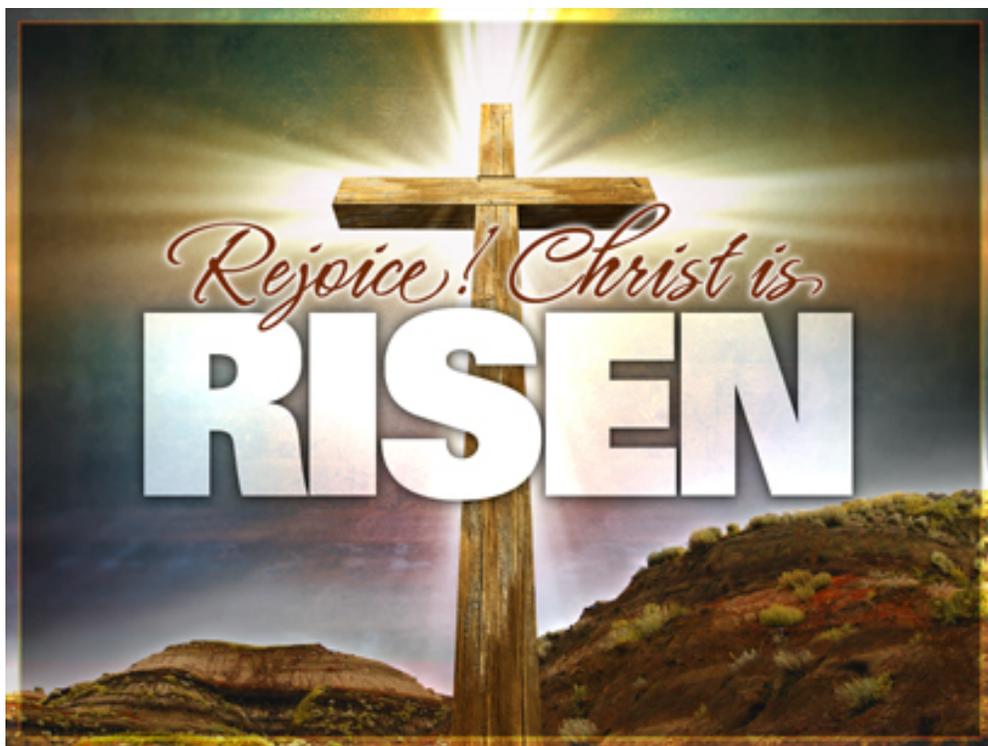


St. Francis of Assisi Faith News

May 2017 

Happy Easter! All of us at Saint Francis of Assisi Academy pray that you had a joyful and special Easter break with your loved ones. Did you know that the Easter celebration is 50 days long? That is right, we are not even halfway through this special time in our church! The season of Easter, or Eastertide, begins at sunset on the eve of Easter and ends on Pentecost, the day we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. This extended season gives us time to rejoice and experience what it means when we say Christ is risen. It's the season when we remember our baptisms and how through this sacrament we are, according to the liturgy, "incorporated into Christ's mighty acts of salvation." As "Easter people," we also celebrate and ponder the birth of the Church and gifts of the Spirit (Pentecost), and how we are to live as faithful disciples of Christ.



Ways to Celebrate the 50 Days of Easter

- 1 - Alleluia, Hebrew word for joyful praise, the word for the Easter season. Make a family banner & leave it up for the 50 days.
- 2 - Make a Resurrection cross from colored eggshell pieces glued to a cardboard cross.
- 3 - Read the Emmaus story (Lk 24: 13-35), then go out for a walk. Imagine that Jesus is walking with you.
- 4 - Play Easter songs for the 50 Days.
- 5 - People who chose to become Catholic were baptized at the Easter Vigil. Keep some holy water on your table to remind you to live a new life too!
- 6 - Read Acts 2: 42-47. Things were held in common among the faithful. Do you have too many of one thing that can be shared?
- 7 - Sometimes in the spring, the weather gets a bit stormy. Sit outside and recall the Good Friday story. Talk about the storms and fears in your own lives, then remember the glory that came after the storm in the Resurrection! Read Romans 10:9.
- 8 - Have guests over for Sunday dinner...an extension of Eucharist.
- 9 - Light a special candle at meals to recall the light of Christ.
- 10 - Plan fun family activities—one for each of the 7 weeks of Easter: hikes, games, movie nights.
- 11 - Develop an Easter project or a new hobby for yourself or your family.
- 12 - Resurrect relationships; reconnect with people you care about.
- 13 - Buy Easter napkins on clearance & pack them in your sack lunches.
- 14 - Celebrate life; spend time outside noticing all the signs of new life in Spring!

