



DIOCESAN NEWS LETTER VELLORE

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Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters

As we are in the season of Lent we are going to celebrate **Holy Week** at the end of this month, the culmination of the Passion and Death of Our Lord. Let us know something about the importance of Holy Week.

The final week of Lent, or the season leading up to Easter, is Holy Week 2024. It starts on March 24, Palm Sunday, and finishes on March 30, Holy Saturday. Christians remember Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection during Easter week by participating in a variety of liturgies and devotions.

Do we know the day commemorating Jesus' crucifixion and death, Good Friday, has been celebrated since 100 A.D. as a day of fasting? This means that Christians around the world have celebrated Holy Week and observed different services during the week for over 1,900 years!



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History of Holy Week

Holy Week has names for the five special days in the week, beginning with Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday, which commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The following day is called Holy Monday when Jesus cursed the fig tree, sent out the merchants from the temple, and responded to those who questioned His authority. On Holy Tuesday, some observe Christ foretelling his own death. The next day is called Holy Wednesday or Spy Wednesday, which remembers how Judas arranged the betrayal of Jesus with the chief priests, since he was a spy among the disciples of Jesus. Some churches celebrate Tenebrae (the Latin for 'shadows' or 'darkness') services especially on Spy Wednesday, where they gradually extinguish lit candles while reciting and chanting a series of readings and selected psalms. Holy Wednesday is then followed by the 'Triduum' of Holy Week- Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday.

Deriving its name from a shortened form of the Latin word 'mandatum' meaning 'command,' Maundy Thursday (also called Holy Thursday) commemorates Christ's "new commandment" that his disciples love one another as He has loved them (John 13:34). Maundy Thursday also marks the Last Supper that Jesus shared with His disciples, His prediction of His death, His betrayal by Judas Iscariot, and His arrest at the Garden of Gethsemane. Maundy Thursday services also include an act of foot washing, commemorating how Jesus washed His disciples' feet as an act of service preceding His arrest.

Known as the most somber day for Christians, Good Friday remembers Jesus' trial before Pontius Pilate, His death sentence,



torture, crucifixion, death, and burial some Christians fast on Good Friday, while some avoid eating meat, and many attend a church service where they meditate on and venerate the cross of Christ. The Triduum of Holy Week concludes with Holy Saturday, the seventh day of the week, when Jesus rested in the tomb. On this day, Christians, observe a late-night two-part Easter Vigil service. Jesus' resurrection on the eighth day is celebrated as Easter marking the beginning of the Easter Week, and the season of Eastertide.

Wish you all a Graceful Holy Week and Happy Easter!

On the 19th of March we celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph, the Spouse of Mother Mary. Though he is depicted in the Gospel as a man of righteousness and silence but he is the patron saint of the Universal Church, families, fathers, expectant mothers, travelers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers and working people, among others. Also as he is patron for education and novices let us pray to him for all our children those who are writing their final year exams. Wish you all the priests, and institutions a very HAPPY FEAST who bear his name.

At this juncture I would like to ask all the parish priests to take extra effort and enthusiasm to help our children for their admissions in the schools, colleges and other technical courses. The same I ask all the heads of the educational institutions to be kind enough to consider favorably to give admissions to our poor and deprived children of our diocese with due concessions. I do appreciate your wonderful ministry in the field of education. God bless you all.



Also I would like to ask all the parish priests to encourage our parish children for more vocations not only for our diocese but to other dioceses too especially to the northern dioceses where more vocations are needed and also for other congregations.

I take this opportunity to wish all our priests and religious those who celebrate their fest day, birthday and ordination day. May God bless them abundantly and our Mother Mary intercedes for them. Kindly pray for a good shepherd to our diocese.

God bless,

Yours in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Msgr. J. John", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Very Rev. Msgr. I. John Robert,
Diocesan Administrator