



Our Lady of Mount Carmel
What is Lent and Easter ?



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PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Prayers for Lent



Help us now, Lord, in our feeble attempts to make up for past sin. Bless our efforts with the rich blessing of Your grace.

O gracious Master, infuse in our hearts the spotless light of Your Divine Wisdom and open the eyes of our mind that we may understand the teachings of Your Gospel.

Instil in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, so that having curbed all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing everything to please You.

For You, O Christ, our God, are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies; and to You we render glory, together with Your eternal Father, and with Your all holy, life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and forever. Amen



Take hold of me with Your love, that same foolish love that knew no limits, and let me offer myself to the Father with You so that I may rise with You to eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,
by Your Passion and Resurrection
You brought life to the world.
But the glory of the Resurrection
came only after the sufferings of the Passion.

You laid down Your life willingly
and gave up everything for us.
Your body was broken and fastened to a Cross,
Your clothing became the prize of soldiers,
your blood ebbed slowly but surely away,
and Your Mother was entrusted to the beloved disciple.

Stretched out on the Cross,
deprived of all earthly possessions and human aid,
You cried out to Your Father that the end had come.
You had accomplished the work given You,
and You committed into His hands,
as a perfect gift, the little life that remained to You.

Lord, teach me to accept all afflictions
after the example You have given.
Let me place my death in Yours
and my weakness in Your abandonment,
Take hold of me with Your love,
that same foolish love that knew no limits,
and let me offer myself to the Father
with You so that I may rise with You to eternal life. Amen



He fulfilled Your Will by becoming Man. And giving His life on the Cross.

Dear Lord, we are now in the holy season of Lent. We begin to realise anew that these are the days of salvation, these are the acceptable days. We know that we are all sinners. We know that in many things we have all offended Your infinite majesty. We know that sin destroys Your life in us as a drought withers the leaves and chokes the life from the land, leaving an arid, dusty desert. Help us now, Lord, in our feeble attempts to make up for past sin. Bless our efforts with the rich blessing of Your grace. Make us realise ever more our need of penance and of mortification. Help us to see, in our ordinary difficulties and duties, in the trials and temptations of every day, the best opportunity of making up for past infidelities. Every day we are so often reminded in field and wood, in sky and stream, of Your own boundless generosity to us. Help us to realise that You are never outdone in generosity, and that the least thing we do for You will be rewarded, full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and flowing over. Then we shall see, in our own souls, how the desert can blossom, and the dry and wasted land can bring forth the rich, useful fruit that was expected of it from the beginning. Amen.



Lord, during this Lenten Season, nourish me with Your Word of life and make me one with You in love and prayer.

Almighty and Everlasting God,
You have given the human race
Jesus Christ our Saviour as a model of humility.
He fulfilled Your Will by becoming Man
And giving His life on the Cross.
Help us to bear witness to You
By following His example of suffering
And make us worthy to share in His Resurrection.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son.

Amen.



God, heavenly Father, look upon me and hear my prayer during this holy Season of Lent.

God, heavenly Father, look upon me and hear my prayer during this holy Season of Lent.
By the good works You inspire, help me to discipline my body and to be renewed in spirit.

Without You I can do nothing.
By Your Spirit help me to know what is right and to be eager in doing Your will.
Teach me to find new life through penance.
Keep me from sin, and help me live by Your commandment of love.
God of love, bring me back to You.
Send Your Spirit to make me strong in faith and active in good works.
May my acts of penance bring me Your forgiveness, open my heart to Your love, and prepare me for the coming feast of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Lord, during this Lenten Season, nourish me with Your Word of life

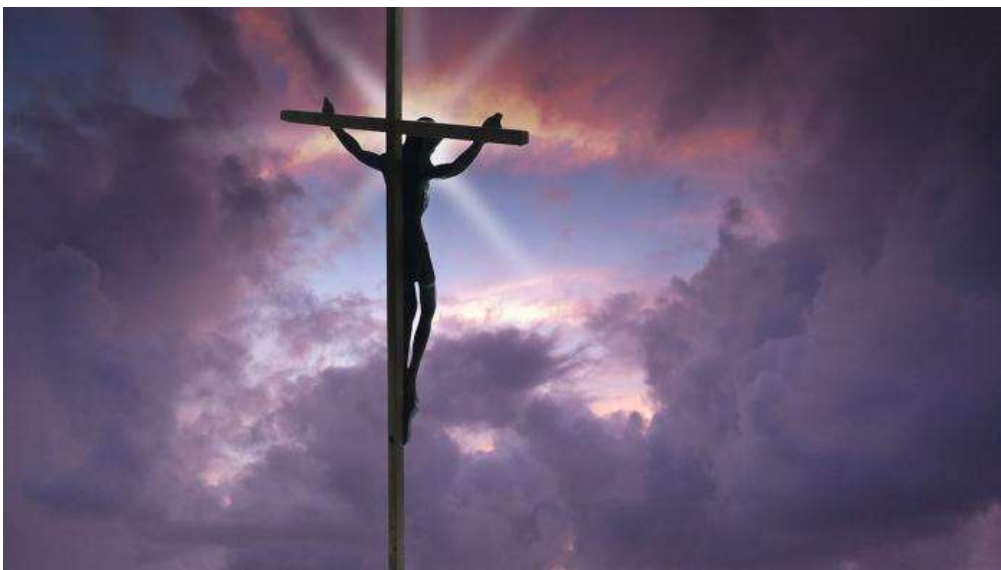
and make me one
with You in love and prayer.

Fill my heart with Your love
and keep me faithful to the Gospel of Christ.
Give me the grace to rise above my human weakness.
Give me new life by Your Sacraments, especially the Mass.

Father, our source of life,
I reach out with joy to grasp Your hand;
let me walk more readily in Your ways.
Guide me in Your gentle mercy,
for left to myself I cannot do Your Will.

