Questions:

1. To proclaim Jesus as “King,” means to follow him and his teachings. What are some ways in which I struggle or even fail to follow?
2. If we think of Jesus’ entrance outside the physical event and more of a Spiritual event, how is Jesus trying to enter my heart and soul? In what ways do I embrace his arrival? In what ways do I resist?
3. In what ways do I enter into other people’s lives? When I do so, do I enter and stay more on the surface or am I willing to enter into their pain or joys and be vulnerable and open to them as well?
4. God loves me unconditionally! God has sent these people into my life to show me that love. (make a list) After you have made a list, offer a prayer of thanksgiving for each of them.  
You can continue to add to this reflection throughout the remaining few days of Lent.

## Holy Thursday Morning

### Gather as a Community

*If there is time, you could do the entire Liturgy of the Hours Morning Prayer. If NOT, then focus on the psalm of the day.*

### Psalm 80

**ALL:** Look, O Lord, and see my suffering. Come quickly to my aid.

**Right:** O shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
you who lead Joseph's flock,  
shine forth from your cherubim throne  
upon Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh.  
O Lord, rouse up your might,  
O Lord, come to our help.

**Left:** Lord God of hosts, how long  
will you frown on your people's plea?  
You have fed them with tears for their bread,  
and abundance of tears for their drink.  
You have made us the taunt of our neighbors,  
our enemies laugh us to scorn.

**Right:** You brought a vine out of Egypt;  
to plant it you drove out the nations.  
Before it you cleared the ground;  
it took root and spread through the land.  
The mountains were covered with its shadow,  
the cedars of God with its boughs.  
It stretched out its branches to the sea,  
to the Great River it stretched out its shoots.

**Left:** Then why have you broken down its walls?  
It is plucked by all who pass by.  
It is ravaged by the boar of the forest,  
devoured by the beasts of the field.

**Right:** Visit the vine and protect it,  
the vine your right hand has planted.  
They have burnt it with fire and destroyed it.  
May they perish at the frown of your face.

**Left:** May your hand be on those you have chosen,  
the ones you have given your strength.  
And we shall never forsake you again;  
give us life that we may call upon your name.

**Right:** Glory be to the Father, and to the son and to the Holy Spirit.

**Left:** As it was, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

**All:** Look, O Lord, and see my suffering. Come quickly to my aid.

*As Lent is drawing to an end, take time throughout these final few hours to consider times when you felt estranged from God. Times when you felt that God had abandoned you. Times when you were angry at God. Times when you gave-up on God. Times when you thought God gave-up on you.*

### **Quiet Private Reflection Throughout the Day**

1. Recall your feelings during those times. (Fear – Anger – Despair – Sadness – Shame – Betrayed – Alone - Guilt - etc.)
2. How did you work through (or how are you currently working through) the darkness?
3. Were there people who entered your life to help carry you? If so, offer prayers of thanksgiving for their presence and for being the healing hands of Jesus.
4. Are there individuals now who you have shut-out or abandoned because of a dispute, misunderstanding, betrayal, etc.? What will you work on to reconcile? Pray for the Peace of God to be with you and to guide your steps into forgiveness.

## Holy Thursday Night

This is the night of darkness. I suggest NOT gathering as a community, but to remain silent & meditative.

We have just experienced the beginning of the Triduum – The Mass of the Lord’s Supper! We have gone from exultation with the singing of the Gloria for the first time since before Lent, ringing of bells, to the Washing of the Feet, to the Table and the institution of the Eucharist, to a darkened church and an empty tabernacle. The main focus of the night is the Washing of the Feet, the great sign of humility as Jesus took on the role of the lowest class of servants by doing the one job viewed to be least respectable. It’s impossible to miss the symbolism of cleansing and water, but there is something most profound and more obscure that is important to grasp.

The first miracle that Jesus performed was at the “Wedding Feast of Cana.” The host has run out of wine and Mary asks Jesus to intervene. He does so by directing the servants to fill the stone crocks located at the door. The water from these crocks were used to wash the feet of every guest upon entering the feast. Now, at the end of his earthly ministry, he becomes that most lowly, humble servant and uses the feet-washing water to begin this Passover Banquet. During mass, the priest takes wine (work of humans) and mixes into it, water (work of God) to become our spiritual drink. We must not miss the connection between the Washing of the Feet and the Eucharist.

Finally, Jesus says to his guests who were gathered that had to include men, women and children.

*Just as I have washed your feet, so too, you must wash each other’s feet.*

We should attempt to remain in silence, so the reflection is personal and private, not communal.

