

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION THE LORD



**SUNDAY REFLECTION**

Today is a wonderful opportunity to join the evangelist John in his post-Easter celebration of the Lord's resurrection. Carefully he develops the theme of faith in the resurrection. What is the correct attitude to the resurrection? Did someone steal the body? Did Jesus look the same as He did during His ministry or is there something different about Him? Can we relate to Him exactly as before the resurrection? Can we touch Him and verify the wounds of the historical Jesus? These are the questions raised by the actors in today's reading.

Today we renew our faith in the risen Lord. However, John never actually uses the word 'faith,' a noun, but always 'believing,' a verb. Believing in Jesus is something we do, it is not merely an intellectual assent. So, in the first reading, Peter changes his understanding of membership in

the Church, acknowledging that 'in every nation anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him' (Acts 10:35). This approach to universal salvation and the welcoming of the Gentiles into the Church will cause some initial problems for Peter, but it has to be done; he sees the Church in a different way. The writer of the letter to the Colossians likewise makes it very clear that believing implies concrete actions. He reminds his congregation that they must change their way of life. They must look at life, think about life, and live daily differently than before the resurrection. Now their vision, values, and practice must all be centered on Christ and His way of doing things.

As we continue to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord, let us ask ourselves how our lives have changed because of our acceptance of the resurrection. With Thomas we can say 'My Lord and My God,' but it is not enough. Ours is not a merely-believed-in discipleship. We must change our way of living because the Lord is raised from the dead. Believing means action, accepting the consequences of our decisions, and living differently.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Alleluia! Christ is risen and is victorious over sin and death! We are good stewards of our faith if, like St. Paul, we share this good news whenever and wherever we can.

## **READINGS SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER SUNDAY OF DIVINE MERCY**

**11 APR '21**

**Acts 4:32-35:** The early Church, gathered together, is shown as a foundation for prayer, unity and the sharing of goods for the good of all.

**1 Jn. 5:1-6:** Love of God is revealed in love of one's neighbor.

**Jn. 20:19-31:** The doubting apostle, Thomas, discovers new faith in the risen Christ.

## **EASTER**

The Easter Vigil is the "Mother of All Vigils." Easter Sunday, then, is the greatest of all Sundays, and Easter Time is the most important of all liturgical times. Easter is the celebration of the Lord's resurrection from the dead, culminating in his Ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. There are 50 days of Easter from the first Sunday to Pentecost. It is characterized, above all, by the joy of glorified life and the victory over death expressed most fully in the great resounding cry of the Christian: Alleluia! All faith flows from faith in the resurrection: "If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, is your faith." (1 Cor 15:14)

"What you sow is not brought to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel of wheat, perhaps, or of some other kind;...So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown corruptible; it is raised incorruptible. It is sown dishonorable; it is raised glorious. It is sown weak; it is raised powerful. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual one. So, too, it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being," the last Adam a life-giving spirit. But the spiritual was not first; rather the natural and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, earthly; the second man, from heaven. As was the earthly one, so also are the earthly, and as is the heavenly one, so also are the heavenly. Just as we have borne the image of the earthly one, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one (1 Cor 15:36-37, 42-49).

The octave of Easter comprises the eight days which stretch from the first to the second Sunday. It is a way of prolonging the joy of the initial day. In a sense, every day of the Octave is like a little Sunday.

The word "Easter" comes from Old English, meaning simply the "East." The sun which rises in the East, bringing light, warmth, and hope, is a symbol for the Christian of the rising Christ, who is the true Light of the world. The Paschal Candle is a central symbol of this divine light, which is Christ. It is kept near the ambo throughout Easter Time and lit for all liturgical celebrations.

## **EASTER FACTS**

Many people think that Christmas is the most important day in the Catholic liturgical calendar, but from the earliest days of the Church, Easter has been considered the central Christian feast. As Saint Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:14, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." Without Easter—without the Resurrection of Christ—there would be no Christian Faith. Christ's Resurrection is the proof of His Divinity.

Easter is not only the greatest Christian feast; Easter Sunday symbolizes the fulfillment of our faith as Christians. Through His Death, Christ destroyed our bondage to sin; through His Resurrection, He brought us the promise of new life, both in Heaven and on earth. His own prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven," begins to be fulfilled on Easter Sunday. That is why new converts are traditionally brought into the Church through the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion) at the Easter Vigil service, on Holy Saturday evening. Their baptism parallels Christ's own Death and Resurrection, as they die to sin and rise to new life in the Kingdom of God.

