

Forty Activities for Forty Days for Intermediate Students

Monday before Ash Wednesday – Activity 1 – March 4

Discuss Lent – a time to turn away from sin and to build up our relationship with God. It is a liturgical season lasting forty days. Lent is called a penitential season. That means that we reflect about how we are living and take an inventory of our lives. It is a time to do penance (acts of expressing our sincere sorrow for wrong doing), to pray, fast and give alms. Praying is a way to spend time with and grow closer to God. Fasting is a way to remove the obstacles that get in our way. Almsgiving is helping us to share with those who have less than we do. All three can be ways to do penance. One can also do penance by receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Tuesday before Ash Wednesday – Activity 2 – March 5

Discuss what will happen tomorrow on Ash Wednesday. Where do the ashes come from? The palm branches of last year's Palm Sunday celebration are burned and the ashes are collected. A teacher will make a cross of ashes on our foreheads. We are invited to leave the cross on our foreheads as a sign that we are invited to this penitential season. We want to live out of our Baptismal call. [If you have a classroom old palm branch or ask students to bring in old palms from home – burn it with the class and add it to the school's supply of ashes – be prepared to have to burn just a little of it because it can take awhile for the whole branch to become ashes]

Ash Wednesday – Activity 3 – March 6

Change the prayer cloth on your prayer table to violet/purple.

Take off every else except a candle, cross and bible.

Put away all other icons of faith until Easter.

There were three traditional ways we were invited at the service/mass to live Lent, what were they? [Praying, fasting, and giving alms]

What do each of these activities look like if someone is living them?

First Thursday of Lent – Activity 4 – March 7

Everyone make a heart out of red construction paper and write their name in the centre of the heart. Fold the heart accordion style so there are little folds – enough for one fold for every classmate (front

and back.) Invite each student to create a slogan of encouragement for their classmates. They are going to write their slogan on each classmates' heart. The same slogan on each heart. Invite your students to keep the slogan to him/herself so it is his/her unique expression of care and encouragement for his/her classmates. Do not make the slogan too long because you will get tired repeating it over and over. Start on one side, write your slogan then hand the heart to the next writer open to the next fold so he/she knows where he/she needs to write. It will take less time and the hearts will be completed more easily. This is a way to give ALMS.

First Friday of Lent – Activity 5 – March 8

What is SIN? Sin is anything we say, think or do that turns us away from God. God is always watching us and caring for us, however, there are times when we take our eyes, ears and hearts away from God's presence, God's voice and the way of life God invites us to live. Sin is a reality for us. Sometimes it is a sin of omission [not doing something that is good or right to do] or sin of commission [doing something wrong or hurtful.] In our world there is a lack of awareness of sinfulness. In fact, there is an idea that "if I do/say/think it is okay, then it is okay." This is a lack of conscience formation. There are right words/actions/thoughts and there are wrong actions/words/thoughts. We need to teach young people that they need to make good choices. They need to acknowledge that there is an objective right and wrong in many situation i.e. it is wrong to murder someone.

First Saturday of Lent – Activity 6 – March 9

Take a moment to reflect on the many ways your parents serve you. Say a heartfelt thank you to them for all the things they do for you. This is a way to GIVE ALMS.

First Sunday in LENT – March 10

Sunday is the day of the week we celebrate Jesus' resurrection from the dead so Sundays are not part of the forty days of Lent. However, the Church wants to support us on our journey of faith so the altar is dressed in purple, and we do not sing Alleluia [an Easter word], and the priest may speak about Lenten themes of praying, fasting and almsgiving. Sometimes holy water is removed from the font at the entrances of Churches because we are preparing for a renewal of our

Baptismal promises at Easter. There may be some adults [the Elect] preparing to join the Church in full initiation at Easter. They will be baptized, confirmed and receive Eucharist for the first time at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. Lent becomes a six week retreat for these people and their sponsors. The entire community supports the Elect as they prepare to join our Church.

First Monday of Lent – Activity 7 – March 11

A Lenten CHAIN

You will need purple construction paper, scissors and glue. Cut the paper into one-inch strips. You'll need 7 strips per student in your class. Once a week, during Lent, give each student a strip of paper and invite them to write down their Lenten goal for the week: a prayer that they plan to say each day; an offering that they plan to make; one thing that they are going to fast from, etc. One thing per strip. When they have all finished writing out their Lenten goals for the week, invite them to come forward and loop their strips around one another, to form a class chain. Display the Lenten chain or circle prominently – or make it grow each week. We can support and work together as we grow closer to Jesus as a Christian community of faith.

