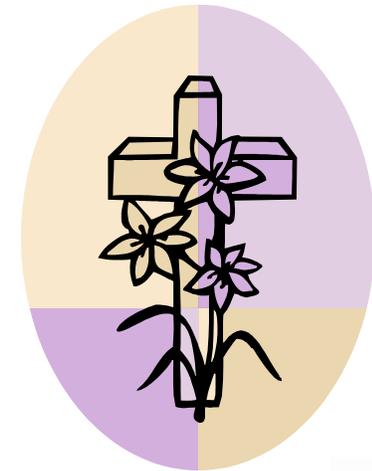
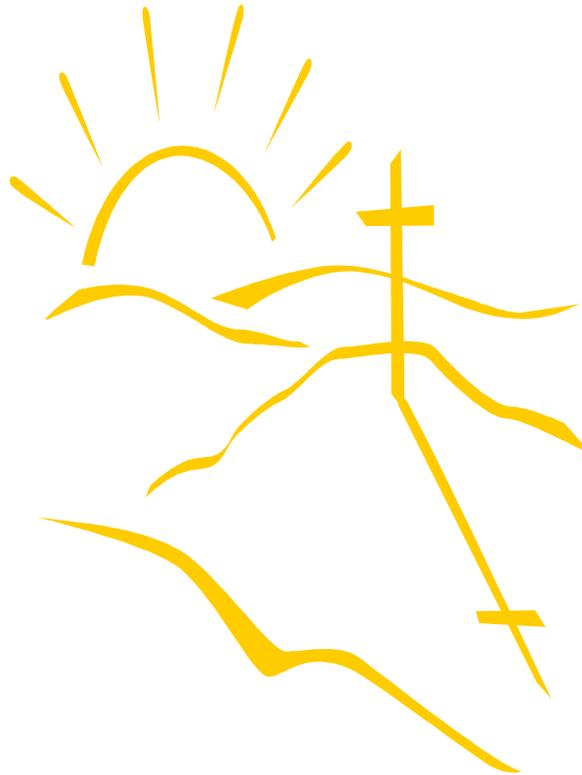


As St. John Chrysostom announces in this famous Easter sermon, all are invited to the feast:

"Let all then enter the joy of Our Lord!
Both the first and the last, and those who come after, enjoy your reward!
Rich and poor, dance with one another, sober and slothful, celebrate the day.
Those who have kept the fast and those who have not, rejoice today, for the table is richly spread.
Fare royally upon it—the calf is a fatted one.
Let no one go away hungry.
All of you, enjoy the banquet of faith!
All enjoy the riches of His goodness.
Let no one cry over his poverty, for the universal Kingdom has appeared!
Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again, for forgiveness has risen from the grave.
Let none fear death, for the death of our Savior has set us free.
He has destroyed it by enduring it.
He spoiled the power of hell when he descended thereto.
Isaiah foretold this when he cried, 'Death has been frustrated in meeting him below!'
It is frustrated, for it is destroyed.
It is frustrated, for it is annihilated.
It is frustrated, for now it is made captive.
For it grabbed a body and discovered God.
It took earth and behold! It encountered Heaven.
It took what was visible, and was overcome by what was invisible.
O Death, where is your sting?
O Death, where is your victory?
Christ is risen, and the demons are cast down.
Christ is risen, and life is set free.
Christ is risen, and the tomb is emptied of the dead.
For Christ, having risen from the dead, is become the first-fruits for those who sleep.
To Him be glory and power forever and ever!
Amen."

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**"Christ is risen,
and life is set free!"**



**EASTER
and
EVANGELIZATION**



Alleluia!

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The Lord is risen! He is truly risen!

The Christian community joyfully proclaims this message to the whole world. The resurrection of Jesus breaks into our lives and opens us to new promise. It is a message we cannot keep to ourselves. Peter began the proclamation at Pentecost: "This (Jesus) delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify Him. But God raised Him up, releasing Him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for Him to be held by it." (Acts 2:23-24).

We believe that Christ is truly alive and that He offers us His grace through the sacramental life of the Church. We strive to offer this grace and the reason for our hope to others. The Easter message is all about mission and evangelization. As Catholic Christians we are bound by the Great Commission: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matt. 28:19-20). It is Christ, Himself, who compels us! Let us take advantage of the Easter season to joyfully spread the Good News. Here are some ideas which may be helpful to you and your parishioners:

- Resurrect the traditional Easter greeting of "The Lord is risen!" - "He is truly risen!" Encourage parishioners to use this when they share the Sign of Peace or at parish meetings.

- Have RCIA members who have been baptized or confirmed give a witness at Mass or prayer meetings. They often have powerful insights and testimonies which touch people's lives. The stories of their journeys can offer hope to others.
- The Easter season is a beautiful time for the renewal of marriage vows to promote the idea that familial love is the foundation of a healthy society and that the family, as the Domestic Church, forms the loving heart of the Body of Christ.
- During the month of May, foster devotion to Mary and the Rosary by reminding parishioners that Mary "announced" Christ to others by saying "yes" to God and bearing Him to the world. Weather permitting, perhaps plan a rosary recitation on the church lawn or in a nearby park.
- Mary became our Mother, too, at the foot of the cross, when Jesus told John, "Behold, your mother." On Mother's Day, offer a flower or Miraculous Medal to all parishioners as a reminder of their heavenly mother. Remind them that as Mary prayed at Pentecost for the beginnings of the Church, so she does now, for us.
- Invite all the First Communicants and their families to a Mass designed to teach children their need to give Christ to others now that they have received Him. Use a children's version of the Gospel and make the Prayers of the Faithful simple and direct, such as: "that we may bring Jesus to our friends by being kind, we pray...". Let the children be involved in the Mass. Follow up with a brunch or continental breakfast.
- Think of creative ways to make the Sacrament of Confirmation more of a parish event rather than an isolated Mass involving just one group of people. Print the names of all the confirmandi on small pieces of paper and have them in baskets at all the doors. Invite people to take a name and pray for that person during

the Easter season. Take their pictures (in small groups if the numbers are overwhelming!) and post them in the church lobby or on your website so people can put a face to a name. Assign the students community service projects that take them into the life of the parish: visiting homebound parishioners, babysitting at parish functions, tending to the church garden, etc.

- If possible, celebrate some baptisms at Mass, particularly a Family Mass. New souls bring new life!
- Bring the Gospel home—literally! Form a pastoral team for home visitations. Reach out to inactive parishioners; sometimes all it takes is a listening ear to show people that we truly care about them. In a society dominated by computer screens and voice mail, a human touch is sorely needed.
- The Easter season, with its focus on renewal, is also about healing. Offer a healing Mass during the season with Anointing of the Sick and perhaps prayer for parishioners after the Mass. Make people understand their value, even in sickness, to the Body of Christ. Encourage them in love to continue to "fight the good fight" and to claim the joyful promise of the resurrection. Offer home visits by the pastoral team to those who may need extra support and care.
- Persuade teens to attend the Youth Rally Day, "Proud 2 B Catholic". The rally will be a music festival held on Saturday, May 19th, from 2:00 to 9:00 p.m. at St. Anthony's High School. Current information can be obtained at youth@drvc.org.

