

Living the tension of Holy Week



Since moving to Indiana almost three years ago, I have always celebrated Holy Week and Easter here in Fort Wayne. Yet, neither time was of my own planning.

The first year, during Lent of 2019, [my car broke down](#), preventing me from driving the four hours to Illinois to celebrate with my family as I had intended. But despite the fact that things were out of my hands, it turned into an unexpected blessing as friends took care of me and invited me to celebrate with them, making Fort Wayne and my Catholic community here feel very much like home. Then, last year, the pandemic hit; there were no Holy Week and Easter liturgies to attend in person, not to mention family gatherings, so I again remained in Fort Wayne. That week also had its own blessings, such as celebrating the Easter liturgies with a renewed intentionality through the prayer altar my roommate and I put together, along with the [driveable Eucharistic procession](#) my pastor organized within the neighborhood.

So, for the first time since moving out on my own, I will be returning home for Easter this year. And there is a strangeness in that.

Of course, I want to be able to return and celebrate with my family. These moments together – when myself and all three of my siblings are home under the same roof – are precious and far between, and I know I must embrace them now before life gets even more beautifully complicated with the changing landscape of our family.

And yet I find myself still drawn to remain with my Fort Wayne

community with my parish and Church family – to celebrate the Holy Week liturgies with the community that now feels like home.

There is a beautiful tension here that is appropriate for the season. There is a tension of being torn between two places, of your heart being stretched between two things. And that is the tension that Holy Week provides.

Starting with Palm Sunday, we remember Jesus' glorious entrance into Jerusalem with the opening readings. But by the time we have transitioned to the Gospel, we are already recounting how the people condemned Jesus and crucified him. We as the descendants of these people feel the tension of being torn between two places – our worship of God followed by our rejection of him.

We repeat that dynamic on Holy Thursday, where Christ gives his very self in the Eucharist, only to feel alone and abandoned during his most agonizing moments just hours later in the garden, followed by his betrayal by Judas, after which his apostles – all but John – scatter.

On Good Friday and Holy Saturday, we feel the weight of Christ's death and wonder, now what? But even as we try to sit in this tension, we know what's ahead. We know there is a homecoming: the Resurrection.

As a people, each year we are torn between our sin and the fact that God paved a way for us to come home. We often feel that we don't deserve such mercy, such a chance at eternal goodness. And so we feel torn between our earthly reality and our deep longing for our eternal home.

So, this year, I will celebrate the Palm Sunday through Good Friday liturgies with my parish in Fort Wayne, and then following the Good Friday service, I will drive four hours to await the Resurrection with my family.

This life is always pointing us home – to our true home. And yet, we will always feel the tension in some way. Maybe you are still struggling to accept that Easter this year will look both similar and dissimilar to Easter last year. And that is OK. Allow yourself to sit in the tension. Ask the Lord what he wants to reveal to you through this feeling. But don't forget that we are called to be filled with the hope of what comes next: resurrection, if we are willing to accept it.

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