First Tuesday of Lent – Activity 8 – March 12

Personal (Secret) Lenten Calendar

Invite students to show their love for Jesus by doing something for him each day. Ask students to bring their agenda to class each day during Lent. To show what they have done each day they will draw crosses on the boxes of the dates. Students can draw crosses of different colours to represent different activities

+ green cross – I said an extra prayer

+ purple cross – I helped someone

+ red cross – I did something good that was hard for me to do

+ yellow cross – I did what I was supposed to do without being told

Most Lenten calendars make recommendations about what the person should do; this calendar activity is decided by the person him/herself and is in a code so no one else knows. It makes “Do in secret your good works” real!

Second Wednesday of Lent – Activity 9 – March 13

ALMSGIVING of our kindness

Today let us look for ways to be kind to one another in our classroom. During Lent we are asked to give ALMS. Alms can be money, time, our talents, and our kindness. So let us focus today on finding ways to be KIND to our classmates, teacher and family members.

Second Thursday of Lent – Activity 10 – March 14

Avoiding Temptation - A form of FASTING

Arrange young people in pairs and invite them to brainstorm a list of temptations that young people their age face everyday [gossiping, calling people names, being lazy, etc.]

Have them identify strategies to avoid temptations or to resist them if they come. [doing another positive activity to avoid thinking of the temptation, talking to a parent, teacher or relative, praying etc.]

Have students share their ideas. Encourage young people to make a real effort to resist the temptation they find the most challenging this Lent. Invite volunteer to read aloud Mark 1:12-15 (Jesus' temptation in the wilderness). Emphasize that during Lent, we can go to Jesus to ask for help in resisting and avoiding temptation because he understands and can help us to be strong.

Second Friday of Lent – Activity 11 – March 15

Ask students to show a common posture for praying (kneeling, standing with hands folded). Explain that, in the early church, Christians often prayed with their arms folded across their chests, each hand on the opposite shoulder. (demonstrate)

Invite students to stand and to fold their arms in this manner.

Together pray the Our Father holding arms in prayer posture.

Next show the students a twisted pretzel, show how the pretzel imitates the prayer posture that they used. Explain that an Italian monk in the early 600s invented the pretzel as a reminder to his brother monks to pray during the season of Lent. He named his creation "Little arms" which in Latin is "bracellae." From this word came the German word "bretzel" which eventually became pretzel. Share pretzels with your class.

Second Saturday of Lent – Activity 12 – March 16

FAST from electronics [gameboy, computer games, fb, iPod, iPad, electronic reader etc.] today. If the whole day is impossible, do half a

day. Use the time to exercise outdoors or write in your journal about how good life is for you today.

Second Sunday in Lent – March 17

Give someone you love a hug. It is **St. Patrick's Day**, wear some green clothing. Eat some green food.

Second Monday of Lent – Activity 13 – March 18

Lent is a time to start some new patterns of prayer. If we haven't been praying at all, it is a great time to start. The movie "The Sixth Sense" with Bruce Willis and Haley Joel Osment made famous the line "I see dead people." Many people did not get the clues during their first viewing of the movie that Bruce Willis was dead. So they went back to watch the film to see the clues they missed.

Reflective prayer is looking back over our lives. Through prayer, we can re-wind our day and look for the clues of God's presence. This prayer is called the daily examen.

- Invite your class to quiet themselves, assist them by breathing deeply in and out, directing students to slow down their breathing.
- As they breathe invite them to become aware of God's presence.
- Review the day with gratitude, go through the last 24 hours and see when you stepped closer to God and when you stepped away.
- Pay attention to how you felt as you moved toward and away from God.
- Choose one feature of the day and pray about it, talk to God about it, and listen to what God has to say about it, thank God.
- Look ahead to the day that is coming, ask the Holy Spirit to help you to be mindful of God's presence in the day that is ahead.
- This can be done as a *journal exercise* as well... (instructions that follow)
- What am I grateful for in the last 24 hours....week, month (depending on the time line you offer the students)
- What am I struggling with...
- What am I looking forward to...

If you are going to collect the journal exercise make sure you tell your students before they begin the prayer time.