### Quiet Private Reflection Questions:

1. What emotions arose in you when the bells rang, the Gloria was sung and the joyful music opened the liturgy?
2. Our liturgical words are specific and purposeful. Take a moment to pray with your imagination and insert yourself into the scene where YOU are entering the banquet and having Jesus kneel in front of you to wash YOUR feet. What feelings arise as he touched your bare feet, pours water over them, and dries them with the towel wrapped around his waist?
3. The Washing of the Feet was necessary in the biblical times since people walked on dusty, muddy roads wearing only sandals. But today, at this mass, the gesture is not only symbolic, but the primary call to all followers, *Just as I have washed your feet, so too, you must wash each other’s feet.* What does this directive mean to you and how will you live it out?
4. At this Passover Supper, Jesus changed the century’s old words found in Exodus from, *This is the bread of affliction*, to *This is my body!*
  - a. What feelings do think would arise in you if a priest, at a regular mass, changed the words of consecration to something like, *This is the Big Mac of life?*
  - b. How do you think those men and women, who had celebrated the Passover for years and years & knew the words by memory, reacted to these changed words?
5. Paul call us, The Body of Christ. Jesus says, *This is my body*. There must be a connection. Reflect on the words *This is my body* as related directly to you personally as being the Body of Christ.
6. What emotions arose when the church was darkened and emptied? How did this contrast to your feelings at the beginning of the liturgy?

Keep this, from Night Prayer, in your heart, and in your thoughts, using it as a mantra throughout the night:

*Night holds no terror for me, sleeping under God’s wing!*

## Good Friday During the Day

The Triduum is our journey to salvation through following the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. We saw in last evening's liturgy the joyous start of Passover, then we moved into the "dark night of the soul" with his arrest and mock trial. Quite a mood shift! So today, we enter that part of the journey that we do not particularly like – the passion and death part.

Quickly looking at today's highlights:

- The darkened church building with empty tabernacle
- Morning Prayer and Isaiah's picture of the "Suffering Servant"
- The Good Friday Liturgy starting without an entrance because it is just the next stage of the 3-day event
- Reading of the Passion
- Prayer of the Faithful – Prayers for the ENTIRE world from the church & clergy, to our Jewish & Islamic brother & sisters of the covenant, to those who do not believe in God to government officials.
- Veneration of the Cross
- Only day of the year with no mass

Silently read and take some time to reflect during the day on the words from Isaiah 53:

*Who really believed what we heard? Who saw in it the Lord's great power? He was always close to the Lord. He grew up like a young plant, like a root growing in dry ground. There was nothing special or impressive about the way he looked, nothing we could see that would cause us to like him. People made fun of him, and even his friends left him. He was a man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness. We treated him like someone of no importance, like someone people will not even look at but turn away from in disgust. It was our suffering he took on himself; he bore our pain. But we thought that God was punishing him, that God was beating him for something he did. But he was being punished for what we did. He was crushed because of our guilt. He took the punishment we deserved, and this brought us peace. By his stripes, we were healed. We had all wandered away like sheep. We had gone our own way. And yet the Lord put all our guilt on him. He was treated badly, but he never protested. He said nothing, like a lamb being led away to be killed. He was like a sheep that makes no sound as its wool is being cut off. He never opened his mouth to defend himself. He was taken away by force and judged unfairly. The people of his time did not even notice that he was killed. But he was put to death for the sins of his people. He had done no wrong to anyone. He had never even told a lie. But he was buried among the wicked. His tomb was with the rich.*

## Good Friday Evening

In our western society, we are taught to be “rugged individuals,” a term borrowed from Scott Peck. But we are called to be a community and a church, so that in grief, we should never walk alone. Today’s liturgy takes us to the depth of our spiritual story, listening and experiencing the cruelty of human fear and hate – the ignominious and tortuous death of an innocent man! So having experienced this painful part of our salvation story, let us gather together in sharing and in comfort having each other as support.

### Group Reflection Questions:

1. Do you find it possible to enter into this chapter of the story without feeling guilt?
2. If you were in the frenzied crowd with the vast majority of angry people surrounding you, would you have the courage to boldly shout out for the release of Jesus or join in “Crucify him!”? OR – would you remain safely silent?
3. Thinking about today in the place in which we live, in our country and in your personal lives, who are the innocent people being persecuted? (be specific) What is your response? Can you stand up boldly for their release? Do you shout your affirmation, “Crucify them!” Remain silent and safe?
4. Scripture, especially in the Passion narrative, says that at Jesus’ death, the graves opened up and the dead became alive again. In line with this, The Apostles Creed states, *He descended into hell. On the third day, he ascended into heaven.* According to the Apostle Paul, *Jesus destroyed or "abolished" death through his resurrection.* Reflect on this theological concept. How does it personally and collectively impact your life and understanding of salvation?
5. If we say & believe that Jesus abolished death, how do you account for the idea that hell still exists? (Did you know that the concept of Hell did not appear until Dante’s *Inferno* in the 1300’s! Until then it was called Hades or Sheol – a universal resting place of the dead, separated from God, but without suffering.)

From Night Prayer, use this passage from Revelation as a mantra throughout the evening and night:

*I shall see the Lord face to face and bear his name on my foreheads. The night shall be no more.*

## Holy Saturday Noon

In the Liturgy of the Hours, we are called to reflect on this homily, possibly from St. Melito of Sardis, a 2nd-century bishop. It is intended to be prayed at noon on Holy Saturday as a community at a gravestone if possible. If not, then perhaps you can gather outside in a quiet wooded area.

