

31 March 2024

WORD OF THE WEEK

Octave *ˈäk-tiv*

From the Latin for "eighth," a group of eight; in music, the eighth note; in the liturgical year, an eight-day celebration of the highest-ranking feasts, or solemnities, of Christmas and Easter. The **Octave** of Easter is followed by the Easter season, which lasts 50 days and ends with the feast of Pentecost.

Pronunciation: <https://tinyurl.com/Take5-octave>

CONTEXT

During the eight days that make up the **Octave** of Easter, the liturgy never ceases to remind us of the great mystery of the Resurrection of Christ!

—Hozana.org

Each day of the Easter **octave** is treated like a repeat of Easter Sunday, with all the feasting and liturgical trimmings.

—Brother Conor McDonough, O.P.

The eighth Sunday of Easter, or Pentecost Sunday, concludes what has been called the great **octave** of eight Easter weeks. —Richard McBrien

WHY IT MATTERS

Some feasts are so central to our Christian faith that a single day of celebration isn't adequate. The Incarnation of Jesus and his Resurrection are crucial to the story of our salvation. Both declare that, body and spirit together, humanity is significant to God and worthy of redemption in Christ. The Christmas and Easter **octaves** give us time to ponder the greatest mysteries and joys of our faith.

From *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia*: During an **octave**, the feast being observed takes precedence over any other feast that may occur.

RELATED WORDS

Solemnity | Pentecost | Resurrection | Nativity

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Why is Easter Season so long?

The Easter Season is determined by the eight weeks it takes to get from the Resurrection to Pentecost. In Lent, we embrace penitential practices in anticipation of Jesus' Resurrection. What happens next is nothing less than the birth of the church. Easter itself is an **octave**, or eight-day feast. In liturgical practice, the **Octave** of Easter is like a week of Easters as we light the Paschal candle, sing the Gloria, and continue to contemplate the wonder that death has a door. Jesus passed through it, and so will we. Is a week too long to ponder this?

After Easter, Jesus continues to appear, teaching them more about God's kingdom for 40 days, a sacred number symbolizing completeness. Then Jesus returns to his Father in the Ascension. The disciples devote themselves to prayer from that hour until Pentecost, when the Spirit comes and the church is launched into prime time. What should we be doing from Easter through Pentecost? Imitating the disciples: celebrating, contemplating, learning, and praying to prepare for the mission ahead.

—Alice Camille, from *Questions Catholics Ask* <http://tinyurl.com/QCA-easter-octave>

REFLECTION OF THE WEEK

SOLEMNITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD (EASTER SUNDAY) (MARCH 31)

Wide-eyed wonder

Today you witness something that opens your eyes to the power and glory of God's love in a way no other event could. Jesus raised from the dead? How is it possible? Only through the love of God, which makes all things possible. Spend this glorious day in fascination at the miracle you are witnessing.

READINGS: Mass of Easter Day: Acts 10:34a, 37-43: Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-9 (42 <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/033124.cfm>). "*When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.*"

FAITH IN ACTION

Continue to keep your eyes and heart open, and you will see that God never tires of loving you and raising you up. What a miracle!