

Easter Season

Faith Conversations

Find some time in your week, perhaps at a mealtime, to have meaningful conversations with loved ones centered around each Sunday's Mass readings. 1) You may start with reading from the Bible (USCCB [daily readings](#) are helpful; here we focus on the Sunday *Gospel* readings) or simply read the excerpt provided. 2) Use the questions here to get a conversation started. 3) Offer prayers of thanksgiving or petition for specific people. 4) End with a brief prayer, from the heart or something formal such as the prayer below.

Easter Season Prayer

Risen Jesus, come into our midst and give us your peace. Like Thomas, let us touch the wounds in your hands so that our faith in you may grow. As with Mary Magdalen, lift our tear-stained faces to see the hope you offer us. And as with the timid Apostles, breath your Spirit into us, emboldening our hearts to love more fully. We thank you and praise you for the new life you have won for us. We pray with joyful hearts, Amen! Alleluia, Alleluia!

Easter Sunday: April 9

Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. – [John 20:1-9](#)

Scientists studying the [Shroud of Turin](#) (the cloth traditionally believed to be Jesus' burial cloth) have concluded that the image on the cloth was created by a flash of light radiation – more powerful than any UV radiation source known today. This gives some insight into the *power* of the Resurrection. What are the implications of such power for our faith (what/how we believe)? For how we live our daily lives?

When the disciple John sees the signs of Jesus' Resurrection, his response is belief. What is our response to Jesus, who gives us his everything...his miracles, his friendship, his forgiveness, and finally, his life...all so that we can know true joy here on Earth and live eternally in Heaven?

How can our family keep the joy of Easter alive and vibrant throughout the Easter Season?

Divine Mercy Sunday: April 16

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." – [John 20:19-31](#)

The Holy Spirit is often thought of as breath or wind. Let's discuss what this means for God as Trinity . . . for us.

We often hear the Risen Jesus say, "Peace be with you." On this Mercy Sunday, how can we open to divine mercy so as to be instruments of peace in our world? How are mercy and peace interconnected?

Third Sunday of Easter: April 23

Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?
— [Luke 24:13-35](#)

The Risen Jesus walked with two of his disciples. First he asked them questions and listened. Then he explained Scripture to them in a new light, which inspired them. What are characteristics of a good listener? We trust Jesus listens to us. Do we listen to him? (In Scripture, silence, the insights of others. . .) Does it make our hearts burn?

This encounter follows the basic structure of Mass: Scripture, then the breaking of bread—the Eucharist. How is hearing God’s Word at Mass special? Jesus *stays with us* in the Eucharist. Does that make our hearts burn?

Fourth Sunday of Easter: April 30

I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly. — [John 10: 1-10](#)

The Good Shepherd calls his sheep by name. They recognize his voice and follow him. Do we recognize Jesus’ voice *naturally* by some God-given sense — we just *know* it? Or do we need to be *taught* and *learn* to become familiar by listening often? Might it be both? (Even small children can hear God. How does that factor in?)

Religion can seem restrictive. Jesus speaks of following him as freeing and fulfilling. How does following the Risen Jesus closely make us more free? How does it make us more fully alive — with *more* of a life rather than less?

Fifth Sunday of Easter: May 7

If you know me, then you will also know my Father. — [John 14:1-12](#)

If you had to categorize your relationships into, say, four levels of closeness, what would those categories be and who would be in them? In the Sunday Gospel, Jesus is talking to his disciples about their knowing him. Into which of your relationship categories would Jesus fit — actually? Where would you like him to be?

Reading about past historical figures, we can know a lot *about* them. But we can never truly *know them*. With the Risen Jesus, it’s different. We can have a living relationship with him and know *him*! How can we do this?

Sixth Sunday of Easter: May 14*

. . . I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. — [John 14: 15-21](#)

Family bonds tend to be the tightest and give us a sense of security and belonging. What is it like to make someone new part of the family (welcoming a baby, adopting/fostering a child, getting to know a new in-law)? If you’ve not had the experience, imagine what it is like to be the one being welcomed. This Gospel is about God’s desire to welcome us into the “family” of the Trinity—God’s own inner life. What does that tell us about God?

***Note: for those praying a [Pentecost 9-Day-Novena](#), begin on Friday, May 19.**

Seventh Sunday of Easter, Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord: May 21

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. . . — [Matthew 28: 16-20](#)

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? (There are clues right in this Gospel: being Baptized into sharing God’s own life, becoming increasingly aware of God’s presence and building this relationship, striving to live all that Jesus taught.) Other than Baptism, is being a disciple a “once and done” event/decision? What does it mean to “make disciples”? Is it a “once and done” proposition we make to others? Or is it naturally *loving others into* this ongoing cycle of a deepening experience of God’s love, and loving ever-more in return? How do we do this?

Pentecost Sunday: May 28

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were...Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." – [John 20:19-23](#)

What are the doors that are locked in our hearts because of fear or sadness or selfishness? Let's be quiet for a moment to invite Jesus into the "closed off" parts of our hearts with his healing and peace. (Silent prayer)

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit transformed frightened and timid people into bold and courageous people. What does it mean to be courageous? (To be courageous doesn't mean to be fearless. It means to be able to act boldly *in the midst* of fear.) Share a time you were courageous. Were you conscious of the Holy Spirit's help?

As we draw nearer to God, we can sometimes *feel* "our hearts burning within us" (see Luke 24:13-35). *Emotions* are a gift meant to *move* us. But move us to what? What do you think God is inviting you to do?

Tomorrow, May 29, we celebrate the Memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church. She was present as the Church was "born" on Pentecost and accompanied the first Christians as they tried to follow Jesus in this very new way as *Church*. As we begin "Ordinary Time" again in the Church calendar, what does it mean to start this new season with the power of the Holy Spirit. . . and with the company of our spiritual mother. . . Mary? How can we keep this Pentecost "fire" in our minds and hearts throughout Ordinary Time?

Pentecost Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, into our minds with your light. Come, Holy Spirit, into our hearts with the fire of your love. Come, Holy Spirit, into our wills with your strength. Fill us. Transform us. Send us. Be present to us . . . and teach us to be present to you, always listening attentively . . . that we may effectively share the Good News of Jesus with all people. Amen. Alleluia, Alleluia!

