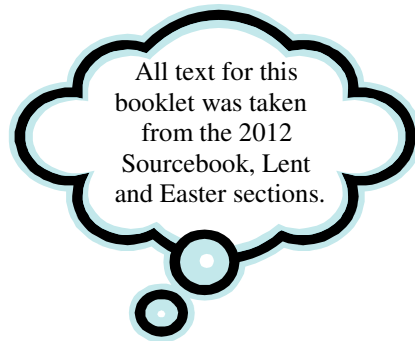
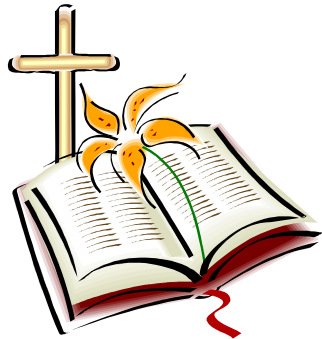


Rejoice! The Lord is Risen, Alleluia, Alleluia!

The word Easter, derived from Old English, means “to shine,” especially to shine like the dawn, and suggests both an action and a beginning, a new day. Although this liturgical time is considered one feast and is called the Great Sunday, we observe several significant moments. We begin with the robust return of the Alleluia, a song of joy and praise that Christ is risen; he has conquered death, and we delight in the full participation of our newly initiated. Just as they need this liturgical time as a period of mystagogical catechesis on their experience of the sacraments they have just received, we as a Church community need this liturgical time to deepen our understanding and participation in the Paschal Mystery. The Sunday liturgies can be a form of experiential catechesis about the meaning of the Fifty Days for the entire community. The Easter symbols of the white vestments, the presence of the Paschal candle, and the use of water are tangible signs of Baptism and of the new life we celebrate.

Easter finds us a renewed and transformed people having passed through the desert of our Lenten journey into a deeper experience of the life that is ours in the risen Christ. “Alleluia!” the Church will have us sing, not for 40, but for 50 days. Indeed, it is a time for the whole Church to reflect on the astonishing events recalled during Holy Week. It is a time to rejoice in the Lord and to renew our lives as disciples of new life, filled with the grace of the Easter mystery, embracing our recent re-commitment to living as the baptized followers of Christ in everyday life.



**For ideas for the family, please see the Liturgy page of the diocesan website: www.padiocese.ca/liturgy

**Liturgy Office: Heidi is available in the office on Tuesdays: 922-4747 ext: 231 or home: 223-4237, email: liturgy.cecr@sasktel.net

Lent & Easter 2012

Liturgy Office, Diocese of Prince Albert



Important Upcoming Dates!

Lent

- | | | |
|------------|--|---------|
| Feb 22nd : | Ash Wednesday | |
| Feb 26th: | Cathedral tour followed by time with Bishop | 3:00pm |
| | Rite of Election /Sacred Heart Cathedral | 4:00pm |
| Mar 11th: | Chrism Mass Choir Practice at Sacred Heart, PA | 2:00pm |
| Mar 19th: | Feast of St. Joseph | |
| Mar 26th: | The Annunciation of the Lord | |
| Mar 31st: | Chrism Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral | 11:00am |
| | Lunch will follow at St. Mary's High School | |
| Apr 1st: | Palm Sunday | |
| | Annual Youth Seder Meal | 4:00pm |

Easter Triduum

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| April 5th: | Holy Thursday |
| April 6th: | Good Friday |
| April 7th: | Holy Saturday |
| April 8th! | Easter Sunday! |

Easter Season

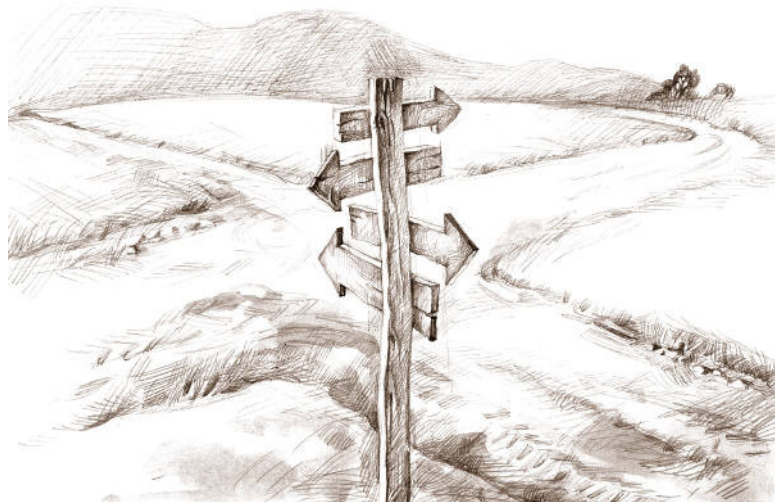
- | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| April 29th: | World Day of Prayer for Vocations |
| May 20th: | Ascension of the Lord |
| May 27th! | Pentecost! |



Lent: The Meaning

On Ash Wednesday, from dawn until evening, men and women on their way to or from work, mothers with infants and toddlers in hand, teens, and school children crowd the church to be marked with a cross of ashes on their foreheads. It is as if, even before they have listened to the First Reading, they have heard the prophet Joel's cry to call an assembly and gather the congregation. Many have suggested why this day is so important to Catholics, but what is incontrovertible is that the rituals and prayers of Ash Wednesday call people to remember that being a Christian is serious business. The exhortation, "Repent, and believe in the Gospel," strikes at the heart of the meaning of Lent. The older, more traditional formula, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (note the slight revision in the text of the third edition of the Missal), is a helpful reminder that our lives on earth are bounded in time, and that we are responsible for how we use this gift of our life.

During Advent and Christmas time, we focused on the light of God as revealed in Jesus. Lent is a liturgical time of preparation for the manifestation of God's love in Jesus' self-giving of his life, and his Resurrection, which we will celebrate during the Three Days. Through our Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and by our accompanying those preparing to receive the Sacraments of Initiation, we recognize our need for healing as individuals and collectively as a society. This is an important clarification for many people who may tend to focus on Lent as a strictly penitential time, and thus miss its potential to bring life and healing to our wounded world. As is often pointed out, the observance of Lent is not for God's sake, but for ours.



Lent is a Journey!

Lent is our great retreat time, and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is a rich resource for catechesis. For example, paragraph 1465 offers a beautiful answer to the question, Why do I have to confess to a priest? Our priests fulfill the ministry of the good shepherd, the good Samaritan and the father of the prodigal son. He is the face of the community that believes deeply in this merciful love and proclaims that there is nothing God won't forgive if we seek his mercy. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* can help lay the groundwork for understanding the adult Christian activity of continual conversion. If we are attentive to this, we may be more likely to examine our lives beyond a laundry list of faults. Conversion is the process of "putting on Christ," as we say in Baptism (RBC, 102).

A Shift in Understanding Can Bring A New Fullness for All!

The spirituality that the Church associates with Lent has many layers. The words *conversion*, *repentance* and *metanoia* help us to understand the traditional purpose of the 40 days of this liturgical time. It is a liturgical time that developed out of the preparation time set aside for the catechumens as they approached the Sacraments of Initiation that were celebrated in the great liturgy of the Easter Vigil. With the decline of the catechumenate after the sixth century, Lent became a time for the baptized to reflect on and remember their baptismal promises, and to enter into the exercises of Lent; namely prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. With the restoration of the catechumenate, the focus of Lent is once again on the preparation of the catechumens for the Easter sacraments. But all the baptized enter this liturgical time, a "retreat" for the whole Church as together we journey with the catechumens and with the Lord to the joy of the Resurrection.