*Something strange is happening – there is a great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began. God has died in the flesh and hell trembles with fear.*

*He has gone to search for our first parent, as for a lost sheep. Greatly desiring to visit those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, he has gone to free from sorrow the captives Adam and Eve, he who is both God and the son of Eve. The Lord approached them bearing the cross, the weapon that had won him the victory. At the sight of him Adam, the first man he had created, struck his breast in terror and cried out to everyone: “My Lord be with you all.”*

*Christ answered him: “And with your spirit.” He took him by the hand and raised him up, saying: “Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.”*

*“I am your God, who for your sake has become your son. Out of love for you and for your descendants I now by my own authority command all who are held in bondage to come forth, all who are in darkness to be enlightened, all who are sleeping to arise. I order you, O sleeper, to awake!”*

*For the sake of you, who left a garden, I was betrayed in a garden, and I was crucified in a garden. See on my face the spittle I received in order to restore to you the life I once breathed into you. See there the marks of the blows I received in order to refashion your warped nature in my image. On my back see the marks of the scourging I endured to remove the burden of sin that weighs upon your back. See my hands, nailed firmly to a tree, for you who once wickedly stretched out your hand to a tree. The sword that pierced me has sheathed the sword that was turned against you.*

*Rise, let us leave this place... The bridal chamber is adorned, the banquet is ready, the eternal dwelling places are prepared, the treasure houses of all good things lie open.*

### **Group Reflection:**

Individually, choose a line or phrase that speaks to you, share it with the group. Then have others offer their reflections on it until everyone who wants to speak has a chance. Repeat this process until the group is finished reflecting. Members may choose any number of lines or phrases, or simply reflect on the homily in its entirety.

## Easter Vigil

To be done once back “home” from the Vigil Liturgy.

The images and connections of the Eater Vigil are many and dramatic, starting with the requirement to begin in the dark. A fire is built. It becomes a light in the darkness, warmth in the chilly early Spring air, a beacon that draws us in and directs us, the symbol of Christ our Light! Then we hear these words, “THIS IS THE PASSOVER OF THE LORD.” It is present tense – now – at this moment – NOT simply a representation of past events!

### Sights, Smells & Sounds:

- Smell of smoke from the Vigil Fire Incense, candle wax beginning to melt
- Chants – “Christ our Light! – People, in faith, following the light into the darkness
- Singular candle, piercing the darkness in the front of a darkened church
- Light spreading throughout from that single source
- Hearing the story of our salvation, from Creation to the Resurrection
- Bells ringing, chorus singing of Alleluia – 1<sup>st</sup> time since Lent began
- The empty tomb
- Welcoming new members through the Sacraments of Initiation
- Smell of Chrism & a fresh burst of incense
- Tears of joy and smiles on faces

There are no reflection questions to follow such a great feast! But gather together as a joyful community, have a glass of wine if it seems appropriate, and share your thoughts and feelings of the Triduum as a whole or of the events of this holy night.

Your mantra for the rest of the night and tomorrow is from the Orthodox Catholics:

*Christ is risen! He is truly risen!*

## Easter Sunday Morning

If possible, gather together to do Easter Sunday Morning Pray from the Liturgy of the Hours. If this is not possible, then read together this passage from Ezekiel. It is the Seventh Reading at the Easter Vigil.

*The word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their land, they defiled it by their conduct and deeds. Therefore, I poured out my fury upon them because of the blood that they poured out on the ground, and because they defiled it with idols. I scattered them among the nations, dispersing them over foreign lands; according to their conduct and deeds I judged them. But when they came among the nations wherever they came, they served to profane my holy name, because it was said of them: "These are the people of the Lord, yet they had to leave their land." So, I have relented because of my holy name which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they came.*

*Therefore, say to the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord God: Not for your sakes do I act, house of Israel, but for the sake of my holy name, which you profaned among the nations to which you came. I will prove the holiness of my great name, profaned among the nations, in whose midst you have profaned it. Thus, the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord God, when in their sight I prove my holiness through you.*

*For I will take you away from among the nations, gather you from all the foreign lands, and bring you back to your own land. I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.*

*I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees. You shall live in the land I gave your fathers; you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

### Group Reflection Questions:

1. Ezekiel was the prophet during the Babylonian exile. God is faithful to the Covenant even when we are not, even if we sin or forget to be instruments of peace and forgiveness. How is God remaining faithful to us today, despite our weaknesses, limitation, choosing unforgiveness rather than forgiveness, choosing violence rather than peace, choosing isolation instead of reconciliation, etc.?
2. What feelings are evoked when you hear God speaking to each of us personally and unconditionally, knowing that we are imperfect and still capable of sin:  
*...you shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

### Ending Blessing

Go in Peace to love and to serve your God, by serving one another!

ALL: Thanks be to God!