

IMAGES OF LIFE

EASTER 2011



IMAGES OF LIFE // EASTER 2011

50 Days of Easter: The root meaning of the Christian feast of Pentecost, the sustained celebration + culmination of the season of Easter. Not merely celebrated 50 days after Easter as a feast remembering the Spirit dwelling among men, but rather, an entire period of rejoicing from Easter Sunday through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples, fifty days later.

“Only here in this time, between the bursting open of the tomb and, fifty days later, the overflowing of the Holy Spirit, does the full awareness of what it is to live in Christ, with Christ, and through Christ fully dawn. Indeed, those first Christians were the first citizens of the new creation. Now began the breaking open of the future. Now the human community sees life lived as it is meant to be. Now creation is re-created. In this Creation, Jesus, risen, walks among the living to demonstrate the presence of the living God among us. In this period, we are all risen to new life. We all become a new people together.” [Joan Chittester]

Welcome, 3rd Place, to the 50 Days of Easter. Welcome, 3rd Place, to fifty days of new life, sustained joy, feasting, and play. Welcome, 3rd Place, to life with Jesus experienced in fullness. Welcome to Images of Life



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FIFTY DAYS OF EASTER

At a fixed point each day, light a candle as a welcome reminder that Christ is risen both within us and throughout every corner of the world. As Jesus walks in new life among his disciples, we seek to celebrate and 'practice' this new life within our world as well. Practice the discipline of Lectio Divina (Sacred, Responsive Reading of the Scriptures) through following the weekly Lectionary Year A texts for 'Easter A' at <http://textweek.com>.



CHRIST RISEN IN US: CELEBRATION INWARD OF NEW LIFE + SUSTAINED JOY

The 50 Days of Easter are a “period of unmitigated celebration. There is a sense of holy abandonment to this space between the already-but-not-yet feel of life, a kind of reckless giddiness in the church year. For fifty great days, the heart of the Christian community has a sense of ultimate fulfillment” [Joan Chittester]. This celebration begins inwardly, in the deliberate and growing ownership of the Resurrection reality: Christ has defeated death and walks in risen life--his own, and yours as well should you decide to partner with him. A season of sustained joy, Easter is stretched beyond one Sunday throughout a seven-week period of celebration of this life we now live as resurrected creations. How one practices this inward celebration becomes key:

- Refrain from negative self-talk and spiraling self-examination. Lent has passed, and new life is now available through Christ. Enjoy the freedom of victory!
- Pursue practices and behaviors that bring sustained joy in your life. Embrace a new hobby, hang out with friends who make you laugh, and indulge within the freedom that Christ offers.
- Explore faith practices such as singing that emphasize whole body engagement in the truth that you have been set free through Christ. Find a new artist whose work inspires you to live in life, not death!
- Create. Embrace your identity as one fashioned in the image of a Creative, Playful God. Seek to bring something fresh to life within this Easter season.



"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." (Galatians 5:1)

CHRISTRISEN THROUGH US: CELEBRATION OUTWARDS OF FEASTING + PLAY

Embracing the risen Christ through us "celebrates what the rest of the world forgets--the inherent goodness of life itself...Life unadorned and raw is the ultimate high. Everything else is a pale shadow of the real thing. All the excesses in the world--sex, alcohol, drugs, gambling, greed--are simply substitutes for the real thing. They are made for people who have yet to discover the joy of being human, the glory of God among us. It is faith in Christ, in fact, that built joy and excitement, happiness and satisfaction, abandon and trust, fun and holy leisure right into the middle of life in the first place" [Joan Chittester]. This celebration flows outwardly as a natural extension of new freedom experienced inward as the Spirit opens up our life more fully to Himself. The heart of this season is to take this celebration outward--to enjoy feasting, play, and freedom with others as a natural means by which to demonstrate God's goodness to a hurting, closed world. A few suggestions in how to practice this outward celebration:



- Intentionally seek to make weekly Sabbaths playful and fun. Set aside deep self-examination or meditative study, and instead, head outside with others to experience the God of all Creation!
- Host a series of progressive feasts with your friends, simply designed to celebrate life and enjoy fine food and drink together. Savor tastes, smells, and sights during these nights!
- Seek to 'return to childhood' as a means by which to practice play. Join a friend's children in playing imaginary games, or recreate your favorite schoolyard games from childhood. Seek to make this a prayerful exercise in embracing new life!
- Create images that represent new life and post them to 3rd Place's Facebook page.

"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love." (Galatians 5:13)