Father of love, source of all blessings,
help me to pass from my old life of sin
to the new life of grace.
Prepare me for the glory of Your Kingdom.
I ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever.

Amen.



For You, O Christ, our God, are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies.

Tłusty Czwartek/Fat Thursday

Pączki are deep-fried pieces of dough shaped into flattened spheres and filled with confiture or other sweet filling. *Pączki* are usually covered with powdered sugar, icing, glaze or bits of dried orange zest. A small amount of grain alcohol (traditionally Spirits) is added to the dough before cooking; as it evaporates, it prevents the absorption of oil deep into the dough. The common opinion is that the ideal *pączek* is fluffy and at the same time a bit collapsed, with a bright stripe around – it is supposed to guarantee that the dough was fried in fresh oil.

In Poland, *pączki* are eaten especially on Fat Thursday (*Tłusty Czwartek*), the last Thursday prior to Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. The traditional reason for making *pączki* was to use up all the lard, sugar, eggs and fruit in the house, because their consumption was forbidden by Christian fasting practices during the season of Lent.



Shrove Tuesday

Pancake Day, or Shrove Tuesday, is the traditional feast day before the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday in the United Kingdom. Lent – the 40 days leading up to Easter – was traditionally a time of fasting and on Shrove Tuesday Christians went to confession and were “shriven” (absolved from their sins). A bell would be rung to call people to confession. This came to be called the “Pancake Bell” and is still rung today.

Shrove Tuesday was the last opportunity to use up eggs and fats before embarking on the Lenten fast and pancakes are the perfect way of using up these ingredients.

A pancake is a thin, flat cake, made of batter and fried in a frying pan. A traditional pancake is very thin and is served immediately. Golden syrup or lemon juice and caster sugar are the usual toppings for the pancakes.

The ingredients for pancakes are seen to symbolise four points of significance at this time of year:

Eggs – Creation

Flour – The Staff of Life

Salt – Wholesomeness

Milk – Purity



WHAT TIME AND TALENTS CAN YOU GIVE IN THE PARISH DURING THIS LENT AND EASTERTIDE?

FLOWERS

If you wish to make a donation towards the cost of providing flowers for the church you can, not just at Easter or Christmas but all year around.

READERS

Have you ever wanted to read at Mass? We are looking for readers for both the Saturday and Sunday Mass. We will particularly need people to help with the reading of the Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday and we will need multiple readers for the Easter Vigil. There will be readings in Polish at the Holy Week and Easter Services as well.

MINISTERS OF WELCOME

Can you help us be an open and friendly church by welcoming parishioners to Church on Saturdays and Sundays and by helping give out and collect mass and hymn books? Why not give it a try.

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Would you be willing to become such a Minister? Training will be arranged

CLEANERS

Our Church and Parish Parlour need cleaning regularly and not just at Christmas and Easter. Many hands make light work. Do you have time on a Saturday morning or afternoon to help with this? We can create a rota

LENT IS TRADITIONALLY A TIME WHEN WE GIVE UP SOMETHING – WHY NOT GIVE SOME OF YOUR TIME AND YOUR TALENTS AND GET INVOLVED? – WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE - NO MATTER HOW SMALL – EVERYONE IS IMPORTANT

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

pietrafitness.com



Lenten Prayer for Transformation



Loving Father,

I invite you into my life today
and make myself available to you.

Help me to become the-best-version-of-myself
by seeking your will and becoming a living example
of your love in the world.

Open my heart to the areas of my life that need to change
in order for me to carry out the mission
and experience the joy you have imagined for my life.

Inspire me to live the Catholic faith
in ways that are dynamic and engaging.

Show me how to best get involved in the life of my parish.

Make our community hungry for best practices
and continuous learning.

Give me courage when I am afraid,
hope when I am discouraged,
and clarity in times of decision.

Teach me to enjoy uncertainty and lead your Church
to become all you imagined it would be
for the people of our times.

Amen

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday is a solemn reminder of human mortality and the need for reconciliation with God and marks the beginning of the penitential Lenten season. **It is commonly observed with ashes and fasting**



Lenten Prayer for Ash Wednesday

God of goodness and mercy,

Hear my prayer as I begin this Lenten journey with you. Let me be honest with myself as I look into my heart and soul, noticing the times I turn away from you. Guide me as I humbly seek to repent and return to your love.

May humility guide my efforts to be reconciled with you and live forever in your abundant grace.

Transform me this Lent, heavenly Father. Give me the strength to commit myself to grow closer to you each day. Amen.



Let today be the
day you give up
who you've been
for you who can
become.

Blessed **Ash Wednesday**

FOCUS ON THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION IN LENT

"Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart ..." (Joel 2:12). This Scripture begins the first reading on Ash Wednesday and sets the tone for the entire season of Lent. To reconcile with God is the reason for the sacrament of reconciliation.

According to the Rite of Penance, "It is therefore fitting to have several penitential celebrations during Lent, so that all the faithful may have an opportunity to be reconciled with God and their neighbour and so be able to celebrate the paschal mystery in the Easter Triduum with renewed hearts"

Links: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSJiQ-VNafE>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-9_Ai4of0

<https://www.catholicscomehome.org/your-questions/what-is-the-sacrament-of-confession/>



Sacrament of Penance Four Main Parts

1. Contrition - is sadness for the sin we committed and the desire to sin no more.
2. Confession of Sin - in confessing our sin with the priest we take responsibility for our actions. Seal of Confession...what is it?
3. Penance - since sin weakens our relationship with God the priest gives us an act of penance to show we are truly sorry.
4. Absolution - the priest, in the person of Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit absolves us our sins by making Sign of the Cross and saying the prayer of absolution



Lenten Prayer for Sundays during Lent

Heavenly Father, As I enter another week of my Lenten journey, guide me to the path that leads to you. Fill my heart with gratitude, patience, strength, and peace as I strive to become the-best-version-of-myself, honestly admitting my shortcomings and sins.

