

Diocesan Commission for Liturgy, Vasai

GOOD FRIDAY

Before the Mass

Today we, the priests, deacons and all the faithful are assembled here around the altar of the Lord to celebrate the liturgy of Good Friday.

Good Friday is a holy day observed by the Christian community, commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus and he was crucified for the sake of humanity.

Through his sacrifice, Jesus became the bridge between the humans and God.

We enter the liturgy on Good Friday in silence. Jesus bore our sins, shame and burden on the cross.

On this day, when Christ our Paschal Lamb was sacrificed, the Church contemplates and adores the Cross of her Lord and Spouse, commemorating her own coming forth from the side of Christ as he slept on the Cross and interceding for the salvation of the world.

Today and the following day the Church does not celebrate the Sacraments, except Penance and Anointing of the Sick.

We see, the altar is completely bare and no cloths, no cross and no candles are lit. The priests and deacons wear red colour vestments. The purpose behind the solemn presentation is to create an awareness of grief over the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son.

As we celebrate the Passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ, let us reflect our own lives and receive the strength and grace from Him who sacrificed his life for our sake on the Cross. Let us take up our crosses and follow Jesus in His footsteps.

There are three parts in today's liturgy:

- 1. Liturgy of the Word.**
- 2. Adoration of the Cross.**
- 3. The Holy Communion**

Now the minister of Christ (priest) will come in procession in silence and prostrate before the altar of the Lord and pray for a while. This profound act of reverence is made to demonstrate the abasement of earthly man and the grief and sorrow of the Church extreme sorrow and the sacred ministers' sense of unworthiness to officiate at the altar due to their faults.

Let us all kneel down and reflect the Passion and Death of Jesus on the Cross which brought us salvation.

The Liturgy of the Word Before the First Reading (Is 52:13-53:12)

Now the liturgy of the Word of God begins. The Word of God enlightens our hearts and minds from darkness of sin.

The Fourth Servant Song of prophet Isaiah reveals the reasons why God's Servant had to suffer and die. It opens with a declaration by God with the exaltation of the servant of God, the report concerning the servant's sufferings and a renewed declaration by God of the servant's triumph.

It was God in Christ reconciling the whole world to himself. Let us listen to the first reading.

Before the Second Reading (Heb. 4:14-16; 5:7-9)

The second reading speaks about the divinity and humanity of Jesus, the high priest. It should help us to walk with God. We can become more holy because God became one with us. As God, Jesus is a perfect High Priest who represents us before the Father. We can approach God with the confidence that the perfect man, Jesus, represents us. Jesus became a man, lived and suffered as a man. In becoming a man, Jesus brought God and man back into one.

Before the Gospel (Jn. 18:1-19:42)

Now the Passion of Christ is sung (read). Let us listen to this Passion Narrative and reflect on the sufferings of Christ who sacrificed his life for the sake of sinful humanity in order to give them to new life. Let us feel his suffering and turn to God in humble faith. After which follows a brief homily.

Before the Solemn Intercessions

Now the Solemn Intercessory prayers will begin. After having reflected the plan of salvation by God through the Word of God, the Holy Church invites us to pray for the various needs.

The solemn intercessions link us to the prayer of our sisters and brothers down through the centuries. As the deacon expresses the intention to pray for various needs with an invitation and introduction, let us then pause for a while in silent prayer.

Then the Presider prays out loud in our name, first praising God and naming how God has been loving and caring for the person or need we present, then asking for a particular grace. At the completion of the prayer, we all affirm that prayer by saying "Amen." Let us participate in this service in a meaningful way.

2. Before the Adoration of the Holy Cross

Now the ceremony of the adoration of the Cross begins. It is the center point of today's liturgical celebration.

We venerate and adore the wood of the cross upon which our Saviour Jesus Christ gained for us the salvation of the world and gave his life for us. We do that concretely by venerating the cross, which represents the divine act of love.

The deacon accompanied by two ministers with lighted candles, carries the veiled Cross through the Church to the center of the sanctuary in procession.

The priest accepts the cross and the standing before the altar and facing the people, uncovers the upper part of the cross, the right arm and then the entire cross. Each time he sings, "Behold the wood of the Cross." We all respond by saying, "Come let us adore." At the end of the response as the priest holds the Cross raised, we all kneel and keep a brief moment of silence.

After that the Cross is kept for personal adoration which is an important feature in this celebration. Only one cross is used for adoration. All the faithful are invited for the veneration of the Cross in procession during which a suitable hymn is sung.

3. Before the Holy Communion

Now the Holy Communion rite begins. We fast from celebrating the Eucharist today, but we are gathered by the Spirit to re-connect with our celebration of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.

We do not want to forget what that liturgy continues to mean for us. This is the bread that gives life. This is his self-giving love for us. This is our nourishment for our mission.

When the deacon (Priest) brings the Blessed Sacrament to the altar, we all will stand in silence and show reverence to the Lord who is present in the Blessed Sacrament.

Let us receive the Body of Christ with great devotion and reverence and welcome him into our hearts.

Departing in Silence

With closing prayer, the blessing and after genuflecting to the Cross, let us depart in silence.

We are the people who are full of faith, but who continue to wait for the fullness of our redemption.

Our silence departure links this celebration to the Easter Vigil, as our silence beginning connected us with Holy Thursday.