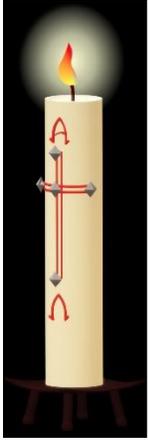


# THE EASTER SEASON



The Easter Season extends from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday. This period of seven weeks or fifty days has its origin in *The Acts of the Apostles* (2:1-11) which describes the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on the Jewish feast of Weeks (Shavuot). That feast was also known by the Greek name “Pentecost” because it was celebrated fifty days after the feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread.

The unity of the Easter Season, as an extended time of rejoicing, is also indicated by the fact that this Sunday is called the Second Sunday of Easter and not the first Sunday after Easter. It is also why no other feast can take precedence over the Sundays of Easter.

In 2021 ANZAC Day fell on a Sunday and although it is an important celebration in the Australian community, the Mass on 25 April was that of the Fourth Sunday of Easter. The one exception is the *Ascension of the Lord*. In many countries it is moved from the Thursday of the sixth week to the seventh Sunday of Easter

The three-year cycle of readings continues during the Easter Season and this year we continue to follow the Year B readings. Across the three-year cycle, the first reading is always taken from *The Acts of the Apostles*. Written by St Luke, it is the story of the growth of the early Christian communities and the role of the apostles as witnesses of the resurrection.

The Gospel readings on the Sundays of Easter are taken from *John’s Gospel* which presents an account of the teachings of Jesus that is different from that found in the other three Gospels.

Another sign of the unity of the season is the Easter Candle, an image of the risen Lord. It remains near the altar until the evening of Pentecost Sunday. It is lit during all Masses throughout the Easter season.

To highlight the festive nature of the season many traditional prayers are also changed. The *Angelus* is replaced by the *Regina Caeli* and Alleluia is added to many prayers.

*Paul Crowley*

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