As I renew my resolve each day to become a better person, let me hear your voice in the deepest reaches of my heart. Give me rest in you. Help me to accept others, showing them your great love instead of casting judgment.

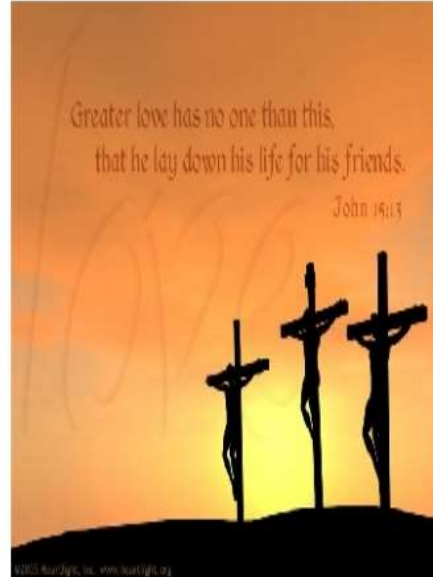
Stay with me through the busy days this week and remind me that when I need comfort, solitude, wisdom, or guidance, I can always turn to you.

Help me develop discipline and generosity through fasting and almsgiving and come closer to you through prayer this Lent. In your name I pray, Amen.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

What are the stations of the Cross?

- The stations of the Cross are 14 representations of the Passion of Christ and Jesus' final moments culminating in his crucifixion and death.
- The stations of the cross play an integral role in Catholic devotion specially during the Holy Season of Lent.



Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross

Leader: We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

All: Because by your holy cross You have redeemed the world.

As Jesus hung on the cross, he forgave the soldiers who had crucified him, and prayed for his mother and friends. Jesus wanted all of us to be able to live forever with God, so he gave all he had for us.

Jesus, let me take a few moments now to consider your love for me. Help me thank you for your willingness to go to your death for me. Help me express my love for you!

My Jesus, three hours didst Thou hang in agony, and then die for me; let me die before I sin, and if I live, live for Thy love and faithful service.

All: I love you Jesus. My love above all things. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always and then do with me what you will.

Our Father.... Hail Mary.... Glory be to the Father....



HOLY WEEK

Holy Week begins with Passion Sunday also known as Palm Sunday

PALM or PASSION SUNDAY

Palm Sunday recalls an event in the Scripture (The New Testament) of Jesus entering into Jerusalem and being greeted by the people waving palm branches. For Christians, it is **a reminder of the welcoming of Jesus into our hearts and of our willingness to follow him.**

Palm Sunday is often celebrated with **processions and distribution of blessed palm leaves.** In some churches, the palms are saved and burned into ashes to be used on Ash Wednesday of the next year. Some Christians fold the palm fronds into crosses and keep them in their homes.



What does Hosanna mean, especially during Palm Sunday?

Hosanna means “Please Save Us.” It is a Greek word “ὡσαννά” based on two Hebrew words- יָשָׁא- “yasha” which means “save or deliver” and אַנָּא – “anna” which means “please, I beseech.” (Strong’s 5614)

[**Mark 11:9**](#) records the people as saying, *“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”*

The people were quoting [**Psalm 118:25-26**](#), *“Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!”*

The History of Palm Sunday

Historical celebration of Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday, as the Sunday before Easter was called in the Catholic, Episcopalian, and Anglican churches, can be traced back over 1600 years.

“The observance of Palm Sunday in Jerusalem was witnessed by the pilgrim Egeria in about 381-384. During this observance, there was a procession of people down the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. The people waved branches of palms or olive trees as they walked,”

A Prayer for Palm Sunday:

Lord Jesus – Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! You are exalted above all others. You are worthy of praise. You are mighty to save; nothing is too hard for you. You have defeated death and the grave. We do not have to fear because you are victorious. Your kingdom is eternal and will never end.

Help us see you as you are – victorious yet meek, powerful but loving, patient and just. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart that understands your kingdom and your reign. Help us trust your sovereignty over all creation and your authority in our lives. Help us not turn our backs on you when things don't go as we expect. Give us strength and endurance as we seek first your kingdom and your righteousness.

Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for your sacrifice. Thank you for your humility. We rejoice in your eternal reign. Hosanna, Hosanna in the Highest. You are the only Sovereign One, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Amen.



The statues and crucifixes in the Church will be covered in purple cloth from today until the Easter Vigil.

THE EASTER TRIDUUM



A: MAUNDY THURSDAY MASS OF THE LORDS SUPPER

Except for the resurrection on Easter, Holy Thursday is possibly one of the most important, complex, and profound days of celebration in the Catholic Church. Holy Thursday **celebrates the institution of the Eucharist as the true body and blood of Jesus Christ and the institution of the sacrament of the priesthood.**

Holy Thursday

-During Lent, we should; live as children of the light, performing actions good, just and true - (see Ep 5:1-9).

-HOLY THURSDAY is the most complex and profound of all religious observances, saving only the Easter Vigil. It celebrates the institution by Christ himself of the Eucharist, His last supper with the disciples, a celebration of Passover, He is the self-offered Passover Victim, and every ordained priest to this day presents this same sacrifice

-The Last Supper was also Christ's farewell to His assembled disciples, some of whom would betray, desert or deny Him before the sun rose again.

-On Holy Thursday there is a special Mass in Cathedral Churches, attended by as many priests of the diocese as can attend

Lenten Prayer for *Holy Thursday*

Jesus, in these last few days leading up to Easter, as I recall your passion and death, let me remember that, above all, I am called to feed your sheep. You have given me a model of how to live; may I strive to be all that you created me for, spreading the love of God and the truth of our

Catholic faith wherever I am able. You are the way, the truth, and the life.
Amen.



