

How to get the most out of the Easter season



My birthday lands in the middle of April, which means, depending on the year, I might be celebrating during the end of Lent or the beginning of Easter. Holy Week birthdays have always been interesting. I remember one year in grade school when I had my birthday dinner and opened presents before attending Holy Thursday Mass. And then there was the unforgettable 21st birthday that landed on Good Friday (though I got lucky because I was on a service trip in Honduras, and you ate whatever they gave you – and they handed me ice cream). Then, on the flip side, there were years when my birthday was so close to Easter that my family combined the celebrations with extended family.

This year, I get to celebrate my birthday during the glorious season of Easter. But as I prep for my birthday, and as I prepped for Easter, I found myself feeling a bit off.

Last Lent was very – for lack of a better word – Lenty. This year, on the other hand, it fell flat for me. None of my added sacrifices really stuck or felt as if they made a difference in my life. And so, as I transitioned from Lent into Easter, there was part of me that didn't feel like I was ready or deserved to enter into the Easter season with full gusto.

And then I remembered a similar [situation I experienced last year](#) – when I was first able to return to Mass. If you've been around since then, you might remember when I shared how I didn't feel the deep yearning for the Eucharist in the same way I knew other people did. Despite the months of physical distance, I had felt close to Our Lord due to the blessings of livestreamed Masses, Eucharistic adoration and the efforts of

my parish priests to keep in touch with and spiritually feed their parishioners.

But as I learned last year, you don't have to feel ready before taking a step of faith into whatever season is before you. Sometimes, you just need to do the work in order for your emotions to catch up to you.

So this Easter, I'm committing to some serious feasting. Not overindulgence, of course. But just because my fasting was lacking this Lent, that doesn't mean my feasting has to follow suit.

But just as it's best to go into Lent with a full plan, I'm going to do the same for Easter.

First, I'm going to commit to honoring the Sabbath. For me, this is twofold. While I've been better in recent months about not letting my work – both professional and household – leak into Sundays, I'm going to be even more rigorous about this. This means I might need to be more on top of life during the rest of the week, but I know allowing myself a day completely dedicated to rest is important, not only for me but as a way to honor the Creator.

Second, I'm going to get creative with feasting. Whether that means soliciting tried-and-true recipes from friends or flipping through the recipes offered in my parish's "Mass Every Sunday" book to see what fellow parishioners have to suggest, I'm going to try and make Sunday dinner an event, even if it is just for me and my roommate or a few friends who are able to join us. If I'm feeling really ambitious, I might even try to find a recipe from a specific culture that matches with a saint for that week.

I'm also going to copy [Scott Warden's idea](#) of doing something to help my prayer life. As it is the year of St. Joseph, I might add a few books to my reading list, including "[Meet Your Spiritual Father](#)" by Mark Miravalle and one (or both) of the

recent publications by OSV, "[Model of Faith: Reflecting on the Litany of Saint Joseph](#)" by Leonard J. DeLorenzo and "[A Man Named Joseph: Guardian for Our Times](#)" by Joe Heschmeyer.

Whatever you choose to do during this Easter season, I hope you don't disregard the opportunity to celebrate. Outside of Ordinary Time, the Easter season is the longest liturgical season of the year, and that should mean something to us. For even when we don't feel like celebrating, the Lord asks us to remember how much we have to rejoice about. So let's sing "Alleluia" and celebrate!

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