

THE EASTER SEASON

The Easter Triduum is the most solemn period in our liturgical calendar. The season of Lent concluded on Holy Thursday and the Triduum began on Holy Thursday evening with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Easter Sunday marks the end of the Triduum but is also the beginning of the Easter Season. That is why this Sunday is called the Second Sunday of Easter and not the first Sunday of the Easter Season.

Our Easter Season extends from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. This period of seven weeks or fifty days has its origin in the Acts of the Apostles (2:1-11) which describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the Jewish feast of Weeks (Shavuot). That feast was also known by the Greek name "Pentecost" because it was celebrated fifty days after the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread.

The first week of the Easter season, the Octave of Easter, is a special time of rejoicing and is considered so important that it takes precedence over all other feasts. An example this year is the feast of the Annunciation of the Lord. Because this year the feast (25 March) fell on Passion Sunday, the feast has been moved to the first available date after the Octave of Easter. Therefore, this year we will celebrate the Annunciation of the Lord on Monday 9 April.

In fact, the whole of the Easter Season is celebrated as an extended time of rejoicing. "Alleluia" is the Easter acclamation and is added to many prayers. The Easter Candle remains near the altar until the evening of Pentecost Sunday as an image of the risen Lord and it is lit during all Masses throughout the season. To highlight the festive nature of the season there is also an ancient prohibition against fasting and kneeling during the Easter Season

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