



## Thoughtful Moments

### Why does Easter matter?

Jesus died so that we might live. In fact, He died so that we might live forever. If we truly believe in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, that belief must cause us to live differently. Easter gives us confidence that the darkness in our past can be forgiven, our present has meaning, and we can have hope for the future. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in human history.



### Come together in silence.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta said, "We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence." Once a week, turn off the television, computers, video games and telephones for fifteen minutes. Sit in silence together and listen for God's voice.

*"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but (H)im who sent me"* (Mark 9:37).



## Live with Easter joy throughout the year

The Church gives us a whole season to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ on Easter, ending on Pentecost (May 28). Here are five ways to spread Easter joy beyond the season:

**Praise God daily together.** Christ's Resurrection is a source of hope. Without it, getting to Heaven would be impossible for us. Offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving together every day.

**Celebrate our new life.** Plant an indoor Easter garden that you can tend all year. Point out new leaves, blossoms, or shoots when they appear, and remember that Easter brings us all new life.

**"Tell me a story."** Jesus told marvelous stories to help us understand God's love for us. Add

Jesus' stories to your regular bedtime story selection and help children fall asleep with sweet dreams of God's love.

**Fast before the feast.** The pain of Good Friday makes the joy at Easter more intense. Observe every Friday as a day of penance. For example, in addition to abstaining from meat, consider making Friday night a no-dessert or a no-computer game night. Then, on Sunday, treat yourselves to whatever

you gave up.

**Celebrate Easter every week.** At every Mass, we receive the Resurrected Christ. He is as present to us as He was to Mary Magdalene outside the tomb. Don't miss a chance to celebrate "Little Easter" every Sunday.



## Why Do Catholics Do That ?

## Why are roses associated with Mary?

For centuries, Our Lady has been associated with roses, traditionally considered the "queen" of flowers in Europe and the Middle East for their beauty, nobility, delicacy, and fragrance. They have also been linked to royalty. In apparitions,



Mary has appeared with roses at Lourdes, Guadalupe, and La Salette. One of her titles is "Mystical Rose." This connection was so strong, people compared praying sets of Hail Marys to a "wreath of roses," called a "rosarium"—now known as the Rosary.

## Helping children encounter the Holy Spirit

At the Last Supper, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, who would remain with us to comfort, guide, and teach us (John 14:16, 26). Encourage children to:

**Accept His gifts:** Knowledge to know right from wrong, fortitude to stand up and be strong, understanding to follow God's way, piety to worship and pray, counsel to enlighten and guide, wisdom to feel God's presence, fear of the Lord to always be awed by the mighty wonders of our God.



**Listen for His voice:** Even when "the still small voice" (1 Kings 19:12) reveals our wrongdoing, the Holy Spirit gently urges us back to the right path. Teach children to rely on Him for inspiration and guidance.

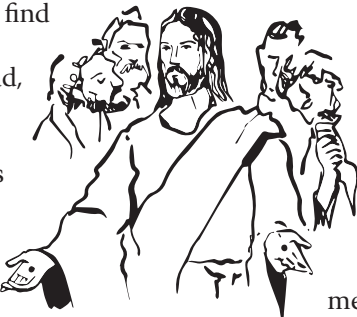
**Asking Him to reveal God's love:** God pours out His love to us through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) and makes us His beloved children (Romans 8:15-16). When we accept this gift, we're empowered to extend it to others. Every day, pray together for your children to receive His love and grace.

### Scripture LESSON

### John 20:19-23, God's transforming mercy

In this Gospel reading, the Apostles spent their first Easter Sunday fearfully hiding in a locked room. They were terrified the Romans would find them and execute them for being Jesus' students. Instead, Jesus appeared to them in glory and spoke words of peace. He showed them His wounds as "the living proof" of His Resurrection. He was alive!

That night, Jesus created the Sacrament of Penance, "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained," (John 20:23). He knew we would need to hear the words of forgiveness. Having authority to forgive sins in His name,



the Apostles and their successors could continue Jesus' work after he returned to Heaven.

**What can parents do?** Jesus appeared to His Apostles in their darkest moments and gave them strength, peace, and grace to move forward. Tell children God doesn't wait for us to mess up, but instead prefers to keep us close.

Teach them that when they fall into sin, don't waste time "hiding" from Jesus. Instead, seek Him out in Confession and celebrate His forgiveness.

### Parent TALK

Having younger siblings prepared me for my two noisy, active children. But I wasn't prepared for constant

bickering and tattling. It seems as if I settle an argument every ten minutes.

One day, Fr. Mike Dobbins came to dinner. The children were on their best behavior until they went to the next room to play. The screams and tattling made adult conversation impossible.

Father finally said, as the oldest of a large family, it looked like our children didn't know how to settle their own fights because I always settle them. Once I stop, he predicted things would calm down.

The next day, I told the children that if they fought, they needed to ask, "What would Jesus do?" and find a solution. Otherwise, they would both get sent to their rooms no matter who started it. Sure enough, within a few days they learned to solve their own disputes.



### Feasts & Celebrations

**May 13 – St. Mary Mazzarello (1881).** Born near Genoa, Italy, Mary Domenica and a friend taught poor girls to work as dressmakers and to love God. Inspired by a vision, she worked with St. John Bosco to found the Salesian Sisters.

**May 14 – St. Matthias the Apostle (1st century).** He was chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot, since Matthias had accompanied Jesus from the beginning. He spent his life preaching the Good News until his martyrdom.

**May 18 - Ascension of the Lord (1st century).** This solemnity marks the completion of Jesus' mission of salvation and His triumphant entry into Heaven. *Note: In many dioceses, observance of Ascension has been moved to the following Sunday.*

**May 31 – The Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (1st century).** Following the news from the angel, Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth, to share gladness at being favored by God. Upon hearing Mary's greeting, John the Baptist leapt for joy in Elizabeth's womb. The Hail Mary includes Elizabeth's address to Mary.



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