## **How Is Easter the Third Day After Jesus' Death?**

There's still one odd thing, though—if Jesus died on a Friday and rose from the dead on a Sunday, how is Easter the third day after His death? Sunday is only two days after Friday, right? Well, yes and no. Today, we generally count our days that way. But that wasn't always the case (and still isn't, in some cultures). The Church continues the older tradition in Her liturgical calendar. We say, for instance, that Pentecost is 50 days after Easter, even though it is the seventh Sunday after Easter Sunday, and seven times seven is only 49. We get to 50 by including Easter itself. In the same way, when we say that Christ "rose again on the third day," we include Good Friday (the day of His death) as the first day, so Holy Saturday is the second, and Easter Sunday—the day Jesus rose from the dead—is the third.



### **MARY MAGDALENE AND THE EASTER EGG**

According to tradition, after Jesus' Ascension into heaven, the Magdalene—a wealthy woman of some importance—boldly presented herself to the Emperor Tiberius Caesar in Rome to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus Christ, with an egg in hand to illustrate her message.

Holding the egg out to him, she exclaimed for the first time what is now the universal Easter proclamation among Christians, "Christ is risen!"

The emperor, mocking her, said that Jesus had no more risen than the egg in her hand was red. Immediately, the egg turned red as a sign from God to illustrate the truth of her message. The Emperor then heeded her complaints about Pilate condemning an innocent man to death, and had Pilate removed from Jerusalem under imperial displeasure.

Why would Mary Magdalene bring an egg to talk about Jesus with the Roman Emperor?

In another tradition, it is said that Mary Magdalene brought a basket of white boiled eggs with her on Easter morning to the tomb of Jesus—perhaps as a meal for herself and the others as they waited for someone to roll the stone away. When she arrived at the site of the Resurrection, finding the stone already rolled away, she also found that the eggs in her basket had turned into bright shades of color.

Perhaps this is why she brought an egg to the Emperor; did she expect that Jesus would perform a similar miracle for her egg as he had done on that first Easter morning? While we do not know if these stories are true with absolute certainty, we do know that the tradition of handing out red eggs at Easter is one that originated among Christians in Apostolic times. And we often find Mary Magdalene depicted in icons holding a red egg. Moreover, the story fits into the various cultural traditions already surrounding the symbol of the egg.

## THE EASTER EGG TRADITION

For many cultures, even before the time of Christianity, the egg was a symbol of creation, spring, and rebirth. After the resurrection of Christ, the egg took on a new meaning for Christians and became a symbol of new life breaking forth while leaving the empty tomb behind. Perhaps this became even more pronounced due the account of Mary Magdalene. Eggs were what helped people to understand a new theological truth—the resurrection of the dead, and a new religion—Christianity—built around the first Resurrection. As a symbol of Christ's resurrection, the Easter egg then became a symbol for the rebirth of all mankind at the resurrection on the Last Day due to the merits of Jesus Christ. "Easter eggs" were shared with one another as a joyful symbol of Christian hope.

## EASTER EGG DECORATION

Painting boiled Easter eggs is a beloved ancient tradition for Eastern Catholic churches as well as Orthodox. The eggs are often dyed red to represent the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross.

The Easter eggs are then carried to the church in baskets to be blessed by the priest (often with other foods to be eaten for the Easter feast) at the end of the Easter vigil before being distributed to the faithful. Historically, Christians would abstain from eating eggs during a strict Lent, so Easter was the first chance to eat eggs again after a long period of abstinence. The egg represented the sealed Tomb of Christ, and cracking the shell represented Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

In some cultures it is also common to paint wooden Easter eggs and hand them out as gifts to friends and family. You can read more interesting traditions about Christianity and the Easter egg [here](#) and [here](#).

Thus the connection of eggs with Easter and the Resurrection is a historic one in the heart of the Church, and as is always the case with ancient Christian customs, an excellent way to catechize the faithful and celebrate a shared Christian culture with family and friends.



## **RABBITS AND EASTER**

What is the connection between a furry, long eared mammal and the Feast of Christ's Resurrection? Is there a connection? And while we are asking questions how did a rabbit get associated with depositing eggs in baskets and hiding places in our yards?