A night reflection for Maundy Thursday

Jesus arrested, judged, found guilty and condemned to die is held captive overnight.

If I were arrested and held this night, what would I be found guilty of?

That I made friends with people irrespective of their colour, creed or class....

That I shared my bread with the poor....

That my words... and actions... brought healing and forgiveness....

That I made justice and didn't count the cost

That I sought the truth and then spoke of it....

That I recognised my neighbour and loved them as my very self...

That I met God along the way in the healing and forgiveness I received....

That I accepted hospitality at many different tables....

That I was changed by the lives of others....

.... and often repented my arrogance and foolishness in encountering their wisdom ...

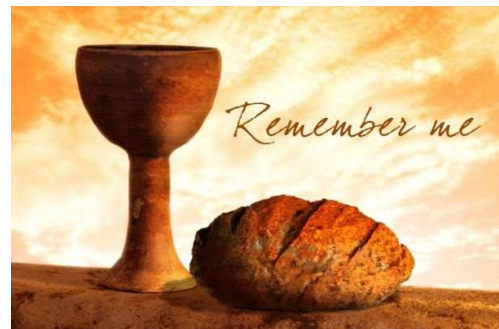
That friends and strangers sometimes paid the price for me....

That I never sought out suffering...but journeyed with it to the best of my ability...That the love of those about me taught me to love myself before God...

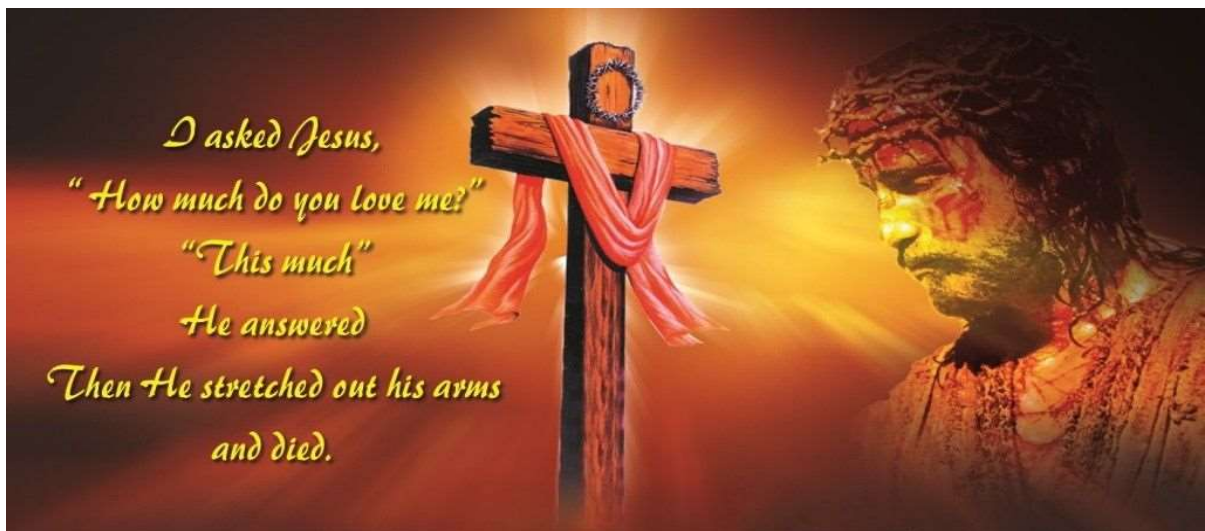
You call us out of brokenness to mend and remake your creation.
Grant us the courage to stay with all those who are held captive this night. In the name of Jesus who is good news, Amen.

Stripping of the Altar

In the earlier form of the Roman Rite, the stripping of the altar was done at the end of Mass of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday. It is still carried out. All altars in the church, except for the altar of repose, are stripped. In the present form of the Roman Rite, as revised in 1955, there is no ceremony of stripping the altar. At a suitable time after the Mass the altar is stripped, usually by the sacristan, and crosses are removed from the church, if possible. There is no Mass on Good Friday or Holy Saturday, the next one being that of the Easter Vigil. On Good Friday, a white cloth is placed on the altar for the last part of the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, after the conclusion of which the altar is stripped, again privately, except that the cross remains on the altar with two or four candlesticks.



B. GOOD FRIDAY THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD



Good Friday is a day of fasting requiring Catholics to refrain from eating meat. Traditionally, there is no Mass and no celebration of the Eucharist on Good Friday. A liturgy may still be performed and communion, if taken, comes from hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday. Church bells are silent.

Prayer at 3 o'clock on Good Friday

Jesus, you are my Lord and my God,
you endured such pain and suffering for me,
you died for love of me.

I kneel beneath your cross
and beg for mercy.

Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

O blood and water flowing from your side,
sanctify and cleanse me.

Lord, I love you with all my heart
and place all my trust in you.

Amen

The Veneration of the Cross

In the seventh century, the Church in Rome adopted the practice of Adoration of the Cross from the Church in Jerusalem, where a fragment of wood believed to be the Lord's cross had been venerated every year on Good Friday since the fourth century. According to tradition, a part of the Holy Cross was discovered by the mother of the emperor Constantine, St. Helen, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 326. A fifth century account describes this service in Jerusalem. A coffer of gold-plated silver containing the wood of the cross was brought forward. The bishop placed the relic on the table in the chapel of the Crucifixion and the faithful approached it, touching brow and eyes and lips to the wood as the priest said (as every priest has done ever since): 'Behold, the Wood of the Cross.'

Adoration or veneration of an image or representation of Christ's cross does not mean that we are actually adoring the material image, of course, but rather what it represents. In kneeling before the crucifix and kissing it we are paying the highest honour to our Lord's cross as the instrument of our salvation. Because the Cross is inseparable from His sacrifice, in reverencing His Cross we are, in effect, adoring Christ. Thus we affirm: 'We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee because by Thy Holy Cross Thou has Redeemed the World.'

