THE TRIDUIN

The Triduum begins with evening services on Maundy Thursday. The liturgy from The Book of Common Prayer recalls the Last Supper and institution of the eucharist from Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It also includes a foot-washing ceremony that recalls John's Last Supper story in which Jesus washes the feet of the disciples after the meal. It is from John's Gospel that we get the "New Commandment," from which we get the word Maundy (the Latin word mandatum means commandment).

Good Friday remembers when Christ was crucified and died. The liturgy comes from the ancient service that was used on days when the eucharist was not celebrated (which is still the Byzantine tradition).

This liturgy begins with the collect (prayer) and readings and moves on to the solemn collects, which come from the old Roman form of the Prayers of the People. The liturgy of the word then moves into the veneration of the cross. While no celebration of communion may take place on Good Friday, communion may still be offered from the reserve sacrament (bread and wine consecrated at another time).

Holy Saturday, also known as Holy or Great Sabbath, is the day when Christ is dead in the tomb and descended to the dead or even to hell. Liturgical celebration for this day is extremely sparse to represent that Christ is dead.

While Holy Saturday is often neglected in the Western Church, 20th-century Roman Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar gave this day a pride of place in his theology. He thought of Holy Saturday as a place between the old life and the new—the space where Christians live their lives.

The Paschal Triduum (pronounced "TRIH-doo-uhm") is the three-day period starting with sundown on Maundy Thursday through Easter Day (Triduum comes from the Latin for "three days"). While the term is never used in *The Book of Common Prayer*, the Triduum has the advantage from a theological point of view of retaining the unity of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus.



