

# LITURGY BYTES

## *The Great 50 Days!*



Isn't it exciting and so joyful every year when we finally get to Easter? I am sure the first disciples felt that way with Christ's Resurrection, too. It is also the same joy you see on the faces of the newly baptized at the Easter Vigil. This year I saw that same radiant joy, via pictures on Facebook, of a young man I knew from my grandson's hockey team who was received into the Church this year. It is a joy that cannot be contained in just a moment. That is why from about the third century, the Church let Easter last into a 50-day season from Easter Sunday to Pentecost.

Our ancestors found great symbolic meaning in these 50 days of Easter, for example, 50 days in seven weeks—a week of weeks plus one day. That extra day was the Eighth Day, the same name they gave to Sunday—the day of resurrection, the day that symbolized eternity. It is not just the start of a new seven-day week but the beginning of a whole new creation. Fifty days are also just about one-seventh of the entire year, so these 50 days hold the same relationship to the year as Sunday does to the week. That is why the 50 days of Easter are known as the Great Sunday of the entire year.

While 50 days of immense joy seem hard for us to sustain today, the season still has meaning. It is the time when we are meant to experience what it means when we say Christ is risen. It is the season when we hear and ponder the beginnings of our Church, the gifts of the Spirit, and the meaning and mission of discipleship, on what joining in the Eucharist commits us to be and do. Eventually we do move out of this celebratory mood and move on. However, let us try to live out what we have celebrated *in all moments of our lives*. Let us keep wishing everyone: **HAPPY EASTER!**

Have a blessed, safe, and healthy week! ~~~ *Michele Hall*