Lenten Prayer for *Good Friday*

Jesus, no one knows change better than you. You died on the cross, and three days later you rose from the dead. Forty days later you ascended into heaven and left the world transformed for the rest of time. Help me to transform my soul, to die to sin and death and be reborn in your love and eternal life. Amen.

Walk with us

Jesus, you know what it's like to feel abandoned, lost and afraid.

Walk with us

And show us how to walk with others, who live in fear,
who face death through hunger or war.

Show us how to pray for those we do not know and will not meet,
but who are always loved by you.

Walk with us Jesus, Amen.

The darkness of the tomb

Jesus, in the darkness of the tomb, you were surrounded by love,
by grief and by fear, as your body was prepared for burial.

Walk with us

May we feel the comfort of your love for us.

And may we turn outwards to share that love with others,
with the same generosity and gentle loving kindness
that you showed to all.

Walk with us Jesus, Amen.



THE EASTER SEASON

◉ Time Frame

- Begins with the Easter Vigil
- Lasts 50 days
 - ◉ Includes Ascension Thursday (HDoO)
 - 40 days after Easter
 - ◉ Ends with the celebration of Pentecost
 - 50 days after Easter



C: HOLY SATURDAY

Blessing of the Food:

Although a Polish tradition in the main, **all parishioners are encouraged** to participate in this tradition on Holy Saturday.

BLESSING OF THE EASTER BASKETS

This is probably one of the most beloved Polish traditions that take place on Holy Saturday. It is celebrated not only in Poland but also within Polish communities all around the world. The name of this custom might sound mysterious but it's nothing more than a blessing given by the priest over the food that will be eaten during the Easter feast. Of course, you won't see people bringing all of the traditional dishes right to the front of the church (it would be funny though) instead, a small amount of the most important food like eggs, bread, meat and butter are put inside the basket. It's a very important tradition in Polish culture so you can often spot entire families participating in it.



Lenten Prayer for *Holy Saturday*

Jesus, you are courage incarnate. As you hung on the cross for my sins and the sins of the world, you showed me that all things are possible. You knew that life did not end on the cross. It was only the beginning of a new and glorious eternal life. Amen.

D: THE EASTER VIGIL



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EASTER VIGIL

- It is the most important Mass of the liturgical year.
 - It is the first official celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus.
 - The Paschal candle (the large white one) is blessed and lit, and this will be used throughout the entire Easter season.
 - Catechumens are received in the Church.
 - You get to renew your baptismal vows.
 - There are 7 readings, and the vigil itself lasts for quite awhile.
- It is the most beautiful liturgy.
 - The Exsultet/Easter Proclamation is chanted.
 - The Litany of the Saints is sung.
 - For the first time after the season of Lent, we get to use the Gloria and Alleluia again.
 - The first part of the vigil, the Service of Light, includes a lot of symbolisms.
- The solemn season of Lent culminates with the Easter Vigil.

“On this radiant night, let us ask the Lord to give us a share in his Resurrection. May he open us to the newness that transforms, to the beautiful surprises of God. May he make us men and women capable of remembering all that he has done in our own lives and in the history of our world. May he help us to feel his presence as the one who is alive and at work in our midst. And may he teach us each day, dear brothers and sisters, not to look among the dead for the Living One. Amen.”

– Pope Francis, Easter Vigil 2013

The Easter Vigil is the greatest liturgy of the entire year in the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church. The Roman Missal guides the celebration of this great night and even refers to the Easter Vigil as the “mother of all vigils” which is quoting St. Augustine from the 5th Century. So, the Easter Vigil has real history.

Throughout the years, this celebration did get lost for a time, lacking the full vigour it once had. However, Pope Pius XII in the 1950s restored the prominent celebration of the mother of all vigils on the Saturday evening before Easter Sunday.

The Easter Vigil is packed with breath-taking symbolism and meaning. And it is packed with a celebration of everything that we hold dear as Catholics. Christ is seen throughout in amazing grandeur.

Fire

The Easter Vigil begins with a bonfire outside. This holy fire is called the Lucernarium, and the liturgy begins with the celebrant blessing the Easter fire. This fire is symbolic of Christ who is not dead, but very much alive, burning brightly. From this fire, coals are taken out to light the incense and the fire is also used to light the new Paschal candle.

Throughout the entire liturgical year, the Paschal candle stands in or near the sanctuary of the church or near the baptistry as a sign of Christ. This candle is triumphantly marched into the church which is completely dark at this point. The single burning flame enters the back of the church carried by a priest or deacon who then raises it above his head and sings, “Lumen Christi,” (the Light of Christ) to which the people respond, “Deo Gratias” (Thanks be to God). This is repeated for a total of three times as the priest nears the sanctuary of the church.

While the Paschal candle makes its way to the altar area, little candles held by the congregation are lit from the Paschal candle and the light of Christ truly begins to spread throughout the church which is now lit by candlelight.

Beautiful Music

Once the candle makes it to the front, the Easter Proclamation or *Exsultet* is proclaimed by the priest, deacon, or cantor. This triumphant and beautiful chant is the prelude to the celebration of Easter. It speaks of night and light, of the place and time of the moment, of the priest and congregation, and it anticipates the glorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

After the long, subdued nature of the Lenten Season, the Easter Vigil breaks in with glory and anticipation. During the *Gloria in Excelsis*, for example, every bell available is rung all throughout the chanting or singing of the hymn. Each of the readings during the Liturgy of the Word has an accompanying responsorial psalm. There are many other musical additions to the liturgy called for in the Roman Missal, including the Litany of the Saints before the Blessing of the Baptismal Water.

