



Union Baptist Church of Cincinnati  
105 West Seventh Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45203  
513) 381-3858  
[www.union-baptist.net](http://www.union-baptist.net)  
Rev. Dr. Orlando Yates, Pastor

## CELEBRATIONS OF HOLY WEEK

“Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.” Col 3:2 (KJV)

### CHRISTIAN LENT: March 6, 2019 – April 18, 2019

Lent is the period of 40 days which comes before Easter in the Christian calendar. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, Lent is a season of reflection and preparation before the celebrations of Easter. However, the six Sundays within the period are not fast days (Sundays are always feast days in the Christian calendar) and therefore not counted in the 40 days of Lent. The liturgical period of Lent also ends on the evening of Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday).

**By observing the 40 days of Lent, Christians replicate Jesus Christ's sacrifice and withdrawal into the desert for 40 days. Lent is marked by fasting, both from food and festivities.**

Whereas Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus after his death on the cross, Lent recalls the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion by Rome. This is believed to have taken place in Roman occupied Jerusalem.

The Christian churches that observe Lent in the 21st century (and not all do significantly) use it as a time for prayer and penance. Only a small number of people, today, fast for the entire period of Lent; although some maintain the practice on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. It is more common these days for believers to surrender a particular vice such as favourite foods or smoking. Regardless of the sacrifice, it is a reflection of Jesus' deprivation in the wilderness and a test of self-discipline.

*“Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, and Your faithfulness to the clouds.”*

*Psalms 36:5 KJV*

### **Holy Monday – A People's Fruitless Faith**

The nation of Israel had failed to exercise their faith in Jesus. They were professing to be fruitful/faithful (waving palm leaves as He entered their city on Palm Sunday), yet the Jewish people were fruitless in practicing their faith. Within a few days of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, they would deny their King and crucify Him.

Jesus spent Sunday night in Bethany, the village at the foot of the Mount of Olives (Matthew 21:7). As Jesus was returning on Monday to Jerusalem, He noticed a fig tree that had produced leaves ahead of the season. Jesus knew that fig trees bear fruit twice a year -- in June and September. This was April, so even the un-ripened fruit should be there for Him to eat. Since the fig tree bore leaves, He expected to find figs, yet it was fruitless. Jesus cursed the tree and it

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withered the next day. The tree was fruitless as was most of the people's faith.

### **Holy Monday – A Temple Cleansed**

Another event of Holy Monday is the Temple cleaning. John 2:13–17 bears record of Jesus' first cleansing of the Temple, presenting Himself as the Messiah. This first cleansing was for teaching and admonishing. The second cleansing occurred during Jesus' final week before His crucifixion. As part of prophesy, Jesus pronounced a symbolic judgment upon the irreverence for the Lord's house of prayer (Isaiah 56:7, Jeremiah 7:11).

Having heard the commotion, the courtyard was in chaos. Yet those who had needs did not hesitate, nor did the children. First, **the blind and lame came when they heard Jesus was in the Temple. As the children saw Jesus standing there and teaching, they began to shout again, "Hosanna, Hosanna, to the Son of David."** There was nothing the Pharisees could do to stop Jesus as the Messiah. "Jesus replied 'Have you never read, from the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?'" (Matthew 21:14–16).

Holy Monday is the last Monday prior to Easter Sunday; it is the second day of Holy Week after Palm Sunday. **It is Monday, April 15, 2019. AMEN.**

*"He was despised and rejected--a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care." (Isaiah 53:3 NLT)*

### **Tuesday of Holy Week**

**In Christianity, Holy Tuesday is the last Tuesday prior to Easter Sunday; it is the third day of Holy Week after Palm Sunday and Holy Monday.** According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus again returns to Jerusalem where He is confronted by the Temple leadership for what He did the day before. They questioned His authority. He also teaches extensively using parables and other formats. There is the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21:33-46), the parable of the wedding banquet, (Matthew 22:1). There is also the teaching on paying taxes (Matthew 22:15) and the rebuke of the Sadducees who deny the resurrection (Matthew 22:23). There is also the fearful prophecy about the destruction of Jerusalem if the inhabitants do not come to faith in Him. He warns that not one stone will be left on another (Matthew 24). **Let us pray with Jesus and listen carefully to His final teachings just before his passion.**

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**Holy Tuesday is April 16, 2019.**

### Wednesday of Holy Week

**Depending on the denomination, this particular day may or may not be celebrated at all.** Those that do observe Holy Wednesday typically mark it with readings of particular scriptures and the singing of relevant hymns. Traditionally this day was called “Spy Wednesday” for it was on this Wednesday before the crucifixion that Judas conspired to hand Jesus over. For this he was paid thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14). Jesus likely spent the day in Bethany. In the evening Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus with costly perfumed oil. Judas objects but Jesus rebukes him and says Mary has anointed Him for His burial! (Matthew 26:6). The wicked were harassing Jesus and plotting against Him. **Wickedness is still prevalent today as it was so many years ago. Are you still praying? AMEN.**

**Holy Wednesday or “Spy Wednesday is April 17, 2019.**

### Thursday of Holy Week

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter, believed to be the day when Jesus celebrated His final Passover with His disciples. Most notably, that Passover meal was when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples in an extraordinary display of humility. He then commanded them to do the same for each other. This is why services on Maundy Thursday generally include the washing of feet or other acts of physical care as an integral part of the celebration. If you’ve never participated

in or witnessed a foot washing ceremony, it’s an incredibly humbling activity—one can imagine how difficult it would have been for the disciples to allow Jesus to humble himself in this way. Maundy Thursday also commemorates Jesus Christ’s institution of the Last Supper, which represents his body that was broken and blood that was shed for the remission of our sins and is a permanent ordinance for Christians. It is to be observed “till He come” again.

Maundy Thursday is an alternate name for Holy Thursday, the first of the three days of solemn remembrance of the definition of love to a new and higher standard. Jesus sacrificially met His followers’ deepest need---that of a new spiritual life and the forgiveness of sins. He even loved His enemies, and He calls us to show love to those who don’t appear to deserve it. Just as Jesus loved sinners “to the end” (John 13:1) when He had nothing to gain from them, so must we. The

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Bible says that there was nothing attractive about sinful mankind that drew Him to love us. God loved us while we were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). Salvation is not only a wonderful gift that

protects us from the penalty that we deserve Romans 6:23, the work of Christ also imbues new life, grants spiritual strength, and motivates godly action in those who believe: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:11-14)

Maundy Thursday is April 18, 2019. AMEN.

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