

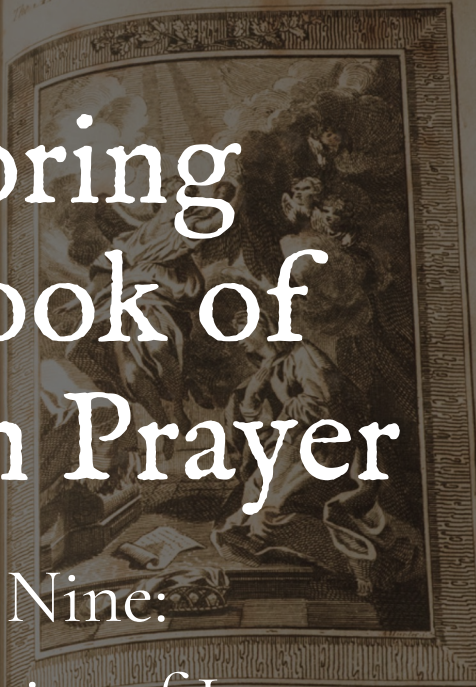
The Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary.
The Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary.
THE COLLECT.

WE beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel; the glory of his resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord. *Am.*

FOR THE EVANGELIST.
MOREOVER, the Evangelist says, saying, Ask thee a sign, or in the light above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I see the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O David; Is it a small thing for you to weary myself, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore shall himself shall give you a sign; a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

THE GOSPEL.
AND in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a virgin espoused to a man, whose name was Nazareth, of the house of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. When she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and

The Angel appearing to the VIRGIN MARY.



And this Angel said unto her fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God.
Chap. I. Ver. 30.

Exploring The Book of Common Prayer

Session Nine:
Special Liturgies of Lent
and Holy Week

Ash Wednesday

- The Ash Wednesday service is the first Eucharistic service of Lent. It is dramatically somber, as are most of the liturgies we'll discuss today.
- The Ash Wednesday service begins with the antiphon:
Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
His mercy endures for ever.
- This is followed by the officiant minister reciting a statement about Lent's purpose as a season of penitence, forgiveness, and preparation. He then invites those present "to the observance of a holy Lent: by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting, and alms-giving; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." This is followed by a period of silence for reflection and self-examination.

Ash Wednesday

- The people then kneel as the officiant reads the collect for Ash Wednesday, which asks God to give us “new and contrite hearts.”
- This is followed by the lessons—four thematically-appointed selections from scripture are appointed, as in a typical service. After a brief introduction, ashes are imposed on the foreheads of all present with the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” This is followed by everyone reciting the penitential psalm, Psalm 51:1-17, the Confession of Sin, and a litany of penitence, all while kneeling.
- After the absolution and the comfortable words, either a prayer is said to end the service or it continues with a service of Holy Communion, picking up at the Offertory.

Palm Sunday

- Palm Sunday commences Holy Week. It's an occasion that was already celebrated by the 4th Century.
- Uniquely, Palm Sunday features two Gospel readings. The first is the entrance into Jerusalem, which appears towards the beginning of the service, shortly after the minister has read an introduction to the service. This is often done outside the church building, with the congregation holding palm fronds, mimicking the palm leaves waved by and the Passion narrative.
- After a prayer of praise remembering that event and the crowds proclaiming Jesus as King, the congregation processes into the church, singing a hymn.

Palm Sunday

- Inside, after the minister reads the Collect of the Day, the day's lessons are read (the appointed Old Testament, Psalm, and Epistle readings for Palm Sunday. These are Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22 or 31, and Philippians 2:5-7).
- Then, the Passion narrative is read from that year's synoptic Gospel (this year, it is Mark).
- This is often read by multiple readers, with the congregation reading the parts of the crowd.
- Solemnly, all stand at the arrival at Golgotha. All kneel in silence after the verse that mentions Christ's death. From there, the service commences with the sermon as usual.

Maundy Thursday

- Six weeks and one day after Ash Wednesday, the Maundy Thursday service is the last Eucharistic service of Lent. It begins the Triduum (the sacred three days—Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday), which can be seen as one single liturgy lasting until the conclusion of the Great Vigil of Easter.
- Maundy Thursday commemorates Jesus's Last Supper with his disciples. The name Maundy comes from the Latin *mandatum* (commandment) and references Jesus words, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:35). Maundy Thursday also commemorates Jesus washing his disciples' feet before the supper, along with his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane and betrayal thereafter.

Maundy Thursday

- The celebrating minister begins the service with four short sentences reminding us of the four moments remembered that night. Then, after the collect for Maundy Thursday, we have the scripture lessons from Exodus 12:1-4, Psalm 78:15-26, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26(27-34) and either John 13:1-15 or Luke 22:14-30.
- After the sermon, there is a foot-washing ceremony. The celebrant asks for those who have been appointed as representatives (or, yes, sometimes everyone) to come forward—all those who “share in the royal priesthood of Christ” to come forward so we “may recall whose servants we are by following the example of our Master.” We are reminded that “A servant is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him.”

Maundy Thursday

- Two passages of scripture, the first being the account of the foot-washing and the second Jesus's new commandment to "love one another," are read.
- From then on, the liturgy continues with the Eucharistic liturgy, picking up at the Prayers of the People.
- However, the service ends differently. The clergy party strips the altar and other liturgical surfaces clean of their hangings and paraments. If vested, they may also remove their outer vestments. The cross is veiled. Often, either a crown of thorns or a communion chalice turned on its side is left on the bare altar table.
- The congregation departs in silence.

