

From the Desk of Fr. Jerry

March 23, 2025

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday our parish participated in the Rite of Election. Isabelle Collister, Joaquin Guerrero, and Miles Guerrero were chosen by Cardinal Bernardin. No longer strangers to our parish, the catechumens are now called the elect. The rites we celebrate with the elect during Lent reveal a path of purification and enlightenment which we are also invited to follow. Though previously baptized in other Christian denominations, Aaron Ferrer and Nicholas Flatley have seen the Catholic Church as a light shining in the world. They will be received into the church at the Easter Vigil. Catechumens and candidates understand that Baptism is not a badge of honor. It is a pledge of service.

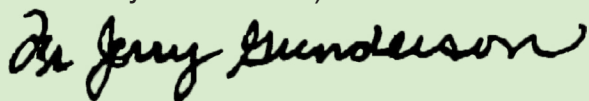
The Paschal Mystery is the name the Church gives to the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Though Triduum is celebrated over the course of three days, it is one ongoing observance. The paschal mystery is like a diamond consisting of many facets. This single gem can be viewed from many perspectives. Turn it a bit and it will sparkle in a way you may never have seen before.

The paschal mystery is like that. It is something we celebrate every time we go to Mass. But we annually celebrate the paschal mystery at the Triduum. For Lent I am trying to keep the Triduum as a sharp focus because deep within it is the paschal mystery. During Holy Week a few years ago, Pope Francis offered some reflections on Holy Thursday, the beginning of the Triduum.

Already immersed in the spiritual atmosphere of Holy Week, we are on the eve of the Easter Triduum. From tomorrow until Sunday we will live the central days of the Liturgical Year, celebrating the mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord. And we live this mystery every time we celebrate the Eucharist. When we go to Mass, we do not go only to pray, no: we go to renew, to bring about again, this mystery, the Paschal mystery. It is important not to forget this. It is as though we were to go to Calvary – it is the same – to renew, to bring about again the Paschal mystery.

On the evening of Holy Thursday, as we enter the Easter Triduum, we will relive the Mass known as in Coena Domini, that is, the Mass in which we commemorate the Last Supper, there, in that moment. This is the evening when Christ left his disciples the testament of his love in the Eucharist, not as a remembrance, but as a memorial, as his everlasting presence.

Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, as I said at the beginning, we renew this mystery of redemption. In this Sacrament, Jesus substituted the sacrificial victim—the Paschal lamb—with himself: his Body and Blood grant us salvation from the slavery of sin and death. The salvation from every form of slavery is there. It is the evening in which he asks us to love one another by becoming servants to one another, as he did in washing the disciples' feet, a gesture that anticipates his bloody oblation on the cross. And indeed, the Master and Lord will die the next day to purify not the feet, but the hearts and the entire life of his disciples. It was an oblation of service to us all, because with that service of his sacrifice he redeemed us all. (Pope Francis, Holy Week 2021)



Fr. Jerry Gunderson