

Living this Easter Season

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The Resurrection of Jesus is such overwhelmingly Good News that a single day is not enough to celebrate it. The Lord's Resurrection is meant to be celebrated intensely for the whole week following Easter (known as the *Octave*), the whole liturgical *Season of Easter* (lasting until Pentecost, this year May 23rd), and every *Sunday* thereafter (each as a mini-Easter).

While Lenten observances get a lot of attention, they are means for preparing us to fittingly celebrate the Easter Season, which also deserves our mindfulness. We continue to embrace Lent's call to prayerful reflection and generous action, but in a new context, the *Easter* context. We contemplate the saving love of the Father. We participate in the new life made possible by Jesus' victory on the Cross. And we invite the Holy Spirit to come and overflow our hearts with bold energy for witnessing to the Gospel!

Perhaps you've heard the phrase, "We are an Easter people." Good Friday was not the end. The "Season" in which we live. . . waiting for Jesus' second coming. . . is *Easter*. . . or perhaps, more fittingly, *Pentecost*. Ponder that. Celebrate that...and testify to it! This resource offers a menu of ideas for how to do that. Choose a few that resonate with you and your family, and let Easter Sunday joy spill over into your living this *Easter Season*!

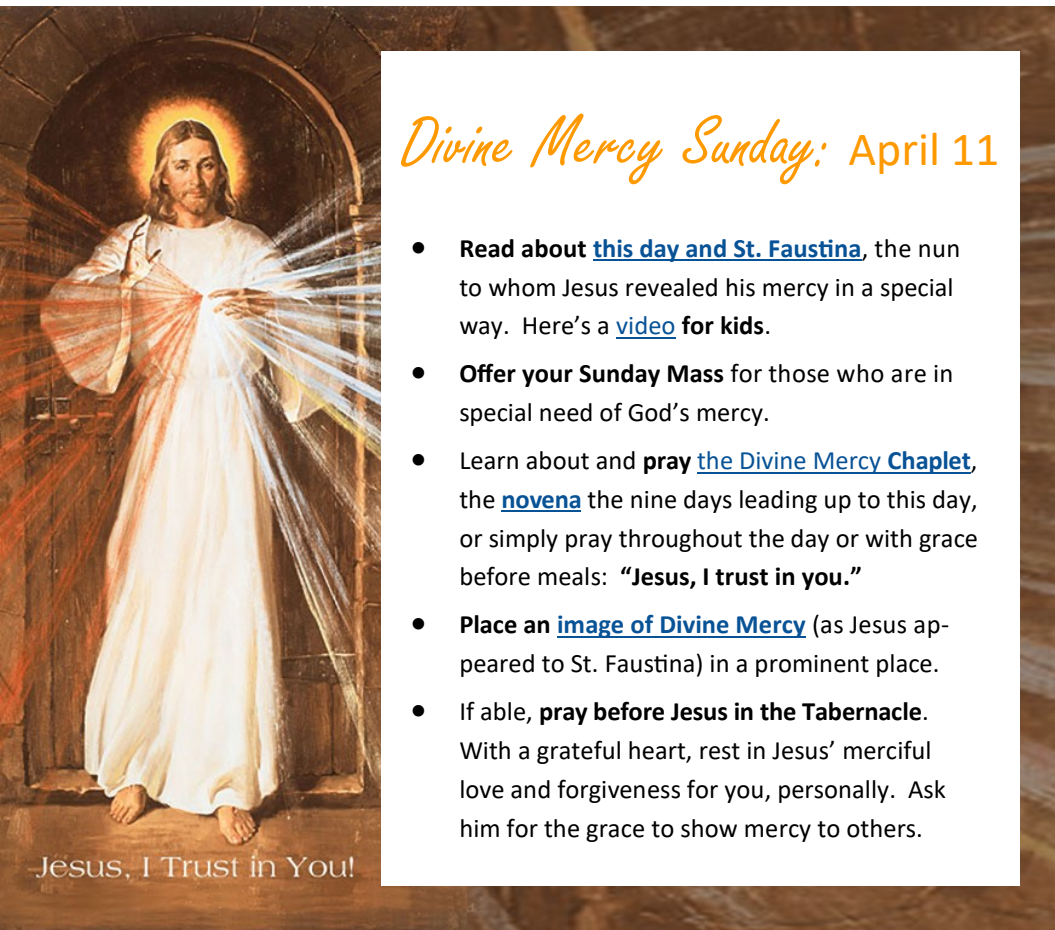
Living the Easter Octave: April 4-11

- **Create and listen to an Easter play-list** of joyful music throughout the week – maybe the Alleluia's are sung out-loud, or maybe it's just music that makes your heart sing "Alleluia!"
- **Visuals:** keep up the Easter décor, spring table linens, colorful eggs, candles, fresh flowers. Put up your favorite image of the Risen Jesus or create an [empty tomb scene](#).
- **Proclaim Easter joy to your neighbors** with a symbol in your front window/door, yard or driveway.



