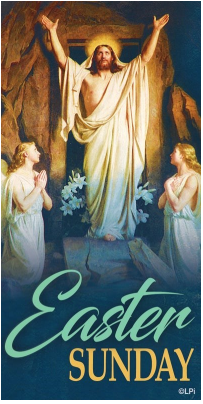


EASTER



We have prayed more earnestly and more fervently. We have fasted from various things that bring us comfort and pleasure. We have given money and time to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. We have gone to Confession to be reconciled with God. We have done all of this during the just completed season of Lent.

And why did we do all of this? To ready ourselves for *this* day. To celebrate with great joy and exaltation the Resurrection of the Lord! This day is the most important day in the Church year. As a matter of fact, one of the important reasons that we hold every Sunday in such high regard is because each Sunday throughout the year is an anniversary of *this Sunday - Easter Sunday!*

I have written before that the Church has given us the season of Lent as a gift. Lent comes with all of the prescriptions we need in order to help us to prepare to celebrate Easter. Lent has helped us to prepare spiritually and mentally for this great occasion!

We have 40 days of Lent to prepare for Easter. But Easter is so important that the Church once again gifts us with a special season - the Easter Season - which is *50 days* in duration! So as you can see, we are given more time to celebrate than we had to prepare for Easter during the penitential season of Lent.

The word "Easter" comes from Old English, meaning the "East." The sun rises in the East, bringing light, warmth, and hope. It is a symbol for us as Christians of the Risen Christ, who is the Light of the World.

The Paschal Candle is a main symbol of this light. It represents Christ the Light of the world. It is lit for the first time at the Easter Vigil. It is kept near the ambo throughout the Easter season, and it is lit for all liturgical celebrations. When we return to Ordinary Time, it will return to its home next to the baptismal pool.

During Lent we did without the Gloria or the Alleluias. Today both are brought back in earnest as a sign of our exaltation at the fact that Christ has truly risen. (By the way, Alleluia can loosely be translated as "praise the Lord.")

You will notice that the liturgical color of the priest's vestments has also changed from purple to white. This is another sign of our joy and celebration.

Likewise' our church environment has transformed from one of a barren desert to a lush garden of beautiful flowers. Another sign of our joy at the Resurrection.

The eight day period between Easter Sunday and the following Sunday is known as the Octave of Easter. It is a way of prolonging the joy of the initial day. In a sense, every day of the Octave is like a little Easter Sunday.

Throughout the Easter season at St. Elizabeth of the Trinity you will see the priest carry out the Sprinkling Rite during the part of the Mass known as the Penitential Rite. This is done to remind us of our Baptism. The Easter Season is the preeminent season for baptism.

I would like to conclude by repeating part of Pope Francis' first Easter greeting as Pope. This is from Easter 2013:

"May the risen Lord, the conqueror of sin and death, be a support to you all, especially to the weakest and neediest. Thank you for...the witness of your faith....To all of you I affectionately say again: may the risen Christ guide all of you and the whole of humanity on the paths of justice, love and peace."

Christ is Risen!!! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

May the joys and blessings of this Easter Season be poured upon you and your families!

Jim Madura