

Tradition

The Verges procession is a theatrical representation. The Church used the theatre as an evangelizing resource. The mass was done in Latin, therefore, making it very difficult for the people of the village to be able to follow the ecclesiastical commandments. The theatre was a good resource to teach the doctrine in their chosen language, Catalan, using a freer, more popular theatrical technique, which was more relevant to the believer.

The mystery that is represented in Verges is based on a book of verses, from the year 1773, by Antoni de Sant Jeroni – "Representation of the holy passion and the death of our Man Jesus-Christ". It is an adaptation, with a certain personality, historical coherence and following the style of previous versions, some of them medieval, of the Passion of Christ. For this reason it was printed repeatedly, with additions and borrowings. Nowadays, many towns use the re-publication for their Easter representations.

The first documented testimony of the Procession of Verges dates back to 1666, in which a specific reference is made to the Procession of Maundy Thursday and the "vergelitana" representation is spoken of as a tradition



Xavier Llop

The Procession

The Mystery of the Passion, or the Procession of Verges, which takes place on Maundy Thursday, consists on two main parts. The first part is done in the town square on a stage placed in the middle of the square, where only those who have bought tickets can watch it. In this setting, with the natural scenery of the village walls and the fortified medieval towers, the three years of the public life of Jesus Christ is staged, with special emphasis to his last days, his betrayal, arrest and condemnation. Once the performance in the town square is finished and after the reading of the sentence of Pontius Pilate, the actors head towards the church, the meeting point for the start of the procession or second part. From this moment, the streets of the town become the stage for the actors until they make their way back to the church, where the Procession ends, a double and simultaneous end: inside the temple, with the Reverence of the Dance of the Death, and outside, with the Crucifixion.



Xavier Llop

The Dance of the Death

The Dance of the Death is performed throughout the course of the Procession. In this dance, five skeletons come out to the sound of a drum and take the form of a cross. They are escorted by four other characters, which with flaming torches illuminate the scene creating a gloomy atmosphere. The main part of the Dance of the Death is performed by two adults (the Scythe and the Flag) and three children (two plates - which carry a dish with ash, and a Clock, which shows a clock without hands). We are warned that death doesn't forgive anybody (the flag); life can be cut short (the scythe) and reminds us that at any time (clock without hands) we could end up becoming ash (plates).



Xavier Llop

The survival

Verges is the only town in the world that has a living preservation of the Dance of the Death, reminiscent of ancestral rites of cult to the deceased. This type of macabre dance is often associated with the epidemics of black plague that affected Europe between XIV and XVII centuries. The Dance of the Death represents the moment in time, the inexorable step in time that leads all men (rich people or poor people, noblemen or farmers) to their death; a death in which the plague, wars and child mortality helped to form a real connection among the European inhabitants of that period, who almost felt its breath on their face.

For them, Christianity was the triumph over death.



Xavier Llop

Timetable

■ 5 pm: Marching Roman Soldiers.

■ 10 pm: Mystery Play performance in the main square.

■ Midnight: Procession through the streets.

► **Information and tickets**
972 78 00 07 / 972 78 09 74
www.laprocesso.cat

The organization begs them to limit the use of flash



Palm Sunday scene background photo: Jordi Vila

Tribute scene background photo: Xavier Llop



Organizes:

Associació La Processó de Verges

with the support of:

