

Easter

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

EASTER, the celebration of Christ's Resurrection, is the oldest and most solemn feast of the liturgical year.

THE RESURRECTION is recorded in the Gospels and proclaimed in the New Testament, particularly by St. Paul, who wrote that without the Resurrection, "your faith has been in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

DISCIPLES WHO KNEW JESUS was dead and where he was buried went to his tomb, but found it empty, and were told: "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised" (Luke 24:5-6). Later, St. Paul writes, the risen Jesus appeared to more than five hundred disciples (1 Corinthians 15:6).

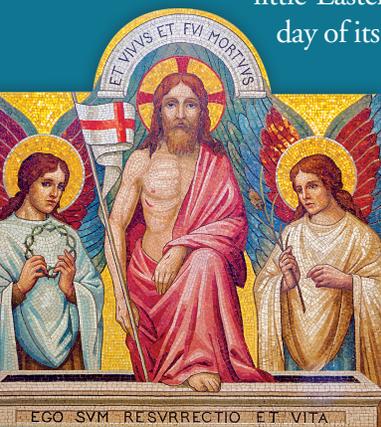
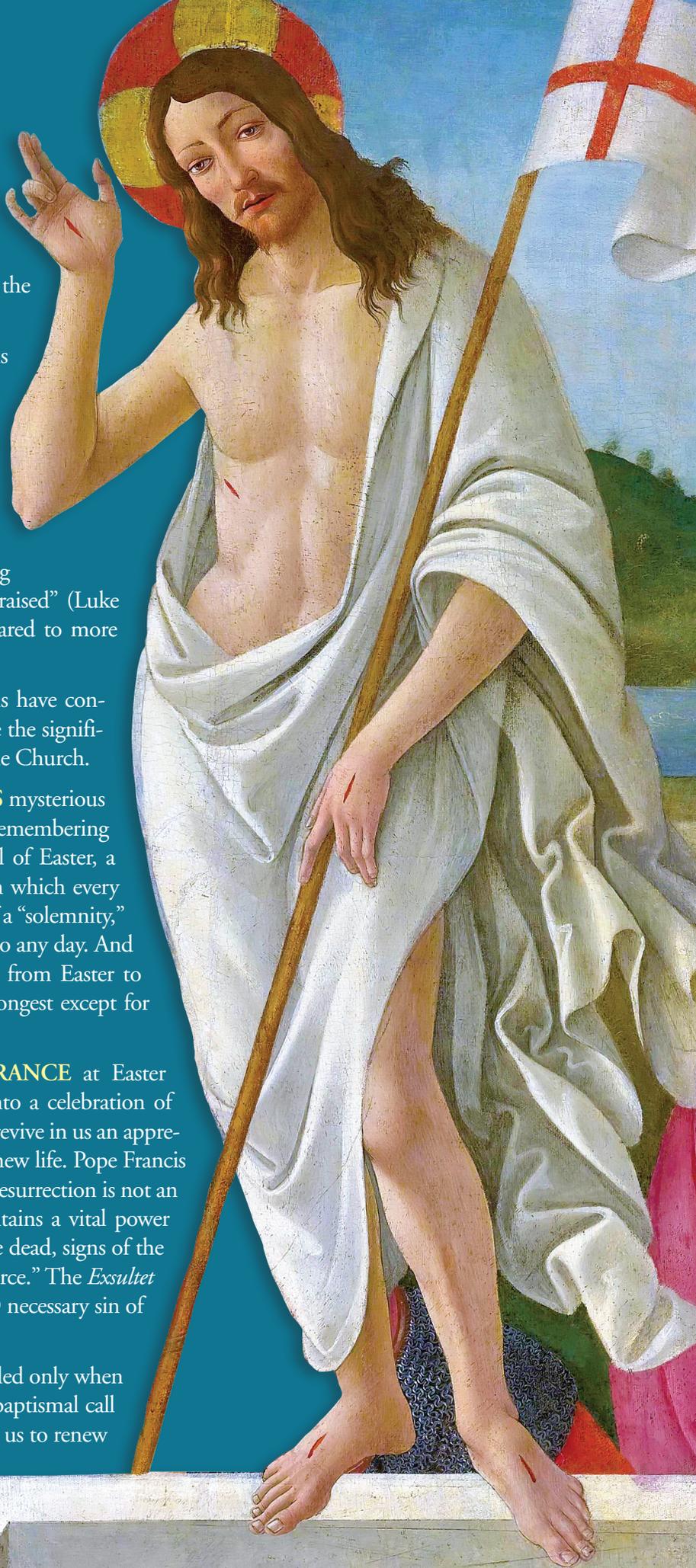
THROUGHOUT THE CENTURIES, Christians have continued to try to understand, appreciate and celebrate the significance of this most central experience for the life of the Church.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE RESURRECTION'S mysterious depths, the Church's liturgical cycles are based on remembering and celebrating Easter. Every Sunday is a memorial of Easter, a "little Easter." Easter is the only feast in which every day of its Octave (Eight Days) is itself a "solemnity," the highest ranking given to any day. And the 50-day Easter season, from Easter to Pentecost Sunday, is the longest except for Ordinary Time.