Well we cannot deny that the Easter Bunny is a symbol of Easter that is popular in western culture, especially with children. According to folklore, the Easter Bunny hides Easter eggs for children to find on Easter morning. However, the association between a rabbit and the resurrection of Jesus Christ appears tenuous at best, and the Easter Bunny has been accused of having pagan origins. But what is the truth?

Rabbits are common and found on every continent except Antarctica. Rabbits are also prolific breeders, especially in the spring when they are most commonly seen interacting with one another. As a result of their fertility, rabbits have long been associated with spring and with new life. Even the Greeks pointed out this connection.

However, the Christian tradition of the Easter Bunny has distinctly Christian origins.

The ancient Greeks thought rabbits could reproduce as virgins. Such a belief persisted until early medieval times when the rabbit became associated with the Virgin Mary, who we know became pregnant without knowing man.

During the medieval period, rabbits began appearing in illuminated manuscripts and paintings where the Virgin Mary was depicted, serving as an allegorical illustration of her virginity. The Easter Bunny was first popularized as a symbol of the season by the German Protestants. It is likely they were the ones to invent the myth of the Easter Bunny for their children. Even in earliest folklore, the Easter Bunny came as a judge, hiding decorated eggs for well-behaved children.

The Easter Bunny followed German immigrants to the American colonies in the 18th century and the folklore spread across the United States.

The notion that the Easter Bunny is a pagan symbol developed in the 19th century. In 1835, Jacob Grimm, the popular collector of fairy tales, suggested that the Easter Bunny came from primitive German pagan traditions. Once Grimm started the rumor, it began to spread, refined to suggest the Easter Bunny comes from the Saxon Goddess Eostre.

However, *there is no direct evidence of a pagan correlation*. The first intimation of a connection arose from Jacob Grimm, and although he was a folklorist, he had no hard evidence other than *his own speculation*.

Conversely, there is considerable documentation that the rabbit was once associated with virginity, the Virgin Mary, and with the season itself, in a Christian context.

As a result, we must conclude, the Easter Bunny is a distinctly Christian symbol, and does not have pagan origins as occasionally claimed by those who despise the popular children's myth.

## **DAILY SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS**

### **OCTAVE OF EASTER**

**5 – 10 APRIL**

### **EASTER MONDAY 5 April**

**Acts 2:14, 22-33:** Peter exercises his prerogative as key-holder, commanding his audience to announce to all the children of Israel Christ's resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit opening the door to the era of the Church through which Christ communicates His word of salvation. At the time of the morning prayer, in light of Christ's resurrection, Peter typologically unlocks the mystery that lay hidden until that moment. Expounding Psalm 16, he demonstrates that everything changes because the glorified Christ, through whom all the promises of God are realized, is now exalted at the right hand of God.

**Mt. 28:8-15:** Matthew recounts two starkly contrasting responses to Christ's resurrection by those who first witnessed it. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce the news to His disciples. On their way they have an encounter with Jesus, who tells them not to be afraid. At the same time as the women were obediently following Jesus' instruction to go and report to His disciples, the guards, in whom the appearance of the angel of the Lord had also induced fear, go to report to the chief priests all that had happened. The Chief Priest and Council fabricate the big lie about the disciples stealing Jesus' body. The large bribe offered meant more to them than the truth of which they were witnesses.

### **EASTER TUESDAY 6 April**

**Acts 2:36-41:** Jesus, the source of Christian faith, is the revelation of the Father's love and of God's plan to give supernatural life through the gift of the Holy Spirit which saves creation from sin. This is explicit in Peter's reply to the assembly's pleading: 'What are we to do, my brothers?' In exercising his Christ-given authority, Peter initiates what the church in the East and the West terms, 'the sacramental economy'. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1076)

**Jn. 20:11-18:** John focuses on representative individuals as typical of the experience of Jesus' first disciples. Today we read of Mary Magdalene's transition from grief and defeat to joy and faith, as she encounters the risen Christ. John is eager to demonstrate the authenticity of this transition. The resurrection is not the product of wishful thinking. On the contrary, Mary Magdalene is so deep in grief that at first she does not recognize Jesus' voice – until He speaks her name. Even then, Mary seems to assume that Jesus' resurrection means that everything will continue as before. However, everything has changed. Christ tells Mary that He is to ascend to their mutual Father and commissions her to be the 'apostle to the apostles'.