- Pray a [Glorious Mystery of the Rosary](#) daily, or start **praying the Regina Caeli** (the Easter form of the Angelus) at noon every day. (Phone alarms are great for this!)
- Pastors, liturgists, and others at the parish put in a lot of extra time and loving effort during Holy Week and Easter. **Send them some sign of your appreciation.**

- Make a point of **having some special food each day:** a special dinner each night, some extra baking, Easter candy. Or, since Jesus rose in the *morning*, have an octave of your family's favorite breakfasts!
- Read a different [post-Resurrection account](#) at a mealtime or before bed, reflecting on it for that day.



Divine Mercy Sunday: April 11

- Read about [this day and St. Faustina](#), the nun to whom Jesus revealed his mercy in a special way. Here's a [video for kids](#).
- Offer your **Sunday Mass** for those who are in special need of God's mercy.
- Learn about and pray [the Divine Mercy Chaplet](#), the [novena](#) the nine days leading up to this day, or simply pray throughout the day or with grace before meals: **"Jesus, I trust in you."**
- Place an [image of Divine Mercy](#) (as Jesus appeared to St. Faustina) in a prominent place.
- If able, **pray before Jesus in the Tabernacle.** With a grateful heart, rest in Jesus' merciful love and forgiveness for you, personally. Ask him for the grace to show mercy to others.

The Regina Caeli

Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
 alleluia.
 For He whom you did merit to bear,
 alleluia.
 Has risen, as he said,
 alleluia.
 Pray for us to God,
 alleluia.
 Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,
 alleluia.
 For the Lord has truly risen,
 alleluia.

Let us pray:
O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Living the rest of the Season mindfully:

April 12-May 23



- **Plant something in Easter hope** – your flowerbed, vegetable garden, or potted plants – reflecting on the new life and beauty Christ brings.
- As a family, reflect on and choose **which elements of your Lenten prayer and almsgiving you'll continue**. How might they be different to reflect the joy of the Season?
 - Little kids love those Easter egg hunts. With plastic eggs and non-candy snacks (Goldfish crackers work great!), why not have **multiple egg hunts throughout the Season!**
 - **Journal about your own “resurrection” experiences**, times you were “brought back to life” or renewed in notable ways. Spend time thanking and praising God. Share with someone.
 - **Choose an Easter-themed spirituality book** to read this season. Here are some [possibilities](#).
 - **Start every prayer** this Season with an expression of **praise or thanks to God!**
 - **Our daily challenges/sorrows** don't all go away this Season. As they come, imagine the power of the Resurrection moment. **Pray: “O Risen Jesus, I [surrender](#) myself to you. Take care of everything.”**
- **Make each Sunday of the Easter Season celebratory** with a special meal and some family reflection/prayer. (Here are some faith conversation/prayer starters based on each Sunday's Gospel reading.) Schedule fun family re-creation: games in the yard, a trip to the nursery to buy garden plants, a picnic, a hike, etc.
- **Keep a “Joy Board”** – where family members write things/people/events/truths that give them joy. **Choose someone for each week of the Easter season with whom you will share Easter joy:** preparing a meal, an outdoor visit, a call, sending flowers or a note/text/email, etc.
- Traditionally, **many receive Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation** in this Season. **Accompanying them** with: prayer, a card/gift, a call, a subscription to a resource that will bless them in an ongoing way, etc.



The Ascension of Our Lord: May 16

- Participate in **Sunday Mass**. **Read the Scriptural account** of the Ascension ([Acts 1:1-11](#)).
- Weather permitting, **lie on your back and look up at the sky**. Reflect on what it was like for Jesus' friends to watch him go up into heaven.
- This feast reminds us of our **belief in the resurrection of our own bodies** at the end of time. Do something intentional to **care for your body**: a walk or workout, a healthy snack, a nap, a bath.
- In Jesus' absence, his friends hid in fear. **Plan to give someone the comfort of your presence** this week.



Pentecost Sunday: May 23

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you participate in **Sunday Mass** with special joy and vigor. **Read the Scriptural account of Pentecost** ([Acts 2](#)).
- **Learn more about the Holy Spirit.** Here are some resources: [articles](#), videos for [adults](#), [teens](#), and [kids](#) (start at 3 minute mark), [Wild Goose](#) video series, Ascension Press [videos/articles](#).
- **Pray a novena leading up to Pentecost.** (For most dioceses in the U.S., the celebration of the Ascension has shifted to the Sunday before Pentecost. Previously it was *9 days* before Pentecost – *the first novena!* – a time of prayerful waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit.)
- As a family, **design a symbol for each of the seven gifts** (here's a [video](#) about them) **or the 12 fruits of the Holy Spirit**, and write a practical way to live it. Place the images in key places in your house. Explore what [charisms of the Holy Spirit](#) you've been given to serve others.
- **Print a copy of the [Veni Sancte Spiritus](#)**, an ancient prayer to the Holy Spirit. As a family, circle all the titles for the Holy Spirit. Underline all the actions we ask of the Spirit. Talk about how/when you need this help of the Holy Spirit as a family. Pray the prayer together.
- Make a personal or family **chart**. On one side keep an ongoing list of **how Jesus' Good News brings you hope** or makes a difference in your life. On the other side, note **with whom/how God may be calling you to share faith** this "Pentecost Season" – with the courage of the Holy Spirit!



*He is risen!
Alleluia!*