Abundant Proclamation of the Word of God

The Liturgy of the Word is kicked into high gear. There are seven possible readings (minimum of three), each with a selected responsorial psalm sung in between the readings and prayers by the priest following each psalm.

Then the *Gloria in Excelsis* is sung. The Collect is said. A reading from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is proclaimed. The *Alleluia* is proclaimed for the first time since before Lent. Yet another Psalm is sung. Then the Gospel is read, and the Homily is given.

Blessing of Baptismal Water and Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

The remainder of the liturgy is a remarkable tour de force of the Sacraments of Initiation of the Church. The Baptismal water is blessed, those entering the Church make a profession of faith, renounce sin, and are baptized. Many of these adults have been preparing for this moment for a year or more.

Next, those who are not Catholic but who are previously baptised make a profession of faith in the Catholic Church are received into full communion with the Church. Then, the new Catholics, now all baptised and officially members of the Catholic Church are invited to the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Renewing Our Own Promises

The entire congregation is then invited to renew their own baptismal promises and receive a blessing from the priest with the newly blessed baptismal water. The Liturgy of the Eucharist then takes place in the normal way.

However, now baptised and confirmed, the new Catholics (neophytes) receive the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist for the very first time. What a splendid moment to behold. This is the pinnacle of our Faith. By being present and praying for these new

Catholics, we show our support to these new members of the Body of Christ.

Prayers for Eastertide

Resurrection Light

Risen Christ, when darkness overwhelms us may your dawn beckon.

When fear paralyses us may your touch release us.

When grief torments us may your peace enfold us.

When memories haunt us may your presence heal us.

When justice fails us may your anger ignite us.

When apathy stagnates us may your challenge renew us.

When courage leaves us may your spirit inspire us.

When despair grips us may your hope restore us.

And when death threatens us may your resurrection light lead us.

Amen.

You are the resurrection

How wonderful, Lord Jesus, you came back

You suffered death but conquered it

You laid in the tomb but on the third day

You rose again

O joyful day, Lord Jesus, when you returned

You are the resurrection, our hope and our life

O glorious and victorious Redeemer

Help us not to be afraid of death

For we must pass through it to see you face to face

And on the last day we will rise again

For you said so

Let us rejoice and praise you

Our Blessed and triumphant Lord

On this happy, joyful feast.

Amen.

Triumphant Jesus

You raised Lazarus from dead, saying “Unbind him, let him go free.”
You too were bound and laid to rest in a cold tomb, freshened by myrrh
and aloes.

Unbind us so that we may also go free.

In sorrow we left you as the dead Jesus and in wonder you returned to
us as the Risen Christ. Untied from the strips of linen,
you offered us a new-found freedom.

Raise us from the coldness of the tomb in which we are trapped.

With this freedom we are empowered to make choices about our lifestyle
and attitudes, But our human frailty prevents us from being courageous
by taking those first vital steps.

Release us from the self-imposed exile of our prejudices.

Amen.

Recreate the world

Creator God,
Because of your abundant love you chose to bring light and order into
the formless void, to create a world of unsurpassed beauty and you saw
that it was good.

We ask that you continue to recreate the world with that same attentive
love, to bring light into today’s ever-increasing chaos and darkness
where we have failed to be stewards and carers of your creation.
Replenish our hearts so that we too can renew the face of the earth.

Amen

Broken Bread

God, whom we meet in bread and wine, in body broken and blood
outpoured, fill us with your compassion, that we may hear the cries of

the hungry and reach out to those in need.

Engender in us a thirst for justice, that the hungry will be satisfied and the rich sent empty away.

Roll away our apathy that, with arms outstretched,
we may offer life in place of death and hope in the face of despair.

Amen.

Overcoming the Cross of hunger

Risen Lord,
shed your light on those who live in the shadow of death and warm the hearts of those who have lost hope, that they who daily bear the cross of hunger may find your Promised Land, and move from slavery to freedom.

As we proclaim your Easter song help us to die to greed and rise to justice, to abandon apathy and take up action, that rich and poor together may travel the road to freedom, and be restored to your resurrection life.

Amen.



E: EASTER SUNDAY



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Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is celebrated on Sunday, and marks the end of Holy Week, the end of Lent, the last day of the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday), and is the beginning of the Easter season of the liturgical year.

As we know from the Gospels, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day following his crucifixion, which would be Sunday. His resurrection marks the triumph of good over evil, sin and death. It is the singular event which proves that those who trust in God and accept Christ will be raised from the dead.

Since Easter represents the fulfilment of God's promises to mankind, it is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar.

In the Gospels, the precise details of the Easter narrative vary slightly, but none of these variances are critical to the main story. In fact, it is argued that the variances are simply matters of style and not substance. Despite the variances, the key aspects of the Easter story all match. Above all,

they agree that the tomb of Christ was indeed empty, which is the most essential fact.

Based on direct evidence from the mid-second century, it is believed that Easter was regularly celebrated from the earliest days of the Church.

On this greatest day of the year, all fasting and sombre thoughts are banished. 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 Saviour 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!*





Wesołych Świąt Wielkanocnych



Happy Easter

Prayer for *Easter*

Almighty Father, I thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead and redeemed humankind. Fill us with the fire of the Holy Spirit, that we may be faithful disciples and enthusiastic witnesses of our Catholic faith. Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed.



THE EASTER SEASON

Following Easter Sunday, the season of Easter begins and lasts until Pentecost.

Length. The Easter Season is fifty days, not forty days, like Lent, or four weeks or slightly less, like Advent. The Easter Season extends from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. It is sometimes known as the “Festival of Weeks,” seven weeks of seven days (49 days), plus one, the fiftieth day, Pentecost.

