



What's What

A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.

Easter

Date of Easter

Early in Christianity a controversy arose over setting the date of [Easter]. Some, called the *Quartodecimans* (Latin, "fourteenth") claimed that it should be celebrated annually on the precise date of Jesus' historical Passover: the 14th of Nisan (first day of the full moon that followed the spring equinox), usually a weekday. Others insisted that it always be a Sunday, because Christ was raised from the dead on the first day of the week. This controversy was a high priority on the agenda at the Council of Nicaea called by Emperor Constantine in 325. The decision was that it be observed on the Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. In the West, only the Celtic church in Britain and Ireland refused to accept the date until 664 because of their own Celtic calendar. Easter can

occur on any Sunday from March 23 to April 25...

Religious traditions associated with Easter are not all Christian in origin, but most have received a Christian interpretation over the centuries...

New Easter Clothes

Wearing new Easter clothes may be traced to the new white robes in which the newly baptized at the Easter Vigil were clothed. They are also symbolic of the newness of resurrection. This symbolism has been lost for most. The practice, still evident today, is probably associated more with the change of seasons along with a desire to look one's best at Easter church services. ...

Easter Parade

During the Middle Ages in Europe, people in their new Easter clothes would take a long walk after Easter Mass.

This was a kind of procession preceded by a crucifix or the Easter Candle. This tradition was condemned by Protestant reformers. Even though its original meaning was lost, the tradition evolved into the Easter parade. It is still popular in many cities in the United States...

Easter Lamb

The sacrificed lamb was the key symbol of the Passover Seder. It continued as a symbol of Jesus, the Lamb of God, slain and raised from the dead to gain freedom for all from the slavery of sin and spiritual ignorance. The Easter Lamb became an important symbol in Christian art. It also became popular to include the symbol among Easter decorations and to bake Easter breads and cakes in the shape of a lamb...

Easter Eggs

... In ancient Egypt and Persia friends exchanged decorated eggs at the spring equinox, the beginning of their new year... Christians of the Near East adopted this tradition, and the Easter egg became a religious symbol. It represented the tomb from which Jesus came forth to new life. Because eggs were at one time forbidden by the church's lenten discipline of fasting and abstinence, they were a precious Easter food...

Easter Bunnies

Little children are usually told that the Easter eggs are brought by the Easter Bunny. Rabbits are part of pre-Christian fertility symbolism because of their reputation to reproduce rapidly. Their association with Easter eggs goes back several hundred years to vague legends in Germany. There the custom of mak-

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Things to talk about:

- What is one of your favorite Easter memories?
- How have you encountered the Risen Jesus in your own life?
- What does Christ's resurrection mean to your faith?
- How do you bear witness for Christ to others

ing candy rabbits also originated. The Easter Bunny has never had a religious meaning.

Easter Lilies

Easter lilies did not exist in North America until about 100 years ago. The white trumpet lily, which blooms naturally in springtime, was introduced here from Bermuda by Mrs. Thomas P Sargent. The popular name "Easter lilies" comes from the fact that they bloom around Eastertime. They have become associated with Easter as much as poinsettias are with Christmas. In early Christian art the lily is a symbol of purity because of its delicacy of form and its whiteness. For the same reason it serves well as a symbol of resurrection.

Catholic Customs & Traditions,
Greg Dues, 2000, 23rd Pub

The Easter Proclamation (Exultet)

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation around God's throne!
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Savior shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's people!...



Easter Homily by St. John Chrysostom

Let all pious men and all lovers of God rejoice in the splendor of this feast; let the wise servants blissfully enter into the joy of their Lord; let those who have borne the burden of Lent now receive their pay, and those who have toiled since the first hour, let them now receive their due reward; let any who came after the third hour be grateful to join in the feast, and those who may have come after the sixth, let them not be afraid of being too late; for the Lord is gracious and He receives the last even as the first. He gives rest to him who comes on the eleventh hour as well as to him who has toiled since the first: yes, He has pity on the last and He serves the first; He rewards the one and praises the effort.

Come you all: enter into the joy of your Lord. You the first and you the last, receive alike your reward; you rich and you poor, dance together; you sober and you weaklings, celebrate the day; you who have kept the fast and you who have not, rejoice today. The table is richly loaded: enjoy its royal banquet. The calf is a fatted one: let no one go away hungry. All of you enjoy the banquet of faith; all of you receive the riches of his good-

ness. Let no one grieve over his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed; let no one weep over his sins, for pardon has shone from the grave; let no one fear death, for the death of our Savior has set us free: He has destroyed it by enduring it, He has despoiled Hades by going down into its kingdom, He has angered it by allowing it to taste of his flesh.

When Isaiah foresaw all this, he cried out: "O Hades, you have been angered by encountering Him in the nether world." Hades is angered because frustrated, it is angered because it has been mocked, it is angered because it has been destroyed, it is angered because it has been reduced to naught, it is angered because it is now captive. It seized a body, and, lo! it encountered heaven; it seized the visible, and was overcome by the invisible.

O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are abolished. Christ is risen and the demons are cast down. Christ is risen and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen and life is freed. Christ is risen

and the tomb is emptied of the dead: for Christ, being risen from the dead, has become the Leader and Reviver of those who had fallen asleep. To Him be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

John Chrysostom (c.347-407) was born at Antioch and studied under Diodore of Tarsus, the leader of the Antiochene school of theology. After a period of great austerity as a hermit, he returned to Antioch where he was ordained deacon in 381 and priest in 386.

From 386 to 397 it was his duty to preach in the principal church of the city, and his best homilies, which earned him the title "Chrysostomos" or "the golden-mouthed," were preached at this time.

In 397 Chrysostom became patriarch of Constantinople, where his efforts to reform the court, clergy, and people led to his exile in 404 and finally to his death from the hardships imposed on him.

Chrysostom stressed the divinity of Christ against the Arians and his full humanity against the Apollinarians, but he had no speculative bent. He was above all a pastor of souls, and was one of the most attractive personalities of the early Church.

Connections to Doctrine & Tradition

- Jesus Christ redeems the world, as revealed in his life, death, and Resurrection (NDC 28)
- Easter is the feast of feasts, the focal point of the Church year (CCC 638-658, 1169-1171)
- Primarily in and through the Paschal mystery, God expresses the divine desire for our salvation (DV 7; CCC 74), liberates and glorifies us (CCC 2084, 2012), and satisfies our desire for happiness (CCC 1718.)

CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; CIC: *Code of Canon Law*; NDC: *National Directory for Catechesis*; DV: *Dei Verbum*. These documents can be found online at www.vatican.va or www.usccb.org.

Want to know more?

Would you like to know more about almsgiving? Check out the following books or websites for more information:

- [Catholic Customs & Traditions](#), Greg Dues, Twenty-Third Publications, 2000
- [United States Catholic Catechism for Adults](#), United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006
- <http://www.americancatholic.org>

These are just suggestions. In providing these we assume no responsibility for, nor do we necessarily endorse these books or websites, their content, or their sponsoring organizations.

"What's What" is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement [Draft]:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.