

# St. John's Newsletter



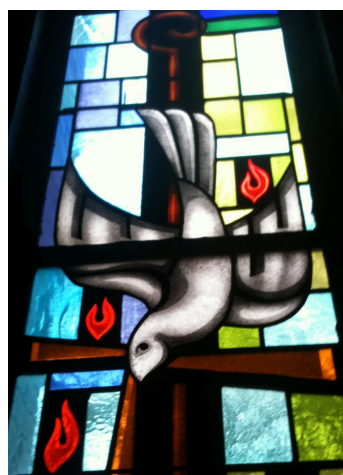
## Celebrate Eastertide

### *The 50 days of Easter*

We have Lent – 40 days of preparation with fasting, almsgiving and prayer. Then we experience Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday and ending with the sacred Triduum – Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday which culminates with Easter celebrating the Resurrection of our Lord.

Easter Sunday is a celebration with joy and fun things like Easter baskets, candy and bunnies. But the Resurrection brings Catholics so much joy that we can't celebrate enough in just one day. **Eastertide** begins on Resurrection Sunday and ends with Pentecost Sunday. The 50 days of Eastertide is a time for celebration and prayer. It is the time between the resurrection and Pentecost when the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles in the upper room filling them with the grace, faith and courage that spread the Catholic Faith throughout the world.

The first eight days of Eastertide, beginning with Easter Sunday, is the octave of Easter. Each octave day is a solemnity, the highest ranking feast in the church, and we hear those vivid accounts of that first Easter. During the 50 days, the church helps us to unlock the mysteries and miracles of Easter. The last Sunday of the octave was, for centuries, called Low Sunday to differentiate it from the glories of Easter Sunday. Today, the octave ends with **Divine Mercy** Sunday. Pope St. John Paul II introduced this feast into the Church calendar during the canonization of St. Faustina Kowalska in April 2000. Often, this celebration takes place on Sunday afternoon and focuses us on the divine mercy of God, as reflected through the paschal mysteries and in our lives. The church offers us a plenary indulgence if we take part in these Divine Mercy devotions, have gone to confession, received Communion and prayed for the intentions of the Holy Father the world.



First Communion for children is also often connected to Eastertide. From Holy Saturday through the Saturday after Pentecost, the church honors the Blessed Mother with the “Regina Coeli” (Queen of Heaven) instead of the Angelus. We recite the Regina Coeli while standing during prayers at 6 a.m., noon and 6 p.m.

Forty days into the season, the church commemorates the feast of the **Ascension**. Jesus returns to the Father. St. Thomas Aquinas explains that “[Christ] prepared the way for our ascent into heaven, according to His own saying: “I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2) . . . For since He is our Head the members must follow whither the Head has gone: hence He said: “That where I am, you also may be” (John 14:3).

After the Ascension is another period of preparation, praying, readying our hearts for the great feast of **Pentecost**. This day commemorates Jesus sending the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, just as he said he would. With the celebration of Pentecost, a ceremony ranked by the church only behind Easter and Christmas, we will return to Ordinary Time. Even as we move to Ordinary time, the joy of Easter lives in us.

Sources:  
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<https://catholicreview.org/signs-and-themes-of-eastertide/>  
<https://stpaulcenter.com/posts/the-deeper-meaning-of-christs-ascension>