

2008 HOLY WEEK PROMO SUMMARY

The Chrism Mass

The **Chrism Mass** is a wonderful experience of the whole Church of Catholic Montreal – it is mostly in French, but there are some gracious words in English to make us feel welcome. It's a great immersion in a large crowded church, with over 200 priests, dozens of deacons, and several bishops – all renewing their ordination promises. And the Archbishop calls down the Lord's blessing on the holy oils used for all the sacraments that require oils all year long: Baptism, Confirmation, the Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders, as well as the consecration of churches and altars. If you've never been to a diocesan celebration – go to the Chrism Mass – make a pilgrimage of it – since it takes place at Mary Queen of the World Cathedral. There is some beautiful singing and music – it is a unique celebration and well worth the trouble of going into town! Msgr. Sean Harty and all the English priests and interns will gather around Msgr. Frank Coyle for supper at St. Patrick's rectory before the Chrism Mass. They will celebrate together their share in Jesus' priesthood and in God's love for his people.

Holy Thursday

The Chrism Mass is part of the Holy Thursday celebrations, which is why it is celebrated on Wednesday evening, the eve of Holy Thursday. Then at 8:00 Fr. Gilles will preside the **Mass of the Lord's Supper**. It is a wonderful grace to remember that it was on this night that Jesus offered us the gift of his Body and Blood to sustain us on our pilgrim way through life and as a Church until He returns in glory. He established his apostles as ordained ministers of this mysterious Sacrament; so that we might gather around them and be visited by the Lord every Sunday until the end of time and even during the week. As we do every year, we will commemorate Jesus' washing of the feet of his Apostles. For the benefit of our parishioners, our priests and deacons will renew their ordination promises. At the end of our celebration of the Lord's Supper, we will linger for a while and spend a few moments in silent prayer before Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

Good Friday

As we did on Ash Wednesday, on Good Friday we abstain from eating meat or eggs, and we fast – i.e. we remain hungry all day, eating just enough to give us sufficient energy to carry on with our duties and not feel faint. We accept to be hungry in order to connect with Jesus who ate nothing all day until He died. We hope that He will help us make a significant connection between our own life and sufferings and those He endured for us. Fr. Gilles and Fr. Michael will be in the confessionals after the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion hearing confessions to celebrate the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**, and at 5:00 our Poor Man's Supper will be served.

We have 3 different opportunities to accompany Jesus on his way of the Cross. At 8:50 am our annual **Walk of Faith** with our Christian neighbours will begin here at St. Luke. The walk winds up at Christ the Redeemer Lutheran Church across the street around 11:00 and stops for prayer and reflection along the way. This would be a good way to be in solidarity with Christians of all around the world who will gather with faith in their churches around the Lord's Cross. If you prefer the evening, join us as we watch and pray with our youth and young adults in their interpretation of the Lord's Passion at 7:30 pm in a more contemporary prayerful reflection and **Way of the Cross**.

The **highlight** of the day is the traditional 3:00 p.m. **Good Friday Service** presided this year by Fr. Gilles and our Deacons, including the reading of the Lord's Passion, prayers for the whole world, an offering for our Catholic brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, veneration of the Cross – in which we all participate – and Holy Communion with the Lord Jesus.

Overview of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum - 2008

The Easter Vigil

The **Easter Vigil** is called the Mother of all Christian festivals, because it is here that adults come to be baptized or to be received into full communion with us as Catholic Christians, and that some Catholic adults not yet confirmed receive this Sacrament to complete their Christian initiation. It is at this time that we renew our own Baptismal promises. It is an awesome celebration that gives us a panoramic glimpse of the whole plan of salvation that our God has been unfolding from the beginning of human history until the present moment. Our Lenten fast and penance ends and we rejoice in God.

The Vigil lasts a good 2 hours, but is brief in comparison with the 5-hour Liturgy of our Orthodox brothers and sisters. Still, you may want to bring your favourite cushion and let the children bring their pillow or blankie! We begin the celebration outside at a little campfire and ask the Lord to bless our **Easter Candle** and then make our way into the church in darkness.

Then – as Jesus entered into our darkness – the Paschal Candle enters into our midst in the dark church and we joyfully acclaim Jesus our Light. Only then do we receive the light directly from the Paschal Candle – no lighters or matches please! Wait to receive the light from someone who brings it to you from the Easter Candle! Then we sing an ancient song of praise to the Lord for rising from the dead to save us from our sins and from the fear of death, by opening for us the way into eternal life with our Heavenly Father.

As we listen to the Scripture, God opens our minds, imaginations, memories, hearts, and souls, and the Lord makes all kinds of connections between what He has been doing in every generation and those places in our lives which are still dark and into which He wants to shine his radiant light of truth, goodness and mercy, love and beauty.

We listen and ponder, we sing, we reflect, and the Lord touches us deeply. Then comes the reception of new members into our church community and we renew our own Baptismal promises and receive the Baptismal water with joy. Fr. Michael will continue to lead us in a celebration of the Holy Eucharist and we will receive the Lord, our Bread of Life, in Holy Communion. Thus begins a season of joy – the Easter Season – lasting 50 days until the Feast of Pentecost, when we will ask the Lord to fill us anew with his Holy Spirit, that we might help Him renew the face of the earth!

The Easter Season

By His selfless sacrifice, Jesus attracted the Father's mercy and forgiveness for all of humanity. While humanity continues to participate in the sinfulness of the original disobedience and rebellion, to engage in violent words and actions in futile efforts to seize control of the goods, minds, psyches, and lives of others, or to suffer the burden and curse of unsatisfying, tiring or meaningless labor; all are called to repent of their sin, live in the freeing obedience of Jesus, walk in the peace and love of God's children, and enter with hope into rest in the Holy Spirit.

Easter Sunday, the new day of Sabbath rest in God for Jesus' disciples, extends into 40 days of Easter and every Sunday of the year, that is, into the rest of our lives; that we may enter fully into God's rest. From the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven until Pentecost, we pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes and dispels doubts and fears, with power like a mighty wind and light like tongues of fire: illuminating minds, purifying hearts, inflaming souls, and strengthening bodies; transforming believers in Jesus into his disciples and witnesses.

Finally, after the Easter Season ends with Pentecost, the following Sundays we celebrate these solemnities of the Lord: the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity on Trinity Sunday, and the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ. We reflect and demonstrate with song and processions our love, gratitude, and affection for our God and Father in Jesus his Son and our Saviour, in the love of the Holy Spirit!