LITURGICAL EXUBERANCE at Easter is intended to draw us into a celebration of God's gift of salvation, to revive in us an appreciation of the promise of new life. Pope Francis reminds us that "Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past but contains a vital power

that has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force." The *Exsultet* at the Easter Vigil boldly declares: "O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!"

AS IF TO REMIND US that our Easter joy is fulfilled only when we do our part, when we respond faithfully to our baptismal call to love God and others as ourselves, the Church asks us to renew our baptismal promises to reject evil and to "serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church."



THE HISTORY OF EASTER

Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection, the culmination of Christ's mission and the foundation of our faith. Easter is also the oldest Christian holiday, one that Pope Leo I regarded as the greatest feast of the liturgical year, a conviction that has since been widely embraced. As St. Paul wrote, "If Christ has not been raised, then your faith has been in vain" (1 Cor 15:14).

St. Bede suggests that word "Easter" could be related to *Estre*, an ancient goddess of spring. The more common term for Easter was the Latin *Pasch* or Passover. Easter was the *Festa Paschalia*, a name that is plural because Easter is not just a one-day event but includes seven more days of celebration (called the Easter octave). The name Easter is also related to the German word for east, *ostern*, where the sun rises. So the associations of light from the rising sun and the new life of spring naturally carry over to our celebration of new life through Christ.

The fixing of the date of Easter was complex and somewhat controversial. To the members of the early Church, every Sunday was regarded as a celebration of the resurrection. When it was determined to single out one day to highlight the feast, there was disagreement as to the proper date. Some Christians, including St. Irenaeus and St. Polycarp, felt it should coincide with the Jewish Passover, which was determined by the lunar calendar, while others preferred the Sunday celebration date that eventually prevailed when the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 determined that Easter is to be celebrated on the first Sunday following first full moon that occurs on or after the spring (vernal) equinox.

Alleluia

Terms of the Easter Season

Alleluia: From the Hebrew word meaning "Praise the Lord," *Alleluia* is a special acclamation of joy in the Easter Season.

Ascension: Originally celebrated on Thursday (40 days after Easter), now all U.S. dioceses except 6 celebrate it on the Seventh Sunday of Easter.

Easter: The first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox, Easter is the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. The Church considers every Sunday in the year a commemoration of Easter.

Easter Duty: Having received First Communion, every Catholic in the United States must receive communion at least once a year during Easter time, defined in the U.S. as the period from the First Sunday of Lent to Trinity Sunday.

Easter Season: The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday.

Paschal Candle: A large decorated wax candle that is a symbol of the risen Savior, the light of the world. It is lit during Mass from the Easter Vigil to Ascension Thursday, and used thereafter in baptisms and funeral liturgies.

Mass Readings for the Easter Season 2020

Easter Sunday: Acts 10:34, 37-43;

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 Colossians 3:1-4
or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8; John 20:1-9

2nd Sunday: Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24;
1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

3rd Sunday: Acts 2:14, 22-33; Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11;
1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35

4th Sunday: Acts 2:14, 36-41; Psalm 23:1-6;
1 Peter 2:20-25; John 10:1-10

5th Sunday: Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19;
1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12

6th Sunday: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17; Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20;
1 Peter 3:15-18; John 14:15-21

Ascension of the Lord: Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9;
Ephesians 1:17-23; Matthew 28:16-20

7th Sunday: Acts 1:12-14; Psalm 27:1, 4, 7-8;
1 Peter 4:13-16; John 17:1-11

Pentecost: Acts 2:1-11; Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-31, 34;
1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13; John 20:19-23