

After forty days of Lent the Church asks us to keep **FIFTY DAYS of rejoicing for Eastertide.**

She says “they are to be elevated in **great exultation**, as **one feast day**, or better as **one “Great Sunday”** [St Athanasius].
 These above all others are the days for the singing of the Alleluia.” CB 371.

It is the only Octave we now keep in the Church’s Year - eight days of celebration. No other celebrations can take over one of the days of Easter Week. We have followed the familiar events of Holy Week but they would not make sense unless Christ rose from the dead. Now we need to turn and become familiar with the Lord’s Resurrection appearances that the that Easter Week gospels describe. Later in this series we will offer the Stations of the Resurrection [Via Lucis].

Build on the **focus you created for Holy Week**. Use a gold/white/cream cloth - that Easter candle you made, flowers, a bowl of water to remind us of baptism, a simple cross with no figure [for Jesus is risen] draped with white or gold cloth/ribbon.

Make sure you **sing as many ALLELUIAs as you can** – you had to fast from ALLELUIA in Lent! Make up for it as it is our song of praise to God especially for the Resurrection of Jesus and all it brings. Don’t be shy of proclaiming the central core of our faith! [There is that famous You Tube Hallelujah and Fr Ray Kelly etc!]

Here are some ideas to help make Easter Week a great celebration. The **prayer and the gospel of the Mass** for each day are attached. See how the prayers often speak of Baptism, and new Christians. Just take **a few words from the gospel**. St Ignatius talks about **imagining yourself in the scene** – how would you feel, what would you do, what would you say.

One thing to do – **write out the words spoken - put them on your focus**, change them or add to them each day. When it comes to **the food mentioned** – why not include it in your meal somehow? If you Google “images for” and add the gospel reference you will get pictures of the scene. Check any which can be printed without copyright infringement, and make a collage of the gospels for the week, or just use your iPad screen for each day

As we go through the week note from the gospel - what is said, who speaks, even what is eaten
 How do people see Jesus, now risen, and what does he tell them to do. What gift does the resurrection bring?
 The prayers are valuable for the way they speak about life, baptism, growth, rejoicing.

EASTER	Who’s who	Where	What to add to the focus	Ideas and thoughts
Sunday 1	Mary of Magdala Peter, John	At/in the Tomb The graveclothes	A stone for the tomb Two cloths for the graveclothes	They believe Do we really believe? Say the Creed
Monday	Jesus, the women [The Jewish Guards]	At the Tomb “Greetings” says Jesus	Write “greetings” in all the languages spoken in your home	Go and tell the truth! Do we let other people know we believe = our mission
Tuesday	Mary Jesus	In the garden “Mary!”+ “Rabbuni –Master!”+	Celebrate this in your garden – write out+ the two names for the focus	Our baptism – do we treasure our baptismal name Our mission
Wednesday	Two disciples Jesus	The road to Emmaus They recognise him in the breaking of bread	Celebrate at a meal time. Add a plate with broken bread to the focus	Eucharist – especially now as we cannot celebrate together What are we missing?
Thursday	Disciples Jesus	The Upper Room? He’s no ghost. “Have you anything to eat?”	Have fish to eat! Add the shape of a fish to the focus – a secret sign used for the first Christians*	“Peace be with you “ Called to witness to repentance for the forgiveness of sins
Friday	Disciples Jesus	Miraculous fish catch of fish. Jesus eats fish and bread	Something to remind you of the fishing net	Think of this in the morning as he invites them to have breakfast
Saturday	Mark summarises all the meetings	Everywhere	A globe or a world map	Go tell the world – how do we help the Church’s mission
Sunday 2	Disciples Jesus, Thomas	The Upper room?	Nails and a “spear” – for Jesus’ wounds – they can be painted gold!	Faith – Peace – the Spirit Forgiveness = all gifts of the risen Lord

*Fish – in Greek = ICHTHUS. The letters are the first letters of five Greek words : Iesous [=Jesus] Christos [= anointed] Theou [=God's] uios [= Son] sōtēr =Saviour] = Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Saviour.”