The Octave of Easter. The first eight days of the Easter Season are known as the Octave of Easter. Easter is the greatest Christian feast, so great, in fact, that it cannot be celebrated adequately on a single one day. All eight days from Easter Sunday to the Second Sunday of Easter are considered solemnities, the Church’s highest-ranking feast, and each day is celebrated with festivity and joy.

The Easter Novena. The last nine days of the Easter Season extend from Ascension Thursday to Pentecost Sunday, a novem, Latin for “nine.” Jesus instructed his disciples “not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait ... [because] in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:4,5). The nine days from Ascension to Pentecost are a novena, a period of prayer before the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The Easter Liturgical Colour. The liturgical colour for the Easter Season is white. Gold is not a liturgical colour, but it may be used to accent the white. Together, they are symbols of joy and glory, as well as the Resurrection.

The Easter Liturgical Word. The special word for the Easter Season is Alleluia. It is used for the dismissal from Mass, and it is added to the antiphons and responses for the Liturgy of the Hours. It is only found in the Book of Revelation (19:1,3,4,6), and it is an exclamation of great joy that means “Praise God!” the sentiment of the Easter Season.

Easter Eating. The self-denial of Lent is set aside during the Easter Season. It is not a time of fasting, but rather a season of celebration, a time for “a feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines” (Is 25:6). Jesus once said that “As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast” (Mk 2:19b), and because Jesus was with his disciples for forty days from his Resurrection to his Ascension

(Acts 1:3), it was not a time of fasting then, and so it is not a time of fasting now.

The Major Easter Symbol. The foremost symbol of Easter is the Christ Candle, also known as the Easter Candle or the Paschal Candle. It represents the Risen Christ who is the Light of the World (Jn 8:12; see also 1:4-5,9 and 12:46). The candle is given a prominent location during the Easter Season, usually in the sanctuary or somewhere in the front of the church, and after Pentecost it is moved back to its usual place.

The Easter Sacraments. The Easter Sacraments are the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. Because these sacraments are celebrated at the Easter Vigil when catechumens and candidates are welcomed into the Church, they are also featured throughout the Easter Season. It is the preferred season to celebrate Baptisms within Sunday Mass, and the ideal time to celebrate First Holy Communion as well as Confirmation.

Easter Scripture Texts. The gospels of the Easter Season focus on the appearances of Jesus after his Resurrection, near his tomb, in the Upper Room, on the road to Emmaus, and along the Sea of Galilee. The featured New Testament book throughout the Easter Season for both the first reading on Sundays and every weekday is the Acts of the Apostles, a powerful statement that the risen Christ remains alive and well within the Christian Community. The second readings on the Sundays of Easter are taken from the first letter of Peter in Year A, the first letter of John in Year B, and the Book of Revelation in Year C.



The Feast of the Ascension

For 40 days after his resurrection on Easter Sunday, the Bible says that Jesus travelled and preached with his apostles, preparing them for his departure from Earth.

The Feast of the Ascension marks the moment Jesus literally ascended into heaven before his disciples, at the village of Bethany, near Jerusalem.

Acts provides the longest account of Christ's farewell to his disciples, bidding them to preach the word of God and assuring them of his eventual return for the Second Coming, the day of judgement in which the virtuous will be saved, and the wrongdoers condemned.

"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight," the book says.

"They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven'."

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus Christ, right before your Ascension into heaven you told your apostles to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth upon receiving the Holy Spirit. May I be similarly inspired to spread your Gospel message in word and deed, according to your will for me. And may I do so prudently and joyfully, with your help, your guidance, and your grace! And remembering this glorious event, help me to seek what is above, Heaven, where you are seated at the right hand of God the Father!



The Feast of Pentecost



Happy birthday to the Catholic Church! Happy birthday to you, who are the body of the Church!

We're all familiar with our own birthdays, and we celebrate them because they mark the day of the year in which we entered into this life. But did you know you have a second birthday?

Because you are part of the body of the Church, Pentecost is the Church's birthday, and yours as well. And like any birthday, it's a cause for celebration.

The word Pentecost is Greek, and it means "50th day." Fifty days after Easter Sunday, we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and their followers, and the beginning of their Earthly ministry to make disciples of all nations.

Pentecost is also a Jewish holiday, which the Jews use to celebrate the end of Passover. Jews celebrate the gift of the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai on this day. But we, as Catholics celebrate the birth of our Church.

At Pentecost, the Apostles and their followers were gathered in a room. Jews from all over the world were gathered with Peter, the leader of the Apostles and the Eleven. At this time, a great wind blew, and a flame appeared as a tongue of fire, which split itself into many individual flames above the heads of all those present. The Holy Spirit came upon these people, and each began to speak in tongues. Despite the fact many had no common language, they were

Others who were not so blessed, accused those speaking in tongues of being drunk, but Peter arose and addressed the crowd, explaining that it was only 9 o'clock, and that this phenomenon was not intoxication, but rather this was the work of the Holy Spirit, prophesied in the scripture.

Peter then called all those present to be baptised and about three thousand people were baptised that day.

These people were among the first Catholics, and Peter is the first pope of the Catholic Church.

The symbols of Pentecost are the flame, wind, and the dove, which represents the Holy Spirit. The colour of Pentecost is red, and the priest wears red vestments on this day. Parishioners are also invited to wear red on this day. Red decorations as well as celebrations are appropriate, similar to any other birthday. Special prayers are often said just for Pentecost.



The Prayer for the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who, before ascending into heaven, didst promise to send the Holy Ghost to finish Thy work in the souls of Thy Apostles and Disciples, deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to me, that He may perfect in my soul the work of Thy grace and Thy love.

Grant me the Spirit of Wisdom that I may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal,
the Spirit of Understanding to enlighten my mind with the light of Thy divine truth,
the Spirit of Counsel that I may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining Heaven,
the Spirit of Fortitude that I may bear my cross with Thee, and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation,
the Spirit of Knowledge that I may know God and know myself and grow perfect in the science of the Saints,
the Spirit of Piety that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable,
the Spirit of Fear that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God, and may dread in any way to displease Him.

