

Easter: Feast and Season

I've noted the past couple of weeks how the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection is so "big" that we take three days to celebrate it. Actually, even three days aren't long enough, so we take fifty more days to celebrate the mystery of the resurrection, and the life of the Church born from it. Just as the three celebrations of the Triduum are really but one celebration, so too the fifty days of the Easter Season as one feast, one "great Sunday" as they have been traditionally called. At the forefront of our prayer at this time is the gift of Baptism, celebrated by those newly received into the Church on Holy Saturday, and renewed by the "old timers" at all the Masses on Easter Sunday, and in the Rite of Sprinkling with holy water throughout the Season. It is a time to awaken and explore ever more deeply our experience and memory of God's presence in our lives. The Easter Season leads up to and concludes on the feast of Pentecost, which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples fifty days after Easter Sunday. (In St. John's gospel the giving of the Holy Spirit by Jesus to the disciples takes place on the same day as the Resurrection, *on the evening of that first day of the week*, not at a later date.) Our Christian feast of Pentecost is historically and symbolically related to a Jewish festival which commemorates God's giving the Laws to Moses on Mt. Sinai 50 days after the Hebrews' escape from Egypt, or 50 days after Passover. Our Christian religion sees Jesus' death and resurrection, and the gift of the Holy Spirit as giving us a new law, the law of love by which we too are to lay down our lives for others.

Please let us know what else about our faith tradition you'd like to find out more about.
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