Good Friday

- The Triduum continues with the Good Friday service, the most somber of the church year. Fasting all day before the service is customary. The congregation re-enters the sanctuary quietly, returning in the same manner as their departure the previous night. The clergy forego their vestments for simple black cassocks.
- The beginning antiphon sets the mood:
*All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned every one to his own way,
And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Good Friday

- The scripture lessons powerfully emphasize the day's themes. The Old Testament reading is chosen between either Genesis 22:1-18 (the sacrifice of Isaac) or Isaiah 52:13–53:12 (“But he was pierced for our transgressions”). The Psalm is chosen between Psalm 22 (“My God, why have you forsaken me?”), Psalm 40 (“I waited patiently for the Lord”), or Psalm 69 (“Save me, O God”).
- Then the Passion account is read—this time from John 18 and 19. Once again, as on Palm Sunday, all stand at the arrival at Golgotha. All kneel in silence after the verse that mentions Christ's death.

Good Friday

- After the sermon, there is a series of solemn collects preceded by bidding sentences to pray for the same. We pray for people everywhere, for the church throughout the world, for our bishop and archbishop, all clergy, our president and all in authority, those preparing for Holy Baptism, victory over evil, repentance of heresy, the Jewish people, and unbelievers.
- After these collects, the cross is brought forward and unveiled. This antiphon is said three times:
Behold the wood of the Cross, on which was hung the world's Salvation.
O come, let us adore him.

Good Friday

- This is often (though not always) followed by a medieval responsory called the Reproaches or *Improperia*. To each reproach, we respond with the *Trisagion*: “Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy upon us.”
- Thomas Cranmer notably disliked and excluded these Reproaches, and their rather passive-aggressive, accusatory tone being put into the voice of Christ has long sat uneasy with many in the Church, myself included.
- They were restored to Anglican use during the Liturgical Movement in the 20th Century.
- However, they are a tradition shared by both Eastern and Western Churches in some form.

Good Friday

- After the Reproaches (or immediately following the preceding antiphon if they are omitted) two anthems are spoken or sung, the first beginning “We glory in your Cross, O Lord” and the second beginning,
*“We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.”*
- These are usually followed by a hymn. After this, there can be a brief liturgical distribution of Communion elements consecrated the previous night, though this is often omitted altogether. There is no Holy Eucharist celebrated on Good Friday. One concluding Prayer ends the service.
- Once again, the congregation leave in silence.

Holy Saturday

- The liturgy of Holy Saturday is brief. Once again, there is no Eucharist. It begins with one of two Holy Saturday collects, one reflecting on Christ's body lying in the tomb, the second on his descent to the place of the dead.
- The four lessons are drawn from Job 24, Psalm 130 (or 88 or 31), 1 Peter 4:1-8, and either Matthew 27:57–66 or John 19:38–42.
- This is followed by the day's anthem, which begins, "Man born of woman has but a short time to live, and is full of misery."
- The Lord's Prayer is prayed (without its doxology), and the officiant gives a benediction. It is still customary to depart quietly.

The Great Vigil of Easter

- Now, let me tell you a secret: this is my favorite liturgy of Holy Week, and we don't do it here. If you have the chance to catch an Easter Vigil somewhere, I highly recommend it. The drama of the service is impeccable.
- The liturgy begins with the service of light. It starts in the darkness, often outside—in the graveyard if the church has one. The celebrant announces that “On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer...”
- He offers a prayer. Then, from an open fire, such as a fire pit, he lights the wick of the Pascal candle, symbolizing Christ as the light of the world.

The Great Vigil of Easter

- In the dark church, a deacon or priest carries the Pascal Candle from the entrance to the chancel, pausing three times along the way and singing or saying “The light of Christ,” to which the people respond, “Thanks be to God.” An ancient song of praise, the *Exsultet*, is said or sung.
- This is followed by the *Sursum Corda* (The Lord be with you... Lift up your hearts...), usually said by a deacon. The deacon then recounts Christ's victories that night and praises God for them.

The Great Vigil of Easter

- Then, a series of Old Testament scriptures are read, “the record of God’s saving deeds in history,” followed by collects responding to each. These scriptures cover the Creation, the Fall, the Flood, Abraham’s Sacrifice of Isaac, Israel’s Deliverance at the Red Sea, God’s Presence in a Renewed Israel, Salvation Offered Freely to All, A New Heart and a New Spirit, The Valley of Dry Bones, The Three Young Men in the Furnace, Jonah and the Fish, and the Gathering of God’s People.
- Then, the celebrant proclaims, “Alleluia! Christ is risen!” The people respond, “The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!” These are the first Alleluias since the final Sunday of Epiphany. A joyful fanfare is played, bells are rung, the church is lit, and the altar candles are lit from the Pascal Candle. The Gloria in Excelsis is said in response.

The Great Vigil of Easter

- The Easter Vigil collect follows, then the Epistle reading (Romans 6:3-11), a psalm (114, typically) or hymn follows, then the Gospel reading (Matthew 28:1-10).
- After the sermon, baptisms, confirmations, or the renewal of baptismal vows may follow. After this, the Eucharist follows. A special blessing ends the service.

Helpful Websites

- To buy a 2019 Book of Common Prayer, go to www.anglicanhousepublishers.org
- To say the Daily Office using the 2019 BCP liturgies, go to www.dailyoffice2019.com
- For a Daily Office Booklet, guides, and other Anglican basics, go to www.anglicancompass.com
- For an audio version of the Daily Office, search the **Daily Office Podcast**.
- For the St. Bernard Breviary containing all the BCP 2019 offices, all their appointed scriptures (ESV), music and/or plainchant notation for canticles and psalms, and a small hymnal, go to www.bernardbreviary.com

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