EASTER SUNDAY

Collect

O God, who on this day, through your Only Begotten Son, have conquered death and unlocked for us the path to eternity, grant, we pray, that we who keep the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit, rise up in the light of life.

Gospel - John 20:1-9 *He must rise from the dead*

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb' she said 'and we don't know where they have put him.' So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

MONDAY

Collect

O God, who give constant increase to your Church by new offspring, grant that your servants may hold fast in their lives to the Sacrament they have received in faith.

Gospel - Matthew 28:8-15 *Tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee: they will see me there*

Filled with awe and great joy the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples. And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. 'Greetings' he said. And the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there.'

While they were on their way, some of the guard went off into the city to tell the chief priests all that had happened. These held a meeting with the elders and, after some discussion, handed a considerable sum of money to the soldiers with these instructions, 'This is what you must say, "His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep." And should the governor come to hear of this, we undertake to put things right with him ourselves and to see that you do not get into trouble.' The soldiers took the money and carried out their instructions, and to this day that is the story among the Jews.

TUESDAY

Collect

O God, who have bestowed on us paschal remedies, endow your people with heavenly gifts, so that, possessed of perfect freedom, they may rejoice in heaven over what gladdens them now on earth.

Gospel - John 20:11-18 *'I have seen the Lord and he has spoken to me'*

Mary stayed outside near the tomb, weeping. Then, still weeping, she stooped to look inside, and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head, the other at the feet. They said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' 'They have taken my Lord away' she replied 'and I don't know where they have put him.' As she said this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, though she did not recognise him. Jesus said, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him.' Jesus said, 'Mary!' She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!' – which means Master. Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' So Mary of Magdala went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her.

WEDNESDAY

Collect

O God, who gladden us year by year with the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection, graciously grant, that, by celebrating these present festivities, we may merit through them to reach eternal joys.

Gospel - Luke 24:13-35 *They recognised him at the breaking of bread*

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?' They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

THURSDAY

Collect

O God, who have united the many nations in confessing your name, grant that those reborn in the font of Baptism may be one in the faith of their hearts and the homage of their deeds.

Gospel - Luke 24:35-48 *It is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead*

The disciples told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread. They were still talking about all this when Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you!' In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, 'Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have.' And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet. Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumbfounded; so he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes. Then he told them, 'This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms has to be fulfilled.' He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'So you see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.'

FRIDAY

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, who gave us the Paschal Mystery in the covenant you established for reconciling the human race, so dispose our minds, we pray, that what we celebrate by professing the faith we may express in deeds.

Gospel - John 21:1-14 *Jesus stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish*
Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias, and it happened like this: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said, 'I'm going fishing.' They replied, 'We'll come with you.' They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night. It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, 'Have you caught anything, friends?' And when they answered, 'No', he said, 'Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something.' So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord.' At these words 'It is the Lord', Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak round him and jumped into the water. The other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land. As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. Jesus said, 'Bring some of the fish you have just caught.' Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?'; they knew quite well it was the Lord. Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after rising from the dead.

SATURDAY

Collect

O God, who by the abundance of your grace give increase to the peoples who believe in you,
look with favour on those you have chosen
and clothe with blessed immortality those reborn through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Gospel - Mark 16:9-15

Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News

Having risen in the morning on the first day of the week, Jesus appeared first to Mary of Magdala from whom he had cast out seven devils. She then went to those who had been his companions, and who were mourning and in tears, and told them. But they did not believe her when they heard her say that he was alive and that she had seen him. After this, he showed himself under another form to two of them as they were on their way into the country. These went back and told the others, who did not believe them either. Lastly, he showed himself to the Eleven themselves while they were at table. He reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy, because they had refused to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. And he said to them, 'Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation.'

SECOND [LOW] SUNDAY of EASTER

Collect

God of everlasting mercy,
who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own,
increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed,
that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed,
by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed.

Gospel - John 20:19-31

Eight days later, Jesus came again and stood among them

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you', and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

After saying this he breathed on them and said: 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.'

Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord', he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus said to him: 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.' There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.