

# Why Are We Sprinkled with Holy Water during the Easter Season?

Kristopher Seaman

The Fifty Days of Easter—from Easter Sunday through Pentecost—are “celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day” (General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar, 22). In many parish communities, the season of Lent is one of a retreat for the parish. The elect, that is, those catechumens ready for the Easter sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation) who were sent to the cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent for the Rite of Election, are prayed over during the three scrutinies, which ask that God root out all that is not life-giving in their lives. The baptized community is focusing on what it means to be God’s people and what prevents the community from being faithful disciples.

Lenten traditions of fasting, abstaining from meat, penitential rites, celebrations of God’s abundant mercy in the sacrament of Reconciliation, evenings of recollection, and possibly even retreats help build deeper bonds of unity or communion with God and the community called the Church.

Lent is a retreat when the community and those looking at entering the Catholic Church seek to “put on Christ,” as in the case of the elect, or search out the depths of what it means to have “put on Christ” as a baptized person. The Easter season is then a feast of “joyful exultation” not just for Christ Jesus rising from the dead, but for God’s triumph over death by raising Christ, and for all of us who participate in this mystery of life from death.

On the Sundays of Easter we have the option to renew our identity as Catholic Christians by renewing our baptismal promises to reject evil and all that is not life-giving, and by



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adhering to Christ and all that builds life. The renewal takes the place of the penitential rite at the beginning of Mass. When the presiding priest processes throughout the worship space, sprinkling water on the liturgical assembly, the assembly makes the Sign of the Cross. In Baptism, one is immersed in water while the presiding minister says, “[Name], I baptize you in the name of the Father, [immerse] and of the Son, [immerse] and of the Holy Spirit [immerse].”

In Baptism, we become adopted daughters and sons of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In addition, we become members of the Church as persons within the community of the Church. The renewal of baptismal promises and the sprinkling with the holy water blessed at the Paschal Vigil before the elect were immersed into the

font is a renewal of our identities as Christian disciples.

Discipleship that is “made” in Baptism is renewed each Sunday as we participate in Eucharist. Discipleship is communion with the triune God and a communion with the Church, the body of Christ. Easter is about Christ rising from the bonds of death to life. Renewing our baptismal promises during the Easter season is most apropos, because we too are called to die to self and adhere to Christ, whose Father raises us from the bonds of sin and death.

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