

Understanding the Mass

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To become better disciples, we all need to commit to learning more about our faith and deepening our relationship with Jesus and Mary. As a community of believers, we continue to seek opportunities to supplement our existing adult formation offerings.

This is the sixth of a series of monthly faith formation articles. The objective of the planned series of articles is to provide our parishioners with further insights on the tenets of our faith. We will briefly address the purpose and key dates of Lent and Easter.

Through His sacrifice Jesus has reconciled us with our Father, secured for us a place in His Heavenly Kingdom and given us hope that we too will rise again in both body and soul and live in His eternal presence. Lent and Easter is a time for each of us to reflect on how we are living our lives and in particular if we are following Jesus's Golden Rule: To love God and our neighbor as ourself. We encourage you to take the time to reflect on this article as well as reflect on any questions you might have about your faith or topics that we can address in future articles. Even if you feel you understand the monthly topic, please take the time to be open to the Holy Spirit's inspiration to help you deepen your understanding.

The Lenten Season

Lent is a solemn religious observance in the Christian liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes approximately 40 days later, excluding Sundays on Holy Thursday. Lent is a period of reflection, repentance, and preparation for the celebration of Easter. On Ash Wednesday, Catholics receive ashes on their foreheads in the shape of a cross, symbolizing repentance and mortality.



Fasting:

Catholics aged 18 to 59 are obliged to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, limiting themselves to one full meal and two smaller meals.



Abstinence:

Catholics aged 14 and older are required to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and all Fridays during Lent.



Prayer:

Increased focus on prayer, attending Mass, participating in the Stations of the Cross, and engaging in personal prayer & reflection.



Almsgiving:

Acts of charity and generosity to help those in need. The roots of the word "alms" can be found in ancient Latin meaning "mercy and pity".



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The Lenten Season (continued)

The Easter Triduum refers to the three holiest days in the Church's liturgical year: Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. We then enter into the Easter Season- a season of joy, symbolic of the new age of Resurrection and concludes on Pentecost Sunday, the fiftieth and last day of the Easter Season.



Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday)

- **Date:** Thursday before Easter Sunday.
- **Significance:** Commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples.
- **Traditions:** Celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper, washing of feet, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.



Good Friday

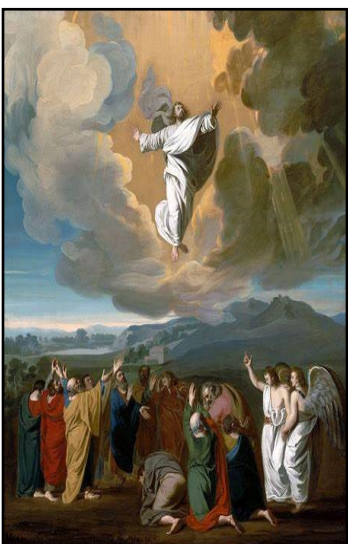
- **Date:** Friday before Easter Sunday.
- **Significance:** Commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.
- **Traditions:** Stations of the Cross, veneration of the Cross, and the Liturgy of the Word.



Holy Saturday

- **Date:** Saturday before Easter Sunday.
- **Significance:** A day of anticipation and waiting for the Resurrection.
- **Traditions:** Easter Vigil Mass, lighting of the Easter fire, and the blessing of the Paschal candle.

The Easter Season



Easter Sunday

- **Date:** Celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox.
- **Significance:** Celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Traditions:** Easter Mass, festive meals, and the exchange of Easter greetings.



Pentecost Sunday

- **Date:** 50 days after Easter Sunday.
- **Significance:** Commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles.
- **Traditions:** Special liturgies, prayers for the Holy Spirit, and the color red symbolizing the flames of the Holy Spirit.

If you have suggestion for a topic or topics you would like to be the subject of a future article or have any questions on this article please contact us via email at engagingdisciples@ihmparish.net