As we celebrate Easter Sunday this weekend, it can be helpful to pause and think, “What does this really mean for my family? What is the actual significance of Jesus’ Resurrection from the dead for my family in our day-to-day life?” In this reflection, I’d like to offer a few reasons why Easter is so important for families. Perhaps it can help us to embrace the celebration of this day more fully this year and for years to come.

#1: Because of Jesus’ Resurrection, we no longer have to fear death. This is a challenging reality for each of us to think about. Death is painful. Grief is necessary. But because of Jesus, we no longer have to fear it. Because of Him, we know that death is not the end. We can all hope for eternal life for ourselves, and for those who have died before us. As a parent of four boys, one of my biggest fears in life is losing one of my sons, having them die before me. I know many who have experienced this loss. But, I need to remember that Jesus came to conquer death, and proved His victory over it with His Resurrection! Embracing this attitude will help me live more freely each day with them, not fearing the worst in the future, but enjoying the present. And perhaps even, by raising them in the faith, together we can look forward to heaven together one day. For in death we as Christians believe we will receive our ultimate reward. So, Jesus “flipped the script” on death. Instead of fear of what comes next, we should look forward with hope, joy, and optimism.

“But now Christ has been raised from the dead …” - 1 Corinthians 15:20 (NABRE)
#2: Easter Sunday is THE primary reason for our faith! This day is the high point of our faith, because as St. Paul said, “if Christ has not been raised, then empty [too] is our preaching; empty, too, your faith.” - 1 Cor. 15:14 (NABRE). Without His rising, there is no reason for our faith. Jesus came not just to show us how to live and to die for us, but to rise from the dead and conquer death FOR us! What great news this is! So, this weekend, please do celebrate with fullness of heart in gratitude for God’s great gift!

#3: This day marks the beginning of the longest season of the church year, aside from ordinary time. We get to celebrate Easter for FIFTY DAYS! So, if you thought Lent was tough, believe me it was worth it. Our 40 days of mourning and preparing now turn into 50 days of celebration and rejoicing! So, let the party begin! Be excited to end your fasting, and enjoy this time of celebration, renewal, and hope!

So, with Lent behind us, how can we full embrace the season of Easter? The other day I was chatting with someone who said the Church has lots of great resources for Lent and Advent, but what about the seasons of Christmas and Easter? Here are some practical suggestions from my home to yours:

1. **Sing the Alleluia daily as a family.** Some homes take up the practice of actually “burying” the Alleluia during Lent. You may have noticed how it is not sung at Mass during Lent. Some families write the word alleluia on a piece of paper, bury it outside, then dig it up on Easter to signify how our time of rejoicing is here! Sing the Alleluia daily with your family all of Easter; it’s a great way to start the day.

2. **Go to Mass MORE frequently.** Now that we know more fully why Easter is such a reason for rejoicing, perhaps it will cultivate in us a desire to attend Mass more frequently. This is where we get to celebrate His death and rising for us each day anew. Maybe start by trying for one extra Mass as a family per month, then growing from there. It will pay dividends in the life of your home!

3. **Pick one way to spoil yourself this Easter.** Now, this is a new idea of mine, and by no means a common practice of the church. BUT, during Lent we all make sacrifices to remind us of our need to repent and to remember the fact that we will die. As we hear on Ash Wednesday, “You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” Perhaps for the Easter Season, we can pick up one habit of spoiling ourselves to remind us that God loves us and that we also live in the hope of RISING with Him! Of course, I wouldn’t do anything that would take you away from God, but how about one extra sweet per day? Or more time to read a new book or find a wholesome TV show to enjoy? God has certainly “spoiled us” by sending His Son to save us. Perhaps spoiling ourselves isn’t always such a bad thing.

Until next time, I hope you enjoy sharing this article with others, and celebrating Christ’s Presence in your homes. If you ever need anything at all, please contact me at 361-573-0828 x 2665 or jreyes@victoriadiocese.org. God Bless!

All for the Sacred and Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, all through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, all in union with St. Joseph. Amen.