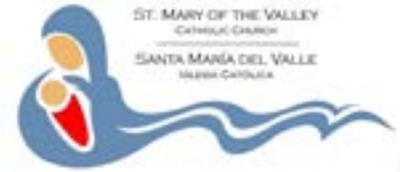


# Families of Faith

ST. MARY OF THE VALLEY PARENT NEWSLETTER  
APRIL 2021



## Rejoice! He is Risen!

JESUS IS RISEN! HE HAS CONQUERED THE GRAVE! WE MUST REJOICE AND BE GLAD!

How do we cultivate and live this joy out? Let's backtrack to Lent. Our prayer, fasting and almsgiving served as means to grow closer to Christ and ultimately be transformed. The transformation shouldn't just stop on Easter but continue. We should continue to pursue our Lord. So continue talking to God. Put him first. By putting Him first you are choosing to live in the spirit of joy.

We receive joy, hope and so many more graces when our relationship with Christ is our priority. Even in our struggles, we are victorious because he is on the side and helps us carry our cross. This is a great reason to rejoice. We have a God that has conquered the grave, a God that is so mighty to save!

If we are putting Him first, it will come natural to put others before ourselves. You are led by this joy of knowing the Lord that you share him with others. ISAIAH 9:3 says "You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy!" We help spread this joy when we share the good news with others and our cup is filled with evermore joy. May we truly rejoice this Easter Tide and share with others the reason for our joy.

## Recipes for Easter

We have 50 days to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Consider making some of these delicious recipes throughout Eastertide.

<https://tinyurl.com/3m6vfr4h>

## Divine Mercy Sunday

Did you know that one can receive special graces on Divine Mercy Sunday (April 11 this year)? Jesus told St Faustina the following:

*I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls, and especially for poor sinners. On that day the very depths of My tender mercy are open. I pour out a whole ocean of graces upon those souls who approach the Fount of My Mercy. The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which graces flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet.*

In order to receive this one must go to confession and receive Holy Communion that day. Jesus promises that the soul that has done these two things will receive complete forgiveness of sins and remission of all punishment. This Divine Mercy Sunday is an invitation to amend our lives and have a fresh new start in our spiritual journey with the Lord. May we not let this grace pass us by.

To learn more about St. Faustina and Divine Mercy, FORMED has a short video with Father Michael Gaitley that can be found at <https://watch.formed.org/divine-mercy-with-fr-michael-gaitley/season:1/videos/faustina-and-the-spread-of-divine-mercy>



## Monthly Devotion: The Blessed Sacrament

Since the 16th century, Catholics have celebrated special devotions each month. The Church traditionally encourages the month of April for increased devotion to Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

We can show our adoration to God in many ways, but in Eucharistic Adoration, we spend time adoring the true presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Every Catholic Church contains a tabernacle in which the Body of Christ is reserved between masses and the faithful are encouraged to come and pray before the Blessed Sacrament in adoration. The practice of Eucharistic adoration on earth not only brings us grace, but prepares us for our life in Heaven. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that, "Adoration is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the "King of Glory," respectful silence in the presence of the "ever greater" God. Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications." (CCC 2628)

This month, why not make a special effort to spend some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament? It doesn't need to be long or elaborate, even a few minutes is a path to spiritual growth.

## Feast Days

**16 - St. Bernadette** - St. Bernadette of Lourdes was best known as one of three girls who received visions from the Virgin Mary in a cave near Lourdes. FORMED has a full-length movie that your family may wish to watch on the life of this Saint and the apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes called [Bernadette](#) or for younger children there is the animated [Bernadette: Princess of Lourdes](#).

**23 - Feast of St. George** - this Saint was a Roman soldier who was martyred for his Christian faith. Over time, legends grew about him and his life, the most well-known being a tale of his fighting a dragon. It can be fun for kids to dress up as knights (with the red cross symbol of St. George) and slay the "dragons" for a day.

**25 - Feast of St. Mark the Evangelist** today celebrates the life of Mark, the author of the Second Gospel. Most of what we know about St. Mark comes largely from the New Testament and early Christian traditions. St. Mark's symbol is a winged lion. This is believed to be derived from his description of St. John the Baptist, as "a voice of one crying out in the desert" (Mark 1:3). The wings come from Ezekiel's vision of four winged creatures as the evangelists.

**28 - Feast of St. Gianna Molla** - St. Gianna Beretta Molla is the first canonized woman who was a "working mom." She was a wife, a mother and a doctor. She is the patron saint of mothers, physicians and unborn children.

**29- Feast of St. Catherine of Siena** - St. Catherine is one of the Doctors of the Church. She received no formal education yet became the adviser to religious leaders, emperors and kings all over Europe. She persuaded Italian authorities to oust an imposter Pope and persuaded Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome. She is credited with composing over 400 letters, her Dialogue, which is her definitive work, and her prayers.