Mark me, dear Lord, with the sign of Thy true disciples and animate me in all things with Thy Spirit. Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Scottish Easter Traditions

1. Easter egg hunts



First of all, an easter egg is a hollow, egg-shaped chocolate treat. Children (and adults!) all over the country look forward to their baskets of Easter eggs, which they receive on Easter Sunday.

Children are told that the eggs are delivered by the Easter Bunny.

Yes, that's right – a rabbit.



The story of the Easter Bunny comes, originally, from German folk stories. The rabbit lays the eggs and delivers them to the children if they have been good over the Easter period.

Easter Egg hunts often take place on Easter morning, if the weather is good. Adults hide small Easter eggs in the garden, house, or village and the children must follow clues in order to find them. Usually, there are enough Easter eggs for all the children to enjoy.

2. Egg painting

Eggs, as you may by now have guessed, are a big part of Easter in Britain. They symbolise new life and represent the rebirth of Jesus.

Before we had chocolate eggs, children would often decorate real eggs to mark the occasion. A lot of children still enjoy doing this, but the chocolate eggs are far more popular of course!

3. Egg Rolling

On Easter Sunday, many Scottish families participate in an egg rolling contest. After they're boiled and painted, the decorated eggs are taken to the park where they are rolled down a hill. The person whose egg rolls the farthest distance without breaking is the winner of the contest.



4. Hot Cross Buns

Hot cross buns are another delicious tradition in UK. These raisin-filled buns are toasted, lathered in butter and before being enjoyed with a nice cup of tea.



The crosses symbolise the Christian belief that Jesus died on the cross for their sins.

Traditionally, they would be eaten on Good Friday

5. Easter Sunday Dinner

A roast dinner, usually of Roast Lamb, is traditional in Scotland on Easter Sunday



6. Simnel Cake

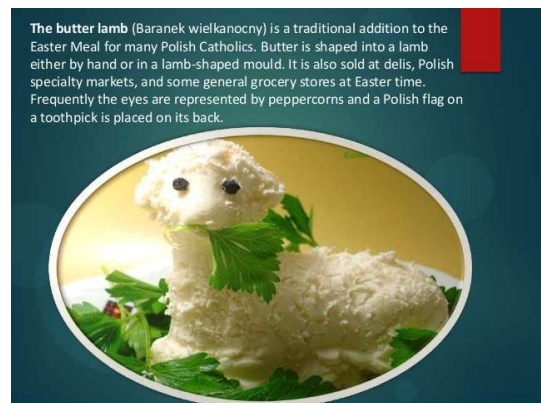
Simnel cake has been eaten since medieval times as both a rich, sweet treat and a symbolic ritual. The fruit **cake** is topped with eleven marzipan balls to represent the eleven apostles of Christ, minus Judas. Packed with fruit, spices and marzipan. It used to be eaten on Mothering Sunday which occurs during Lent but is now associated with Easter.



Polish Easter Traditions

Easter breakfast

On Easter Sunday after the Sunrise Service, families sit down and eat together. Tables are covered with a white cloth and are decorated with Easter eggs, fluffy chicks, and catkin or fresh flowers, which create a spring atmosphere. The basket with blessed food is placed in the centre. Easter breakfast begins with sharing blessed eggs, a tradition with similar symbolic significance to the sharing of the Christmas wafer. On this solemn morning, the food that was blessed on the previous day is eaten first. Then follow the traditional sour rye soup, meat, cold cuts, pâté, stuffed eggs, and for dessert: babka (sweet yeast cake), cheesecake and mazurek (pastry with a generous layer of chocolate or dulce de leche icing decorated with dried fruit and nuts). Children love being given chocolate bunnies, chicks and lambs.



The **butter lamb** (Baranek wielkanocny) is a traditional addition to the Easter Meal for many Polish Catholics. Butter is shaped into a lamb either by hand or in a lamb-shaped mould. It is also sold at delis, Polish specialty markets, and some general grocery stores at Easter time. Frequently the eyes are represented by peppercorns and a Polish flag on a toothpick is placed on its back.

Easter Monday

Śmigus–Dyngus – Wet Monday is celebrated on the second day of Easter. On this day, people splash others with water: both relatives and strangers. The tradition derives from old pagan customs related to the symbolic awakening of nature and spring cleansing of dirt and illnesses. Girls that were soaked on this day increased their chances of getting married.

In many villages in southern Poland, the tradition of sprinkling fields with holy water on Easter Monday is still very much alive. It is often accompanied by tricks played on neighbours, such as changing gates, placing farming tools on roofs or hiding water buckets.



Easter games

People in Poland have played 'cracking eggs' for centuries. Two people strike Easter eggs held in their palms against each other. The holder of the stronger, uncracked egg is the winner.



PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Verses to Our Lady of Mount Carmel as prayed at the Carmelite friary at Aylesford, Kent

V. Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel;

R. Be our constant hope.

V. Mary, perfect disciple of the Lord;

R. Make us also faithful to him.

V. Mary, Flower of Carmel;

R. Fill us with your joy.

V. Virgin Mary, beauty of Carmel;

R. Smile upon your family.

V. Gentle Mother of Carmel;

R. Embrace me as your child.

V. Mary, Mother beyond compare

R. Remember your children forever.

V. Holy Virgin, Star of the Sea;

R. Be our beacon of light.

V. Protecting Veil;

R. Shelter us in the mantle of your love.

V. Mary, conceived without sin;

R. Pray for us who have recourse to you.

Let us pray:

O Father of all, look upon us as your children,
and support us with your strength.

May we, who honour the memory of

Our Lady of Mount Carmel,

always rejoice in her unfailing protection.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**