

This year, **Easter is Sunday April 5**. It is also the start of the Eastertide or the 50 day liturgical season celebrating the joy of the Christian life.

What is Easter?

Easter Sunday is the most important day on the liturgical calendar. It is the day that Jesus has risen from the dead and has conquered death. Easter is more than a day. It is a 50 day season culminating in Jesus' Ascension to the Father and sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church. The **octave** of Easter comprises the first eight days of Easter which stretches from the first to the second Sunday. Like Christmas, the joy of Easter cannot be contained to just one day. The season of Easter is characterized, above all, by the joy of glorified life and the victory over death expressed most fully in the great resounding cry of the Christian: Alleluia! All faith flows from faith in the resurrection: "If Christ has not been raised, then empty is our preaching; empty, too, is your faith." (1 Cor 15:14)

Divine Mercy Sunday

The second Sunday of Easter is now called Divine Mercy Sunday. Instituted by St. John Paul II, the feast commemorates the revelations to St. Faustina Kowalska from Jesus that invites us to trust in the Divine Mercy of Jesus. The [Gospel on Divine Mercy Sunday](#) connects the forgiveness of Jesus with the peace of Christ. [The Divine Mercy image](#) of red and white rays flowing from the side of Jesus is symbolic of the charity, forgiveness and love of God, referred to as the "Fountain of Mercy".

The Ascension of the Lord

Forty days after Easter we celebrate Jesus' Ascension into heaven where his glorified body enters the Father's presence. Preparing a place for us. Jesus is not leaving us but moving "to higher ground" to be present with all of us for eternity. Although traditionally celebrated as "[Ascension Thursday](#)," many dioceses (Los Angeles) move the feast to the seventh Sunday of Easter.

Pentecost

Culminating the Easter Season is Pentecost, sometimes referred to as the "birthday of the Church." As the Apostles huddled in fear in the Upper Room, the Holy Spirit descended upon them, providing the courage to boldly proclaim the Gospel to all nations. The Holy Spirit continues to animate the Catholic Church to proclaim the truth of Christ and to care for the poor.

Confirmation and Pentecost

High School students in Confirmation classes usually receive the Sacrament during the Easter Season around Pentecost. Just like the Apostles at Pentecost, the Sacrament of Confirmation confirms, strengthens, and seals the Gifts of the Holy Spirit we received at Baptism. These gifts described in [Isaiah 11: 2-3](#) (wisdom, understanding, counsel (right judgement), fortitude (courage), knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord (wonder and awe)) help us to live the Christian life God intended. Follow the links below to learn more about the [Gifts of the Holy Spirit](#) and the seven [Sacraments of the Catholic Church](#). If you are in need of any of the Sacraments, contact your parish and learn about the [Order of Christian Initiation of Adults](#).