

## Easter's Meaning

I asked our Youth Choir "Why is Easter important to you?" Here are some of the answers they gave:

"That's when Jesus rose from the dead and defeated death."

"Jesus rose from the dead. [That is important because then] we can all go to heaven."

"Easter is a celebration of Jesus being raised from the dead and [a time] to be thankful for all that God has given you."

Why is Easter important to you? Is it: a time of prayer, a time to spend with family, an end to whatever changes you made for Lent? Lent is forty days long. Forty days that we spend preparing our hearts, minds, and body for the celebration of Easter.

What did you change for Lent? When I was a child, almost everyone gave up candy and dessert. As we grow older, we realize that the changes we make can be deeper. Maybe you gave up social media, or other technology-based activity. Maybe you made a behavior change like not swearing. Although our elaborate celebrations are just for a few days, Easter can be a time to evaluate what we did differently in Lent and how it impacted our lives. Maybe you found more time to pray or to spend time with your family. Maybe you found yourself calmer or less inclined to worry about what others are doing. Perhaps those changes could still be incorporated into your everyday life after Lent.

Easter is not just one day. The Easter season lasts for fifty days. Even longer than Lent! The season of Easter begins at sunset of the night before Easter and concludes on Pentecost. (Pentecost this year is June 4.) Lent was initially the season for new converts to prepare for baptism on Easter and learn about the faith. The fifty days of the Easter season are a time for new members to continue their faith formation.

If Lent is a time for preparation for Easter, the Easter season is a time to rejoice and experience what it means when we say Christ is Risen! This time is for us to remember our own baptisms and our own call to reach out to others. We can use this time to contemplate the gifts of the Holy Spirit and how we can bring these gifts to the world in our own ways.

We are meant to share these gifts. The fifty days of the Easter season are a time to celebrate the most important event in our faith: the Resurrection. As one Youth Choir member said: "Jesus risen!" This is our faith: we believe that God loves us so much that He sent His Son to die and rise for us." What a powerful message to share with others! As Easter people, it is our joy and responsibility to share this message with those around us in word and in deed. What are you going to do to spread this Good News?

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