

My Dear People of God,

In the course of our busy week, we most likely have times set apart for certain things that are important to us—a workout, a few social phone calls, or maybe even a short catnap—so that we can renew ourselves, our energy, and our perspective. Holy Week is a time that is set apart in our Church's liturgical year for our spiritual renewal. In fact, the word *holy* refers to anything that is set apart for God's purposes. Holy Week is *holy* precisely because it is time that is set apart for us to focus on how we are spiritually renewed through the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus.

(*"The Holy Way: Practices for a Simple Life"*, Paula Huston)

What, really, do the liturgies of the triduum celebrate? Most all of us believe we know the answer. We assume that that these liturgies are dramatic "reenactments" of events which happened during Jesus' last days. As we gather throughout Holy Week we are thought to be engaged in acts of historical "reconstruction" that recreate scenes from the upper room, Calvary and the tomb.

It is, however, precisely because these are "faith-anchoring historical events" that they cannot be repeated or reenacted. That is why the church insists that what happened once in history passes over into the mystery of our liturgical and sacramental celebrations. *The paschal triduum celebrates mystery, not history; recollection, not imitation.* The liturgies of holy week do not take us back or celebrate what once happened to Jesus, but rather what is happening **now** among us as a people called to conversion and gathered in faith. They celebrate God's taking hold of our hearts at their deepest core and recreating in us a new human community broken like bread for the world's life, rich in compassion and steadfast in hope—a community of disciples serving with grace, gratitude and generosity.

(*"The Three Days of Pascha,"* Nathan Mitchell, in Assembly, Volume 18:1)

This Holy Week allow yourself time apart, holy time, to spend with Jesus. May it be a time to lay down your burdens, and renew your faith in Him.

Peace,



Fr. John