15 - Celebrate new life by doing something as a family to support unborn/young children & their parents. Catholic Charities is in need of cribs and/or pack-in-plays for our refugee children! Make it a family project to clean up one you have that's not being used & donate!

16 - Drape your crucifixes and crosses with a strip of white cloth (white symbolizes celebration).

17 - Make cookies in the shapes of Easter symbols.

18 - Learn how other cultures celebrate Easter. Try out some of their customs and foods.

19 - What about a short trip to an interesting shrine or church?

20 - Place a resurrection icon or picture in a place of honor.

21 - Wear more white, or even gold! They're the season's special colors.

22 - Do you know someone received into the Church during your parish Easter Vigil? Have them over.

23 - Add an "alleluia" song—or three alleluias—to your grace before meals.

24 - Visit a lonely neighbor or do some other family act of kindness to express thanks for the resurrection.

25 - Discuss what it means to be Christ's "witnesses" (Luke 24:48)?

26 - Pray the Liturgy of the Hours together in the morning or evening (www.liturgyhours.org).

27 - Read about the disciples' amazing catch of fish (John 21:1-14). Then go fishing together!

28 - Imitate Peter, and go swimming (John 21:7).

May – The Month of Mary



Why is May Mary's month? Here's a brief explanation.

For centuries, the Catholic Church has set aside the entire month of Mary to honor Mary, Mother of God. Not just a day *in* May, mind you, but the entire month. The idea of a month dedicated specifically to Mary can be traced back to baroque times. Although it wasn't always held during May, Mary Month included thirty daily spiritual exercises honoring Mary. It was in this era that Mary's Month and May were combined, making May the Month of Mary with special devotions organized on each day throughout the month. This custom became especially widespread during the nineteenth century and remains in practice until

today.

The ways Mary is honored in May is as varied as the people who honor her. It's common for parishes have a daily recitation of the Rosary during May, and many erect a special May altar with a statue or picture of Mary as a reminder of Mary's month. Additionally, it's a long-standing tradition to crown the statue of Mary during May – a custom known as May Crowning. Often, the crown is made of beautiful blossoms representing Mary's beauty and virtue. It's also a reminder to the faithful to strive to imitate our Blessed Mother's virtue in our own lives. May Crowning, in some areas, is a huge celebration and is usually done outside of Mass, although Mass may be celebrated before or after the actual crowning.

But May altars and crownings aren't just "church" things. We can and should be doing the same in our homes. When we echo the customs and traditions of the Church in our homes – our domestic churches – we participate more fully in the life of the Church.

If you haven't already, you could consider creating a prayer corner in your home. No matter how fancy or simple it is. The main point is that it's a place designated for God, and more specifically, for spending time with Him. Just as you need proper atmosphere to sleep, you also need proper atmosphere to pray.

For May, give Mary a special spot in your prayer corner. It can be a statue or picture, but place there some representation of our Blessed Mother. Make it appealing and a real tribute to her beauty and virtue.

Then, crown Mary. You can give her an actual or spiritual crown and you can make it a subtle gesture or ornate ceremony of your own device. The meaning is far more important than the action. You can do it in the beginning, at the end of May or anywhere in between.

Mary is Mother – your mother, my mother, everyone's mother – and because she cares for all of us day-in-and-day-out without fail, interceding for us in even the tiniest matters.

For this, she deserves an entire month in her honor.

