



Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Holy Week 2018 begins on Palm Sunday, March 25th, with the celebration of the thirty-third World Youth Day, celebrated at the diocesan level. The Church's yearly celebration of young people alternates between international celebrations, held every two-three years, and diocesan events.

This year's World Youth Day has the theme, **“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.”** Those are the words of the Archangel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin at the Annunciation, as related in the Gospel of St Luke.

For the diocese of Rome, the celebration will take place in St Peter's Square, with Pope Francis presiding at the Blessing of Palms and the Procession for Palm Sunday, followed by the Mass of the Passion of the Lord.

Holy (Maundy) Thursday

There are two main liturgical events on Holy Thursday: the Chrism Mass, celebrated in St Peter's Basilica; and the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, which the Holy Father will offer in the Regina Coeli prison, not far from the Vatican.

During the Chrism Mass, the local Bishop consecrates and blesses the Sacred Oils – Chrism, used for Confirmation, and also in the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Orders; the oil of catechumens, also used in Baptism; and the oil of the sick, for the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. In Rome, the blessed oils are taken to the Cathedral Church, the Archbasilica of St John Lateran, where they are dispensed to the parishes throughout the diocese.

Read also

Pope's Holy Thursday liturgy in Rome's Regina Coeli prison

On Thursday evening, Pope Francis will celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper, commemorating the institution of the Most Holy Eucharist and of the Priesthood. Following a custom established at the very beginning of his pontificate, the Pope will say the Mass in a prison, this year at the Regina Coeli. During the liturgy, Pope Francis will wash the feet of twelve inmates, in imitation of the actions of Jesus Himself at the Last Supper.

The Pope will also have the opportunity to visit with sick inmates in the prison infirmary, as well as with prisoners in "Section VIII", a protected area of the facility for prisoners who might be at risk in the general population.

Good Friday

The following day, Good Friday, Pope Francis will preside at the solemn liturgical Celebration of the Lord's Passion. The service on Good Friday is not a Mass, as the Holy Eucharist is not consecrated. The ritual consists in the Liturgy of the Word; the Adoration of the Cross; and the Rite of Communion, where Hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday are distributed to priests and faithful.

Following the Liturgy, Pope Francis will travel across town to the Colosseum, where he will officiate at the Via Crucis, the Way of the Cross. The Holy Father will offer a reflection at the conclusion of the service, followed by his Apostolic Blessing.

The Paschal Vigil and Easter Sunday

The rites of Holy Week reach their climax during the Easter Vigil of Holy Saturday, the "Mother of all Vigils." The ceremony begins with the lighting of the new fire, which will take place in the atrium of St Peter's Basilica. Then, with the Paschal Candle, the ministers will process to the sanctuary, where Pope Francis will preside at the Solemn Mass. The Mass is notable for the chanting of the Exultet, the solemn proclamation of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead; and for the Baptismal liturgy which takes place after the Liturgy of the Word.

Finally, on the morning of Easter Sunday, Pope Francis will celebrate the Solemn Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord in Saint Peter's Square. Following the Mass, the Holy Father will give his Blessing Urbi et Orbi – to the City [of Rome], and to the world."

Vatican News will be providing full coverage of all the papal events, with live commentary for the major liturgies. The broadcast begins immediately before the beginning of each ceremony.

Here is the full schedule for the papal events during Holy Week 2018 (all times local Roman time):

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord – 25 March

XXXIII World Youth Day

St Peter's Square

10.00 Solemn Mass of the Passion of the Lord (with Blessing and Procession of Palms)

Holy Wednesday – 28 March

St Peter's Square

10.00 General Audience

Holy Thursday – 29 March

Basilica of St Peter

10.00 Chrism Mass

Regina Coeli prison

(Evening) Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday – 30 March

Basilica of St Peter

17.00 Celebration of the Passion of the Lord

Colosseum

21.15 Via Crucis (Way of the Cross)

Holy Saturday – 31 March

Basilica of St Peter

20.30 The Easter Vigil – Solemn Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord

Easter Sunday – 1 April