Second Tuesday of Lent – Activity 14 – March 19

Feast of St. Joseph, patron of Canada.

Share some Hot Cross buns with your class as a treat. Hot Cross buns are a popular food eaten during Lent. The custom began in England to bake buns, place icing on them in the form of a cross. At first these buns were only eaten on Good Friday. Eventually they were baked and eaten throughout Lent. Talk about the significance of the cross that it would be made part of food.

Third Wednesday of Lent – Activity 15 – March 20

Watch a Godtube/Godvine video about a Lenten theme. Discuss the video's message with your family.

Third Thursday of Lent – Activity 16 – March 21

The Seven Last Words of Christ – A Scripture Search

Explain that, before dying, many people speak final words that express their feelings and thoughts at that moment.

Invite the young people to identify the speakers of these famous last words (fictional and non-fictional)

- “Et tu, Brute?” (Julius Caesar)
- “I have been and always will be your friend. Live long and prosper.” (Mr. Spock, The Wrath of Khan)
- “Rosebud” (Charles Foster Kane, Citizen Kane)
- “If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you could possibly imagine. (Obi-Wan-Kenobi, Star Wars)
- “I’m melting!” (Wicked Witch of the West, Wizard of Oz)
- “Are you guys ready? Let’s roll.” (Todd Beamer, passenger aboard United Flight 93, September 11, 2001)
- “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.” (Nathan Hale, 1776)

Explain that as Jesus was dying on the cross, he said some very important words.

Provide Bibles for each of the students and tell them to search the following **passages** and to write down the words that Jesus spoke (the answers are in brackets – for you)

- **Luke 23:34** (Father, forgive them, they know not what they do)

- **Luke 23:43** (Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise)
- **John 19:26-27** (Woman [Mary], behold your son. [to the disciple John] Behold your mother.)
- **Matthew 27:46** and/or **Mark 15:34** (My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?)
- **John 19:28** (I thirst)
- **John 19:30** (it is finished)
- **Luke 23:46** (Father, into your hands, I commend my spirit.)

When everyone is finished, ask, “If you had never heard of or met Jesus before, and just happened to be passing by as he was dying on the cross, what kind of person would you think he was based on his final words? What was most important to him?”

Explain that the Seven Last Words of Christ serve as an excellent Lenten meditation, especially during Holy Week.

Point out that a famous piece of music written by Franz Josef Hayden is named after the Seven Last Word of Christ. If possible, play a selection on CD.

Invite your students to memorize (take to heart) the seven last words of Christ. See if any volunteers can recall them without looking at their written work.

Third Friday of Lent – Activity 17 – March 22

Today is **World Water Day**. Every time you use water today...do so respectfully and gratefully...also thank God for all the fresh water Canadians have in plentiful supply.

Third Saturday of Lent – Activity 18 – March 23

Wear a cross today to show you are a follower of the Christ who was crucified on Good Friday. Cut a little black cross out of construction paper and pin it to your shirt.

Third Sunday in Lent – March 24 - The First Scutiny

All around the world there are adults preparing to become full members of the Church. At the beginning of Lent they move from being called catechumens to “The Elect.” On this Sunday in Lent the Elect participate in the first scrutiny. This is a “mini exorcism” whereby the Church community prays with the person to help them to resist evil and to acknowledge their need for God. Everyone attending mass prays for the same thing for themselves.

It is also **Earth Hour** this evening. Think about someone you know who could use some positive energy. Pray for him/her asking God in the morning, at noon and in the evening to be present with this person. At 8:30 p.m. join millions around the world by turning off all electricity and sit in the dark for an hour. It is Earth Hour.

www.earthhour.org

Third Monday of Lent – Activity 19 – March 25

VISIT the Church and Look at the Stations of the CROSS

You can explain that the stations were originally created as a way for illiterate people to pray in the footsteps of Jesus.

If you want to do all fourteen stations – I have Stations of the Cross for Youth prayer service that you pray as you move through the moments of Jesus' passion.

Third Tuesday of Lent – Activity 20 – March 26

Bring in 100 pennies and place them on a table/desk in the centre of class. Tell students to imagine that these pennies represent all the earth's resources and wealth. Ask for 10 volunteers to represent the world's population. Divide the pennies in the following manner (according to UN statistics)

20% (2 volunteers) get to share 85 pennies

20% (2 volunteers) get to share 1 penny

60% (6 volunteers) have to divide up the remaining 14 pennies

Point out that 20% of the world's population enjoys 85% of the world's wealth and abundance. Explain that most people in Canada/US can be included in that 20%.