### **EASTER WEDNESDAY 7 April**

**Acts 3:1-10:** Peter and John are punctually going up to the Temple at the routine afternoon 'hour of prayer', when they meet an anonymous man of no means with lifelong mobility issues who elides on charity to be placed at a suitable location to beg. Peter identifies with him in his poverty, telling him: 'I have neither silver nor gold'. What he can share is faith in the name of Jesus. That Peter and John stopped and took time to take notice and to offer the right hand of fellowship to this marginalized man will cause a further decisive opportunity for Peter's mission to all Jerusalem. The man joins them in prayer and praise,

strong and in perfect health, to the people's astonishment.

**Lk. 24:13-35:** Jesus' appearance to Cleopas and an unnamed disciple invites us to insert our names into the narrative as we accompany them to Emmaus. Downcast, their human attempts to understand the events that had occurred in Jerusalem are counter-productive. Though they have the women's testimony of His resurrection, Jesus' crucifixion seems to be an insurmountable obstacle between them and the door of faith. But Jesus draws near, joining their conversation, feigning ignorance concerning its content. Jesus patiently chides their unbelief, demonstrating from all the Scriptures beginning with Moses, through the prophets and the Psalms, the mystery that lay hidden in ages past. When we have a Scripture-informed dialogue with Jesus in the liturgy, our eyes, like theirs, will be opened as He stays with us and discloses Himself to us principally in the Eucharist.

#### **EASTER THURSDAY 8 April**

**Acts 3:11-26:** As the cured man clung to the two apostles Peter emphasized that this first healing carried out by a Christian was the result of Jesus' glorification and of faith in His name. As this healing miracle grabs the attention of the crowds, Peter addresses the people in familial terms, unveiling God's plan throughout the sweep of salvation-history with its culmination in Christ's death and resurrection. He urges them that, with repentance, 'the Lord may grant times of refreshment'. Peter concludes by declaring Christ to be the center of all history, announcing the destiny of all things in 'times of universal restoration'.

**Lk. 24:35-48:** As physician and historian, a characteristic of St. Luke's writing style is the occasional realism of his narrative. Readers notice this in his motif of Jesus' post-resurrection fish-eating. There are liturgical, sacramental and Eucharistic overtones here. The first Liturgy of the Word and of the Eucharist come directly from Jesus. Luke cites a range of emotional responses to Jesus' physical presence: firstly, 'they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost.' To consolidate their apostolic witness to the resurrection Jesus invites them to look at His hands and feet. To assuage their fear and amazement, Jesus' asks them for something to eat. In celebrating the Eucharist, the risen Lord is truly in table-fellowship with us.

#### **EASTER FRIDAY 9 April**

**Acts 4:1-12:** The first miracle attesting to Jesus' glorification brings about the first official opposition to the apostles, with overnight detention. A proclamation-opposition-growth pattern is established, as Peter and John are confronted and apprehended. Peter was preaching what goes to the core of the Church's creed from its outset, the general bodily resurrection of the dead in conjunction with Jesus' resurrection. Faced with 'leaders, elders and scribes ... with Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander and all who were of the high priestly family', one would expect the Galilean fisherman to capitulate. On the contrary, 'Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit' insisted that the miracle corroborates their message concerning Jesus and that 'there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'

**Jn. 21:1-14:** The Epilogue to John narrates 'the third time Jesus was revealed to the disciples



after He was raised from the dead.’ Jesus’ commissioning of Peter marks his transition, through reconciliation, from fisherman to Shepherd of God’s flock. Today’s reading recounts the first section of the Epilogue. After an unsuccessful night’s fishing, a stranger on the shore advises Peter and the fishing party to cast out their nets to starboard, assuring them of a catch. The catch alerts the beloved disciple to the stranger’s identity: ‘It is the Lord!’ Peter instinctively clothes himself, jumps into the water to go to shore to be with the Lord. The sole previous setting on which a gathering occurs around a charcoal fire was the occasion of Peter’s denials. But this charcoal fire is different. It is the place to which Jesus invites His disciples to ‘Come and have breakfast’, and ‘took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish.’ He is always with us, but especially so in the Eucharist, even though we do not recognize His presence. All our success are from Him, and ultimately everything is of God’s provision. But this does not negate human endeavor. God invites. He has chosen to await our acceptance of His invitation and to await our freely given love (21:17).

