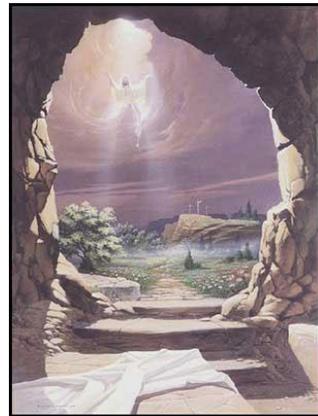




Celebrating
Eastertide





Celebrating Eastertide

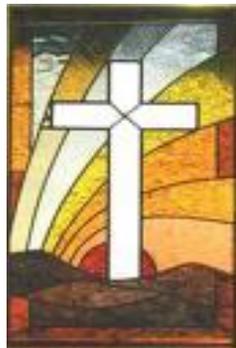
Each week for the seven weeks of Eastertide, or Paschaltide, as it is also known, we will take part of the Gospel reading for the following Sunday for special consideration.

Suggested format:

On each Monday of Eastertide the Gospel extract might be read at assembly, or each class head / class tutor might read the Gospel to his/her class, possibly at registration time, or at some other appropriate time when they meet the class.

For the rest of the week all subject teachers might be invited to say the 'prayer for the week' at the beginning of each class that they have with all their students.

A prayer for the week sheet is attached and can be photocopied for all teachers. Indeed, if it is deemed helpful, each student might also be given a copy of the prayer.



Assembly for the Beginning of the New Term

Monday of the Second Week of Easter



Reader 1:

We have just returned to school after celebrating Easter, the greatest feast in the Church's Year!

Many of us tend to think of Christmas as being the highlight of the year – and the most important of Christian celebrations. However, if there had been no Resurrection then there would be no Christmas to celebrate! By his resurrection Jesus broke the power of death over us and on Easter Sunday we celebrate the fact that Christ IS risen! If we REALLY believe this then our joyful “Alleluia” should be plain for everyone to see in all of our lives!

Reader 2:

St. Paul wrote:

“If Christ has not been raised, then your faith is a delusion ... the truth is that Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised” (1 Cor: 15:17, 20).

The fact that Jesus rose from the dead is not just some pleasant religious teaching – it is a truth that should change our lives if we truly believe it! Imagine, as Christians we **know** that death is only the doorway to the next stage of life!

Reader 3:

Before Easter we undertook to deny ourselves something, or to do something positive in order to prepare ourselves for Holy Week and Easter. Lent is a time when we reflect on our lives and try to reassess just how we are living them.

Eastertide, or Paschaltide, is a time of celebration. And while the Church puts aside forty days of penance and fasting to prepare for Easter, it sets aside **FIFTY** days to **celebrate** Easter.

Many of us are not even aware that the celebration of Easter continues long after Easter Sunday! These days of “feasting” rather than “fasting” make up the seven weeks between Easter and Pentecost. While we celebrate the miracle of the Resurrection, we are also looking forward to celebrating the feast which marks the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. To celebrating the gift of the presence of the Holy Spirit in our own lives.



Scripture Reading:

In Yesterday's Gospel we heard from St. John of Thomas' reaction to the news that Jesus has appeared to the apostles:

'When the disciples said: "We have seen the Lord", he answered, "Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my my hand into his side, I refuse to believe". (Jn. 20:25)

In next Sunday's Gospel we hear from St. Luke how difficult it was for Jesus's followers to truly believe what they were hearing:

"The disciples told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread.

They were still talking about all this when Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said: "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have". And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet. Their joy was so great that they could not believe it, and they stood dumbfounded; so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes".

(Luke 24: 36-43)

Reflection and closing prayer:

Having died such a public death on the Cross now Jesus was truly alive.

It is not surprising that the disciples were alarmed when they saw him even though they had heard the witness of those who had already met him. This was all too hard to believe. But here was Jesus – alive and apparently hungry!

For us too it is sometimes difficult to really understand what happened that Easter Sunday morning.

We pray this morning that when we doubt, like Thomas, and the other disciples, we will remember their astonishment at meeting the risen Jesus.

Prayer

Lord, give us the grace to believe, and grant that, through our faith we may always live in the joy of your Resurrection, communicating the Good News to others by the way in which we live our lives.

Glory be to the Father ...



Eastertide Week Three

As we continue to celebrate Eastertide we listen to the Gospel reading for next Sunday:
_the Fourth Sunday of Easter



Jesus said:

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep... I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice and there will be only one flock and one shepherd. (John 10: 11; 15-16)

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Prayer

Lord we thank you for loving us; for caring for each one of us as the shepherd cares for this sheep. May we always trust in you, secure in knowing that your love surrounds us all; that you are the Good Shepherd.