60% represent the people in developing countries like China, India, Brazil. The last 20% of people are in underdeveloped countries like Haiti, most sub-Saharan African countries.

Ask if anyone can name the three main "disciplines" of Lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Point out that almsgiving (alms refers to money, food or other goods donated to charity) is one of the ways that we strive to share God's abundance with those less fortunate than ourselves.

Introduce students to Development & Peace and ShareLent, the official Lenten program of the Canadian Catholic Church. ShareLent offers Catholics a way to connect with our brothers and sisters in the poorest of countries. Teachers can use this as an opportunity to help students to understand the concept of Solidarity, one of the themes of

Catholic Social Teaching (especially Grade 12 teachers). If you would like to have a guest speaker from D&P visit your classroom please call Rose Marie Valade at 705-253-8797 and she can arrange for a visitor.

Fourth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 21 – March 27

Did you know that Indigenous peoples face discrimination and injustice throughout the world? Pray that Indigenous peoples are included and respected in the decisions that concern them.

Fourth Thursday of Lent – Activity 22 – March 28

Learn about the reasons behind people's choice to leave their homelands to become refugees. Go to

<https://www.devp.org/en/education/fall2018/materials>

This is one of the campaign themes for D&P 2019. It will be a focus for our Walk for Justice

Fourth Friday of Lent – Activity 23 – March 29

During Lent we are invited to participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation. It is a way to help us feel free from sin and its effects. Let us examine our conscience with a few questions: Do I pray regularly? (pause for a moment so students can reflect) Do I use God's name in respectful ways? Do I listen to and respect my parents? Do I hurt family or friends by my words or deeds? Do I lie? Do I steal? Do I cheat? Do I take risks that may cause harm to myself or others? Do I eat, sleep, drink in an excess way? Do I exercise so my body can be fit and healthy? Having reflected on these questions – let us pray an act of contrition: Oh my God, I am truly sorry for all my sins because they are an offense to you who are all Goodness and grace. I firmly promise to with the help of your grace not to sin again and to avoid the occasions of sin. Amen+

Fourth Saturday of Lent – Activity 24 – March 30

Bring in pop tabs. Go through recycle bins and remove the pop tabs from cans. These tabs can be turned into walking aids for people who need canes, walkers, crutches etc. If you collect them for the rest of Lent, call Sister Pat and she will come to get them when your collection is completed.

Fourth Sunday in Lent -- Laetare Sunday March 31

On this Fourth Sunday the colour turns to pink/rose to indicate that we are halfway on our Lenten pilgrimage. It is an encouragement to the faithful who are living the Lenten experience of fasting, praying and almsgiving. Laetare means "Rejoice" in Latin.

The Elect along with the whole church community experience the Second Scrutiny. Usually each scrutiny is held at a different mass so each mass community gets to experience one scrutiny.

Fourth Monday of Lent – Activity 25 – April 1

Sign out computers and Google three-minute-retreat. Each student can spend three minutes or a little more praying the retreat of the day. Students may want to mute the volume so they don't get annoyed with the repeated cycle of the music.

Fourth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 26 – April 2

Students are invited to do some activity with younger students in the school. Some activity that they would not necessarily do regularly like meditate. The older students act as models for the younger students and try to be patient and joyful as they spend time with the younger students. This is a form of PRAYING.

Fifth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 27 – April 3

FAST from complaining. Today let us become aware of how much we complain about things that are small and maybe tedious. Let us think before we speak today to try to avoid whining and complaining. Let us simply do what we are asked to do with a mature attitude. Teachers too!

Fifth Thursday of Lent – Activity 28 – April 4

Pray the First Sorrowful Mystery with your class.

Agony in the Garden – Matthew 26: 36-39

Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me."

And going a little further, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want."

Our Father / 10 Hail Marys / Glory Be

It is intended that while people are praying the prayers that they are reflecting on the scripture story.

Fifth Friday of Lent – Activity 29 – April 5

Conserve energy today by turning off appliances as soon as you are finished with them. Turn off lights. Conserve water as you brush your teeth. Shorten your shower. Do what you can to save power and natural resources. Walk to your friends' house instead of having someone drive you there.