#### **EASTER SATURDAY 10 April**

**Acts 4:13-21:** The populist minded High Council of Jerusalem embark on a damage-limitation exercise. This, despite the miraculous evidence they themselves recognize! Their bribery of the tomb guards to lie about Jesus’ resurrection has failed; now they must face the reality of the fledgling Church. To limit the spread of the Gospel, the Council use intimidation in terms that highlight their recognition that the true source of apostolic power is the name of Jesus. In spite of the danger to themselves, the courage of the Spirit-empowered apostles remains strong and their reply emphatic. Through Jesus, God has established a new authority to attest to the Paschal mystery, Christ’s cross and resurrection: ‘It is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.’

**Mk. 16:9-15:** The companions of Jesus had witnessed His arrest, detention, show-trial, violent torture, and the brutal finality of His bloody death by crucifixion, and the burial of His body in the tomb. It is no surprise that they ‘were mourning and weeping’. Just like us, His companions initially hear indirectly that Jesus has risen from the dead. ‘But later, as the Eleven were at table, He appeared to them and rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they had not believed those who saw Him after He had been raised.’ ‘Later’, we will be at table, and He will come to us in the Eucharist just as He has promised and will also empower us, in our time, to: ‘G into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature’ by our lives.

#### **PRAYER**

##### **Easter Prayer of St. Hippolytus of Rome**

Christ is Risen: The world below lies desolate

Christ is Risen: The spirits of evil are fallen

Christ is Risen: The angels of God are rejoicing

Christ is Risen: The tombs of the dead are empty

Christ is Risen indeed from the dead, the first of the sleepers,

Glory and power are His forever and ever.

(St. Hippolytus {AD 190-236})

### Catholic Prayer for the Easter Virtues

Lord,  
the resurrection of Your Son  
has given us new life and renewed hope.  
Help us to live as new people  
in pursuit of the Christian ideal.  
Grant us wisdom to know what we must do,  
the will to want to do it,  
the courage to undertake it,  
the perseverance to continue to do it,  
and the strength to complete it.

*New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book*

#### ***To you, O blessed Joseph (Ad te, beate Ioseph)***

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our afflictions, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

## **SCHEDULE FOR EASTER WEEK SATURDAY 3 - SUNDAY 11 APRIL**

**SATURDAY 3 APRIL HOLY SATURDAY**

**8:30 A.M. Morning Prayer**

**12 Noon** Blessing of Easter Foods  
**1:00 P.M.** Easter Egg Hunt  
**8:00 P.M.** EASTER VIGIL IN THE HOLY-NIGHT

## **EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD 4 APRIL**

**6:30 A.M.** Sunrise Mass in cemetery garden  
Weather permitting  
**6:30 A.M.** Mass in the church (for those registered)  
**8:30 A.M.** Mass  
**11:00 A.M.** Mass  
**1:00 P.M.** Mass  
Brig Mass

**Monday 5 Apr** Monday Within the Octave of Easter Office Closed  
8:30 a.m. Mass Gloria, Easter Preface I & Eucharistic Prayer I  
6:00 p.m. Meeting

**Tuesday 6 Apr** Tuesday Within the Octave of Easter Office Closed  
8:30 a.m. Mass Gloria, Easter Preface I Eucharistic Prayer I  
6:00 p.m. Meeting

**Wednesday 7 Apr** Wednesday Within the Octave of Easter Office Closed  
8:30 a.m. Mass Gloria, Easter Preface I & Eucharistic Prayer I  
11:00 a.m. Gray's Mass Gloria, Easter Preface I & Eucharistic Prayer I

**Thursday 8 Apr** Thursday Within the Octave of Easter Office Closed  
8:30 a.m. Mass Gloria, Easter Preface I & Eucharistic Prayer I

**Friday 9 Apr** Friday Within the Octave of Easter Office Closed  
8:30 a.m. Mass Gloria, Easter Preface I & Eucharistic Prayer I

**Saturday 10 Apr** Saturday Within the Octave of Easter  
8:30 a.m. Mass Gloria, Easter Preface I & Eucharistic Prayer I  
9:00 – 11:00 a.m. Baptisms  
1:30 – 4:30 p.m. Confession  
5:00 p.m. Vigil Second Sunday of Easter  
Gloria, Creed, Easter Preface I, & Eucharistic Prayer I