Eastertide Week Four:

Gospel reading for the Fifth Sunday of Easter.



Jesus said to his disciples:

“I am the true vine ... Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself, but must remain part of the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away, he withers ...

If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it. It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples”. (John 15: 5; 7-8)

Prayer

Lord we pray that we may truly be your disciples. That we may remember that you are the vine on which we grow. You invite us to make our home in you and remind us you have made your home in us.

May we always consciously trust in you; be thankful for your loving care; and may we care for others in our daily lives so that they may know that we are your disciples. Amen.



Eastertide Week Five



We are now in the Fifth week of Eastertide as we listen to the Gospel Reading for next Sunday.

Jesus said to his disciples:

“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. If you keep my commandments you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my own joy may be in you and your joy be complete. This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you...

You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last; and then the Father will give you anything you ask him in my name. What I command you is to love one another.” (John 15:9-12;16-17)

Prayer

Lord, you have commissioned us to go out and bear fruit; to love one another. And you have assured us that the Father will give us anything we ask in your name.

Help us always to remember that, just as you accepted the death on a cross which led to your resurrection, sometimes - whatever our prayer – we may need to accept what seems like disaster for our prayer to be truly answered; but that, no matter what, You are there, always loving and caring for us. Amen.

Eastertide - Week Six



Next Sunday, we celebrate the Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord.

The Gospel tells us that :

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven and said to them: “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers; in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven; there at the right hand of God he took his place while they, going out, preached everywhere the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

(Mark 16:15;17-20)

Prayer

Lord, since Easter, week by week we have heard readings which have called us to witness to you, to listen to your voice, to make our home in you and to love one another. Now, as we approach the feast of your Ascension we hear you tell us to “Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Good News to all creation”.

Through our Baptism and Confirmation you have blessed us with your Holy Spirit. Help us to open ourselves up to accepting your call to live our lives in you, loving each other as you love each of us. Amen.

Eastertide – Week Seven

During the final week of Eastertide the enclosed Prayer Service for Pentecost 2009 might be celebrated and the prayer to the Holy Spirit used in class each day.

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
there shall be another creation.

And you shall renew the
face of the earth.

Let us pray. O God, You have
Instructed the hearts of the
faithful by the light of the
Holy Spirit, grant us in the
same Spirit to be truly wise,
and rejoice in His consolation.
Through Christ our Lord



Eastertide Week Two



Lord, give us the grace to believe,
and grant that, through our faith we
may always live in the joy of your
Resurrection, communicating the
Good News to others by the way in
which we live our lives.

Glory be to the Father ...



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Glory be to the Father ...

Eastertide Week Three



Lord we thank you for loving us;
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shepherd cares for this sheep. May
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knowing that your love surrounds us
all; that you are the Good Shepherd.



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Eastertide Week Four



Lord we pray that we may truly be your disciples. That we may remember that you are the vine on which we grow. You invite us to make our home in you and remind us you have made your home in us.

May we always consciously trust in you; be thankful for your loving care; and may we care for others in our daily lives so that they will know that we are your disciples.



Lord we pray that we may truly be your disciples. That we may remember that you are the vine on which we grow. You invite us to make our home in you and remind us you have made your home in us.

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Eastertide Week Five



Lord, you have commissioned us to go out and bear fruit; to love one another. And you have assured us that the Father will give us anything we ask in your name. Help us always to remember that, just as you accepted the death on a cross which led to your resurrection, sometimes - whatever our prayer – we may need to accept what seems like disaster for our prayer to be truly answered; but that, no matter what, You are there, always loving and caring for us.



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Eastertide Week Six



Lord, since Easter, week by week we have heard readings which have called us to witness to you, to listen to your voice, to make our home in you and to love one another.

Now, as we approach the feast of your Ascension we hear you tell us to “Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Good News to all creation”.

Through our Baptism and Confirmation you have blessed us with your Holy Spirit. Help us to open ourselves up to accepting your call to live our lives in you, loving each other as you love each of us.



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Eastertide Week Seven



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
there shall be another creation.
And you shall renew the
face of the earth.
Let us pray. O God, You have
Instructed the hearts of the
faithful by the light of the
Holy Spirit, grant us in the
Spirit same to be truly wise,
and rejoice in His consolation.
Through Christ our Lord



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