

LITURGY BYTES

The Great 50 Days!



The great 50 days begin with our celebration of Easter and run until Pentecost. It actually is celebrated as one long feast. This is similar to the Triduum: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday which consists of one liturgy that spans three days. Let us also remember that Easter is not over on Easter Monday. It takes 50 days to celebrate Easter. All of the Sundays of the Easter season are part of the Easter story. We call these feasts "solemnities." Two significant feasts during the Easter season are the Ascension which is 40 days after Easter, and at the end of the Easter season is the great feast of Pentecost which is the coming of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the Church. There are various elements and themes of the Easter season. The Easter Vigil is the primary and principal Mass of the Easter celebration. However, on Easter Sunday itself we look back at the Vigil, renew our baptismal promises, and truly experience a joyful celebration of praise and thanks for Christ's death and resurrection.

The Scripture readings for the season of Easter are all from the New Testament or Christian Scriptures. The first reading is from the Acts of the Apostles, which is about the first emerging Christian community that was charged with spreading the Good News. During the Easter season we hear the stories of Jesus' post resurrection appearances: Jesus' appearance to the Apostles, the doubting Thomas story, the road to Emmaus and Jesus' appearance at the Sea of Tiberius. Also, we hear the famous encounter with Peter and Jesus' question to him, "Do you love me?," as well as Jesus' command to Peter to feed his sheep. The pronouncement by Jesus that he is the Good Shepherd and that he is the vine, and his disciples are the branches is also heard. Finally, Jesus tells his disciples that he will send the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, to continue his presence on earth. These are all familiar accounts but should be heard anew each year.

These great 50 days are also a special time for the "new" Catholics of our parish. They are invited to uncover the mysteries of our faith, referred to as mystagogy, during this fascinating time. Next week, we will examine all that this time holds.

Have a blessed, joy-filled week ahead! ~ *Michele Hall*