

EASTER

The Greatest Christian Feast

Easter is the greatest feast in the Christian calendar.

On this Sunday, Christians celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

For Catholics, Easter Sunday comes at the end of 40 days of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving known as Lent. Through spiritual struggle and self-denial, we have prepared ourselves to die spiritually with Christ on Good Friday, the day of His Crucifixion, so that we can rise again with Him in new life on Easter.

The Fulfillment of Our Faith ... the Resurrection

Easter is a day of celebration because it represents the fulfillment of our faith as Christians. St. Paul wrote that, unless Christ rose from the dead, our faith is in vain (1 Corinthians 15:17).
Thru his death, Christ saved mankind from bondage to sin,
& He destroyed the hold that death has on all of us;
but it is His Resurrection that gives us the promise of new life, both in this world and the next.

The Coming of the Kingdom the Church

In the Our Father, we pray that "Thy *Kingdom* come, on earth as it is in Heaven."
Christ told His disciples that some of them would not die until they saw the *Kingdom* of God "coming in power" (Mark 9:1).
The early Christian Fathers saw Easter as the fulfillment of that promise.
With the resurrection of Christ, God's *Kingdom* is established on earth, in the form of the *Church*.

After Jesus' resurrection, he made several appearances before his Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost:

<u>Jesus appears ...</u>	<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke</u>	<u>John</u>	<u>ACTS</u>
at the empty tomb	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-2	20:1-10	
to Mary Magdalene		16:9-11		20:10-18	
to other women	28:9-10				
the Road to Emmaus		16:12-13	24:13-32		
to Peter			24:34		
to Disciples			24:36-49	20:19-23	
to Disciples & Thomas		16:14		20:24-31	
by the Sea				21:1-23	
to 11 disciples on mtn	28:16-20	16:15-18			
Ascension		16:19	24:50-53		1:1-11
Pentecost					2:1-41

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Easter represents the fulfillment of our faith as Christians. Through his death, Christ saved mankind from bondage to sin, and He destroyed the hold that death has on all of us; but it is His Resurrection that gives us the promise of new life, both in this world and the next. We celebrate for 50 days.

2nd Sunday of Easter



DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY: Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun, reported visions and visitations from Jesus and conversations with Him. In her diary she sketched the vision of His Merciful Divinity being poured from His sacred heart. Jesus calls us to receive his mercy and to extend mercy to others. The readings for this day focus on Jesus's reappearing after his resurrection and on the forgiveness of sins.

4th Sunday of Easter



GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY: The fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday and it is the "World Day of Prayer for Vocations." The scripture lessons for this day concern the role of the shepherds of God's flock in the Church. Each year on this Sunday, we reflect on the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who devotedly and kindly takes care of his flock.

9 days before Pentecost



NOVENA to the HOLY SPIRIT: The Novena to the Holy Ghost (also known as the Novena to the Holy Spirit) has a long and beautiful history. A novena is a nine-day prayer recalling the time the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Apostles spent in prayer between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday. When Christ ascended into Heaven, He told them He would send His Holy Spirit, and so they prayed for the coming of the Spirit.

Because of the connection between the original novena and Pentecost, this particular novena is very special. It is an expression of the desire of the faithful to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Most often prayed between Ascension and Pentecost, it can be prayed at any time of the year.

7th Sunday of Easter



ASCENSION of the LORD: The Ascension of Our Lord, which occurred 40 days after Jesus Christ rose from the dead on Easter, is the final act of our redemption that Christ began on Good Friday. On this day, the risen Christ, in the sight of His apostles, ascended bodily into Heaven (Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11).

This is a Holy Day of Obligation, but its celebration has been transferred to the Sunday following in the U.S.

8th Sunday of Easter



PENTECOST: Pentecost Sunday is one of the most ancient feasts of the Church. On this Sunday, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples. We also celebrate the beginning of the Church, and we rejoice because the Holy Spirit fill our hearts today.