

April 2024 Update

Dear Friends,

Alleluia! HE is truly RISEN, as he said HE would! Alleluia! Wow, what joy it brings to keep singing this song of glory. Pope John Paul II made the word “Alleluia” even more significant when he said, “We are an Easter People, and Alleluia is our song!”.

The Staff and the Deacons and Fr. Vincent and I wish you all Very Blessed and Joyous Easter! It was wonderful to see everyone at the Easter Celebrations this weekend. May the Risen Christ live in your hearts forever!

Why is Alleluia an important, significant, and essential word in the lexicon of the Church?

Let us do a dive deep into its meaning. "Alleluia" comes from the Hebrew phrase "Hallelu Yah," which means "**Praise the Lord.**" It is an expression of both praise and thanksgiving. The use of "alleluia" in Catholic liturgies has a long tradition that goes back to the Jewish roots of the first Christians. Originally, It was used in the Jewish Temple worship. It is a joyful acclamation, and so it was absent during the more somber, penitential days of Lent.

The use of Alleluia during our Easter celebrations, and throughout Ordinary Time, expresses its deeper spiritual meaning for Christians. It expresses not just general praise but a profound sense of joy, triumph, and thanksgiving for God's saving work and mercy. Listen to what St. Augustine says about this word:

*[W]ith regard to the present, when we are pilgrims on this earth, we sing Alleluia as a consolation, to be strengthened along the way; **the Alleluia we are saying now is like the traveler's song**; yet, as we take this difficult path, we are striving to reach that homeland where repose awaits us, where, once all that we are involved in today has passed away, all that will be left is the Alleluia.*

Wow, are we not blessed to have such a sacred word to express the Church's joy, thanksgiving, and devotion to God, especially as we celebrate the Paschal mystery? Now that we know the profound significance of this word, let us sing it with full-throated glee.

We will continue to celebrate with vigor the joy of our Lord's Resurrection throughout the period of 8 days known as the Octave of Easter. This intensely joyful period ends with **the Solemnity of Divine Mercy Sunday on 7 April**. But remember: **we celebrate the Easter Season for a full 50 days**, all the way to Pentecost on 19 May!

I would like to share some thoughts about the significance of Divine Mercy Sunday. The creation of this special day is a way of showing forth the divine intention of the Resurrection of our Lord that we acclaim on Easter Sunday. Pope John Paul II instituted this Feast Day on 30 April 2000, the day that he canonized Sr. Mary Faustina Kowalska as a Saint. Divine Mercy Sunday celebrates the boundless mercy of God, as revealed in the Paschal Mystery of Christ's Death and Resurrection and in the Eucharist. It is a day to reflect on and give thanks for God's merciful love towards all of humanity. We will be able to savor His unfathomable Mercy in a unique way by attending the **Divine Mercy Program** offered **here on 7 April at 7 p.m.** The program is the **creation of Mark Forrest, the internationally renowned Irish Tenor**, who will lead us in **adoration, prayer, reflection, and song** as we **immerse ourselves in celebrating the unfathomable Mercy of God**. This event is the first of its kind. I earnestly urge every one of you to make the effort to come and relish the sweetness of the Lord.

I am overjoyed to announce to you that, on Saturday, 6 April 2024 at 1:30 p.m., the Congregation of Holy Cross will celebrate with jubilation and gratitude to God as 8 of our Seminarians are ordained to the priesthood. What a blessing it is for us as a Congregation and for the Universal Church at large! Please keep these young men in your prayers, and join us in thanking God for this wonderful gift. You can view their ordinations at livestream.holycross.org.

I pray that one day I will see my long-term desire fulfilled by the ordination of one from our own parish. I invite our parents to join me in working prayerfully on this. I ask all of you to pray for the young men in our parish, that they may consider a call to serve the Lord in the Congregation of Holy Cross as either a Priest or a Brother. Please keep all the men and women of Holy Cross in your prayers.

19th April is the Birthday of Fr. Vincent. We thank him for his services to our community. We wish him a very blessed and Happy Birthday! Thank you Fr. Vincent for all you do for SJE community.

It is now time to look at our calendar of activities for the Month of April 2024:

1 April, Easter Monday – The office will be closed on Easter Monday in honor of Easter. From Easter Sunday to the **2nd Sunday of Easter** is celebrated as the **Octave of Easter**.

4 April, Thursday – Flourish Our Faith begins their next study on the mystery of the “Eucharist” by Bishop Barron. As a bonus, the **Word on Fire Digital** library has been made accessible to the entire Parish. Our subscription is available now for the Easter Season through June 7th. Visit <https://StJohntheEvangelist5655.flocknote.com> to sign up and view exclusive content available only through Word on Fire.

6 April, Saturday – First Saturday Mass at **9 am**. **Blessed is She Brunch** at **10:00 a.m.**

6/7 April, Saturday/Sunday – Second Sunday of Easter – also known as **Divine Mercy Sunday**. We will have a **special Divine Mercy Program at 7 pm**. The program was created by **Mark Forrest, the internationally renowned Irish Tenor**, who will lead the Program.

8 April, Monday – **The Solemnity of the Annunciation. This feast was transferred from 25 March to now as it fell during the Holy Week.** There will be **two Masses: 8 a.m. and 12:05 p.m.**

13/14 April, Saturday/Sunday – Third Sunday of Easter

15 April, Monday – **Gratia Plena** Conference at **6:00 p.m.**

17 April, Wednesday – **CCW General Meeting** at 11:00 a.m.

19 April, Friday – **Birthday of Fr. Vincent**. We thank him for his services to our community. We wish him a very blessed and happy Birthday!

20/21 April, Saturday/Sunday – Fourth Sunday of Easter. Today is designated as the **World Day of Prayer for Vocations**. Please pray for our young men and women that they might consider answering the call of God to serve as Deacons, Priests and Religious.

22 April, Monday: Anniversary of the dedication of the Grotto to Our Lady of Lourdes. There will be a **special Mass** in the Grotto at **6 p.m.**

25 April, Thursday: Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist

27 April, Saturday – **Annual Notre Dame Celebration**. This begins at the 4:30 p.m. Mass. Dinner and a lecture follow.

27/28 April, Saturday/Sunday – Fifth Sunday of Easter

30 April, Tuesday – **Men’s Discipleship Dinner and Program** at 6:00 p.m. in Holy Cross Hall with guest speaker, Fr. Zachary Parker.



With Love, Fr. John