Fifth Saturday of Lent – Activity 30 – April 6

Call an aunt or uncle and tell them that you love them. It will brighten their day and it is a way to give alms.

Fifth Sunday in Lent – April 7 - The third scrutiny of the elect takes place today. It is common that a collection for Development and Peace is taken up today. This collection is called Share Lent in Canada. The money collected today is used for the ongoing support of justice projects in the developing world. Some people prefer to make this donation on Good Friday.

Fifth Monday of Lent – Activity 31 — April 8

Go out for a walk. Breathe in fresh air. Enjoy being outdoors for the opportunity to change up our activity level. Taking care of our body is a way to fast from laziness.

Fifth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 32 – April 9

Get students to go to The Hunger Site www.thehungersite.com. By clicking the Give Free Food button – sponsors of the site pay to give cups of food to the poor. This is one way to give alms. You can visit the site daily and click to give food to the poor. If you want more information about the hunger site – go to About the Hunger Site.

Sixth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 33 – April 10

Offer to do some random act of kindness for a total stranger, like hold the door open, smile at someone, some small act of kindness! Alms giving simplified!

Sixth Thursday of Lent – Activity 34 – April 11

Fast from negative responses. No sarcasm...no JJ...no “No”s for a day... see if it is possible.

Bring in different crosses and crucifixes that you have. Even pictures from the internet. Show them to the students and ask them to share comments about what they see and what the cross means, expresses, represents or teaches them.

Point out that years ago, most people were not able to read or write and they relied on pictures and icons to teach them.

In particular, stained glass windows, Stations of the Cross, crosses, murals on walls and ceiling depicted scenes from Scripture that taught people about God’s plan of salvation.

Point out that some members of your class would much rather draw a picture than write an essay or give a presentation. Ask for volunteers to describe their preference. Explain that this activity will be an opportunity for everyone to exercise the artistic side of their brain (point out that scientists believe that the right side of our brain is more visual and artistic and that the left side is more verbal.) Provide each of the young people with a sheet of paper. Invite the students to think about the Seven Last Words of Christ and to sketch a cross or crucifix that would depict their understanding of the Cross.

As they do so, play some reflective music (Handel’s Messiah or something similar) in the background as they do this work.

Encourage expression. Ask them to do this activity prayerfully...

Post these expressions and show them to the whole group.

Sixth Friday of Lent – Activity 35 – April 12

Pray the Second Sorrowful Mystery with your class.

The Scouraging

Part of what Pilate told the soldiers to do was whip Jesus many times. So the soldiers did their job.

Our Father / 10 Hail Marys / Glory Be

It is intended that while people are praying the prayers that they are reflecting on the story.

Sixth Saturday of Lent – Activity 36 – April 13

Pray the Third Sorrowful Mystery of the Rosary: The Crowning with Thorns.

The soldiers mocked Jesus and placed a crown of thorns on his head because people had said that Jesus was the King of the Jews.

Thorns can grow very large and when the crown was forced onto Jesus' head it caused a lot of pain and some bleeding.

Our Father / 10 Hail Marys / Glory Be

As you pray this decade of the rosary hold close to your heart those who suffer mockery and violence in their homes and schools. Pray for a conversion of hearts to be more loving to all people.

Sixth Sunday in Lent – April 14

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

On this Sunday people are invited to pick up palm branches as they enter the church. Then there is a reading of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the back of a colt. During the procession, Hosanna is sung and people wave their branches as they did on the actual day. Then during the Mass the reading of the Passion takes place. This prepares us for Holy Week.

Sixth Monday of Lent – Activity 37— April 15

Beginning of Holy Week

“Hosanna” is a word that was prayed and sung at mass yesterday. As Jesus rode on the back of a donkey into Jerusalem people put palm branches on the road to lessen the dust. They waved the palm branches in the air and sang “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.” Read the gospel account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. (Luke 19: 28-40) What part of the Mass do we hear the words “Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.” [Holy, Holy] Every time we attend mass those words are repeated.

Sixth Tuesday of Lent – Activity 38 – April 16

The Plot to Kill - Read Matthew 26: 1-5 Discuss with students: Have they ever felt that others were plotting to do nasty things to them? This is how Jesus felt.

