The answers are at the bottom of this page.

Holy Week quiz

1. Where did the Agony in the Garden take place?
2. Who betrayed Jesus?
3. Who denied Jesus three times?
4. Who ordered Jesus to be scourged?
5. What criminal was released instead of Jesus?
6. How many Stations of the Cross are there?
7. How many times does Jesus fall on the way to Calvary?
8. Who helped Jesus carry his cross?
9. Who wiped the face of Jesus?
10. What did the sign on the cross say?
11. Who made arrangements for the burial of Jesus?
12. Who was the first to discover that Jesus had risen?

The Seven Last Words of Jesus

Taking time to meditate on the seven last words of Jesus is a traditional devotion during Holy Week. Here are the last words spoken by Jesus with their Scripture citations. You might want to read the passages from your Bible and then ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what meaning these words have in your life today:

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34)

"Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Lk 23:43)

"Behold, your mother!" (Jn 19:27)

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34)

"I thirst!" (Jn 19:28)

"It is finished!" (Jn 19:30)

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Lk 23:46)

Celebrations of Our Lord’s passion and his glorious resurrection date to earliest days of Christianity during the Night of the Great Vigil of Easter. Over time, the practices of observing Holy Week spread throughout the Christian world, with prayers, historical re-enactments and special liturgies. During the Middle Ages, the celebration of the Easter Vigil gradually fell out of practice. The liturgical renewal of the 20th century, however, re-established this ancient celebration that tradition and liturgy had preserved for the faithful. By the second century, Christians celebrated Easter in two parts: the Paschal Vigil and the Octave. The Paschal Vigil was an important part of Holy Week observances. During the Second Vatican Council (1966-65), the bishops called for a renewal of the sacred liturgy to better explain the meaning of the Church’s sacraments. The Second Vatican Council (1966-65) re-established the Paschal Vigil, with its rites and liturgy, as the Easter Vigil of the Night of the Great Sunday, and removed some of the ancient customs. This ancient celebration that tradition and liturgy had preserved for the faithful is once again an integral part of Holy Week celebrations.

Holy Week customs

Palm crosses: From medieval times, followers of the Gospel believed that blessed palms formed the shape of a cross and protected them from danger. The easiest way to make a cross from blessed palms is to cut two pieces of the palm, arrange in the shape of a cross, just a thumb thick at the middle, and attach the cross to a doorknob or a bulletin board. This is a wonderful way to display instructions on how to bless or reuse palms into more decorative crosses.

Easter lilies: During Holy Week, lilies are used as decorations in homes and churches to symbolize the “new life” which comes with the Resurrection. Sweet bread: From medieval times, it evolved from the Jewish custom of making unleavened bread on Holy Thursday to a sweet treat eaten on Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday. In addition to Good Friday, the most important days of the week were Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The important days of the week were Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. During the Middle Ages, the celebration of the Easter Vigil gradually fell out of practice. Today, Easter Vigil with the lighting of the paschal candle, the reading of salvation history, the celebration of the sacraments of initiation for catechumens and renewal of baptism for the faithful is once again an integral part of Holy Week celebrations.

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