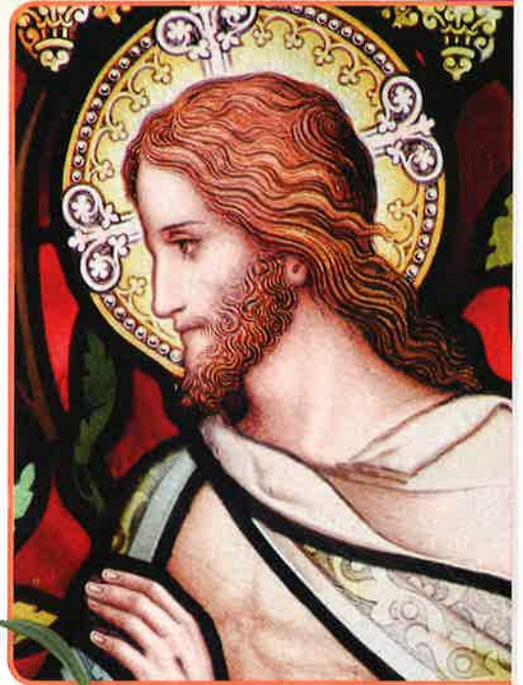


Celebrating Easter

The season in the Church's liturgical year when we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus is **Easter**. All the sadness of Jesus' Death on the cross is washed away as we welcome the risen Christ into our lives. The season of Lent ends as we rejoice and sing "Alleluia! Jesus has risen from the dead."

The Easter season begins on Holy Saturday with the Easter Vigil and ends 50 days later on Pentecost Sunday. During this season we also celebrate Jesus' Ascension into Heaven.

The word *Easter* has its roots in ancient times. Many believe that it relates to springtime celebrations and the beginning of new life. Today, when we hear the word, we think of Jesus' Resurrection. Every spring we joyfully celebrate Jesus' victory over death and the gift of new life that it breathes into us.



Prayer

*Dear Jesus, thank you for dying for our sins.
Help me share your love and peace with
everyone I meet.*

Our Mission During Easter

We have a **mission** during the Easter season. A mission is a special job given to a person to complete. After Jesus rose from the dead, he spent time with his disciples. In John 21:17 Jesus says to Simon Peter, "Feed my sheep." Jesus tells Peter to serve and care for us, just as a shepherd tends to his sheep. Jesus also calls us. Our mission is to love and serve others.

How can you answer the call? There are many ways to reach out in your own community. Complete each sentence below to tell how you can care for and serve others.

In my school I can _____

At the local nursing home or hospital, I can _____

In my own neighborhood, I can _____

My Mission

How can you be faithful to your mission? You can use the unique talents that God has given you. List your talents below and tell how you can use them to fulfill your mission to love and serve others.



Reading God's Word

For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve . . .

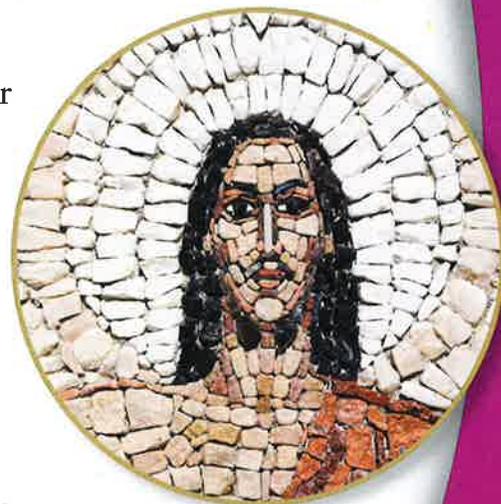
Mark 10:45

Mass During Easter

The Easter season celebrates Jesus' Resurrection, his Ascension into Heaven, and Pentecost. At Mass we gather as a community and hear all that Jesus said and did. At the end of Mass, we hear "Go forth, the Mass has ended." Now that Jesus has risen and returned to Heaven, we think about how we can carry on his work here on earth.

What We Experience

When you look around your church during the Easter season, you'll notice white altar linens and vestments, white Easter lilies, and bouquets of spring flowers decorating the sanctuary. The blooms are symbols of new life. White, the season's liturgical color, represents joy and victory. The color, beauty, and joy that fill your church during the Easter season celebrate the risen Christ.



Stone mosaic of the resurrected Jesus

Serve the Lord and Others

As you leave church, pick up a bulletin. Take a few minutes to read through it and discover how members of your parish community are answering God's call to serve. Perhaps several members held a clothing drive for children in another country, or another group organized a retreat for young people. Think about a service project you participated in recently. Write about it in the space below.



Did You Know?

The feast of the Ascension is celebrated 40 days after Easter Sunday, or in some places on the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

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Faith Summary

The Easter season begins on Holy Saturday when we remember Jesus' Resurrection. The season continues through the feast of the Ascension, when Jesus ascended into Heaven, and then ends on Pentecost, when God sent the Holy Spirit to Jesus' disciples. Filled with joy and praise, our Church celebrates the risen Christ. It is a time for us to think about our mission to serve others.

Words I Learned

Easter mission

Ways of Being Like Jesus

Jesus gave without expecting anything in return.

Do a nice deed for someone without expecting a "thank-you" in return.



Prayer

Dear God, thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus. Help us to serve others as he did—with love.



With My Family

Activity When you go to Mass during Easter, look around your church for decorations described on page 149. Talk about what you see.

Faith on the Go Ask one another: *What do you think might be your mission of service?*

Family Prayer During the Easter season, invite family members to pray together for the president, congressional representatives, the mayor, and other civic officials. Ask God to be with them and guide their hearts and actions as they serve the people they represent.