Read Matt. 26: 6-13 Discuss with students: Why do you think the disciples were so angry with the woman's actions?

Read Matt. 26: 14-16 Discuss with students: Why did Judas Iscariot agree to betray Jesus? It is a good conversation. Have they ever felt betrayal?

Sixth Wednesday of Lent – Activity 39 – April 17

Was Jesus a fool to die for us?

Read Matthew's gospel account of The Passover with the Disciples. Matthew 26: 17-25, 31-35. Read the first passage (17-25) then discuss "What is Passover?" We must remember that Jesus was a Jewish man. Every year the Jewish people celebrate Passover – when the Spirit of Death passed over their homes so they could leave Egypt and be slaves no more. Their doors were marked with lamb's blood so the plague would not touch their families. There is a very special meal that the Jewish people eat at Passover, it recalls the events of the time of Moses and the exodus of the Jews into freedom. So on Thursday night of Passover Jesus celebrated with his disciples. Passover is still celebrated by the Jews of today, it was held on Tuesday evening this week (March 26, 2013) Passover and Easter are forever tied together.

Read the second part of the passage (31-35). Can you see the scene in your mind? Peter was one of Jesus' good friends for three years. Peter wants to protect Jesus. But Jesus knows that when the scary events of later that night take place, Peter will fall away too. Have you ever had a similar experience? Have you ever denied knowing someone because it felt dangerous to acknowledge your friendship?

Seventh Thursday of Lent – Holy Thursday – Activity 40 – April 18

On Holy Thursday Christians throughout the world remember the Last Supper. Bring a picture of DaVinci's last supper to class. Ask the students to look at the picture or wall-hanging (relief) carefully. If they were present at the Last Supper, hearing Jesus say that he was about to die, what would they think? This is the time that Jesus started "The Mass." He asked his disciples and us to remember him at the breaking of the Bread and when the cup is passed around. Christians have been celebrating the Eucharist since that first Holy Thursday. Read Matthew 26: 26-30. At many churches this evening there is a mass and there is a special commemoration of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. People present are invited to wash each other's feet as a sign of our desire to be people of service as Jesus was.

The Sacred Paschal Triduum – Good Friday – April 19

This is the day that Christians throughout the world remember that Jesus died for us. We remember as a Church at 3:00 p.m. No masses are celebrated today; only communion prayer services. The hosts that were consecrated at mass on Holy Thursday night are served today.

Triduum is a Latin word to signify the three high holy days of the Liturgical calendar [Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday.] It is about the trial, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. All of Lent have built up to these three sacred days.

Seventh Saturday of Lent – Holy Saturday – April 20

During this day Christians reflect upon what it would have been like to sit around missing Jesus very much. This is like a wake, when someone we love dies. We sit and remember all the things that the dead person did and said. Mary, his mother, must have been filled with sadness. His friends must have been very sad that Jesus was gone. In fact they were hiding in the upper room because they were afraid that the people who killed Jesus might do the same to them.

The transition from Holy Saturday to the Easter Vigil is exciting. The Easter Vigil is a feast of readings, songs, and sacrament. Those Elect who have been waiting are baptized. There is so much to see, hear and feel in this particular liturgy. The entire celebration takes place at night, it is not allowed to begin until sundown and must be over before daybreak. It begins with a blessing of the sacred fire and a lighting of the Paschal Candle. Everyone in the Church ought to have a candle lit from the Paschal Candle. The Exsultet is sung (a special song of praise of God.) There are nine readings assigned to the Vigil: seven from the Jewish Scriptures and two from the Christian Scriptures. Most Congregations reduce the number of readings to three or four from the Jewish Scriptures and two from the Christian Scriptures. Water is blessed and baptisms take place if any elect are present. If there is no one to be baptized, the congregation renews its baptismal promises. The elect are also confirmed and receive Eucharist for the first time. Candidates for Full Communion (those who have been baptized in another Christian Church but want to join the Roman Catholic Church) may receive Confirmation and

Communion at the vigil. It is a great Feast! I encourage anyone who has never participated in an Easter Vigil to do so this year.

EASTER SUNDAY – Resurrection of the Lord – April 21
Jesus rises from the dead. How exciting! No one has done this before. He is no longer in the tomb. His friends go to visit the tomb and the stone is rolled away and his body is not there. Alleluia! Jesus is risen like He said. Alleluia!