

Holy Week Maximum Impact

“I was too busy.” “I had to work.”

“I had soccer practice”

Are these sorts of explanations for a minimalistic life of prayer and worship going to “fly” when we are face to face with our Lord after death? I would assert that it is very presumptuous to think so.

Why is regularly gathering to worship our Lord and God a more onerous chore than all the other things keeping us busy? At the very least, we should be challenging this way of thinking! It seems to me that it has been a very effective sleight-of-hand on the part of the Devil who, of course, does not want us to be in close relationship with our Good God.

Repent!

The word “repent” should not be reduced to an accusatory, wagging finger of disapproval meant to make a person feel guilty. In the broadest sense, it is the summons to the gift of salvation; sort of like saying, *“Look up from the world and see the incredible offer of life-in-its-fullness that Jesus Christ has won for you!”* *“Wake up to the real meaning of life!”* And, yes, of course, *“Turn away from sin and evil toward the good and holy!”*



It has been heartbreaking to listen to the confessions of kids in this parish and around the diocese during this Lent who, because of an “examination of conscience” provided them to help them prepare, confess *“I don’t go to church on Sunday”* or *“I*

don’t go to church very much.” And, of course, as the confessor, I have to deflect the guilt from the child to the parents. In gentle terms I suggest, *“It seems that it is not a habit of your family to go to church on Sunday. It is not your fault because you are not able to drive yourself, but it is something important to pray about. God has given us everything and only wants the absolute best for us. Isn’t it important that we worship Him and give Him thanks and praise?”*

Holy Week is Powerful!

I encourage one-and-all to invite family members, neighbors and friends to attend one or more liturgies of Holy Week. Holy Week was the cause of my own personal conversion and my call to the priesthood. As a teenager, I was not an entirely willing participant in the Holy Week Liturgies of my parish. My parents required us to go to these and we did. And, much to my surprise, they had a deep impact on my soul: The double recitation of the passion narrative on Palm Sunday and Good Friday . . . the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday . . . the candle-lit darkness of Holy Saturday and the solemn chanting of the Easter Proclamation; this was all very powerful stuff!

Holy Week is like a Retreat

A spiritual retreat is a way of putting the “brakes” on ordinary life and work . . . an extended version of our Sunday/Sabbath observance. If we stay in the mode of “too busy” we are sort of condemning ourselves to being earth-bound. Whereas, the Lord has revealed to us that we are destined, by his will, for a great and glorious eternal life. *“God so loved the world that he sent his only son that we might not perish but have eternal life,”* (John 3:16). If you attend the Holy Week liturgies with the knowledge that Jesus is God in our human nature and keep that in the forefront as you prayerfully allow the words and gestures to massage your consciousness, I assure you that you will have a deeply spiritual experience. The Lord will bless you through His word and sacrament and rescue you from the grip of this world.

**Do not miss this opportunity for
maximum impact!**