

HOLY HEARTS & HOMES

VOL. 2, NO. 4

Liturgical Living Newsletter

APRIL 2025

“Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common.” Acts 4:32

APRIL: Month of the *Blessed Sacrament*

Pope's Intention: For the use of the new technologies.

Let us pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.



Many are familiar with *The Angelus*, traditionally recited three times a day: 6am, noon, and 6pm. During the Easter season, the *Angelus* is replaced by the *Regina Caeli*. Pick one or all times to join in this beautiful Catholic practice!

Prayer Corner:

Regina Caeli (Queen of Heaven)

- V. Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
R. For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.
V. Has risen, as He said, alleluia.
R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, Who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech Thee, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Holiest of Weeks: Holy Week

How is Lent going for you? Perhaps it has been one of the best, or maybe it has been challenging. Now is the time to refocus with a renewed love during the remaining days of Lent and prepare for Holy Week. Holy Week is the most sacred seven days each year in the Catholic Church. It encompasses the crescendo of Lent, the sorrow of Good Friday, and the joy of the Easter Vigil leading up to Easter. One way to prayerfully enter into Holy Week would be to read the Gospel each day and then spend quiet time with God pondering what He is placing on your heart. The following excerpt is from *Holy Week 2025 - Catholic Answers Guide to Holy Week* from Catholic.com and from Kendra Tierney's book *The Catholic All Year Compendium: Liturgical Living for Real Life*:

Palm Sunday: Jesus Enters Jerusalem - Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, a day that echoes with the elated cries of "Hosanna in the highest heaven!" (Matt. 21:9). Jesus enters Jerusalem, where crowds lay palm branches at His feet, recognizing Him as the long-awaited Messiah. The symbolic act of laying down palm branches was a gesture of homage reserved for kings and dignitaries in ancient Israel, in this case acknowledging Jesus as the rightful King of Israel (Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19). As Jesus enters the holy city riding a donkey, the crowd is filled with anticipation, reverence, and jubilation. Ideas to honor the day: The priest's vestments will be red. Try wearing red to Mass to remind you of Jesus's suffering. For dinner, serve Middle Eastern food such as falafel, hummus, or flatbread.

Holy Week Monday and Tuesday: The Gospel for the Monday of Holy Week is the Anointing at Bethany (Jn 12:1-8), when Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, anointed the feet of Jesus with expensive



perfumed oil and wiped them with her hair. Other events remembered on Holy Monday include Jesus cursing the fig tree for failing to give fruit and Jesus cleansing the temple, when He overturned tables and chased out the money changers with a whip made of cord. The Gospel for the Tuesday (Jn 13: 21-33, 33-36) of Holy Week is remembered as the day on which Jesus predicted His coming death. Ideas to honor the day: Cleanse a room or rooms in your house by removing items no longer needed and donating to those in need. Reflect on the fruits God has bestowed upon you and share that gift with another person.

Holy Wednesday: A Day of Preparation - On Wednesday of Holy Week, Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, decides to betray Jesus, handing Christ over to the high priests and Temple guards (Luke 22:6). Since Judas was acting as their spy, this day has become known as “Spy Wednesday.” Some traditions consider it a day of preparation. A close study of the Gospels shows that the betrayal involves detailed and time-sensitive planning. Ideas to honor the day: If you have kids/grandkids, hide 30 pieces of silver (quarters) in a room. Then, let the kids find them and see how they react to finding the silver. Talk about how dangerous greed can be, and how easy it is to make bad decisions where money and power are concerned. Participate in Tenebrae either by recreating at home, finding a service held in your area, if available, or online.

Maundy Thursday: Jesus Washes the Feet of His Disciples - Maundy Thursday, also known as Holy Thursday, commemorates the Last Supper. On Holy Thursday, Jesus institutes the Eucharist and washes the feet of his apostles. This is captured in John 13:5, which depicts the humility, service, and love of Christ that we, His disciples, are called to emulate. In a culture where washing feet was a task relegated to servants, Jesus, the Son of God, takes on the role of a servant and thereby ordains His apostles as the first ministerial priests of the New Covenant (see Matt 20:25-28; 18:1-4). The season of Lent ends on the evening of Holy Thursday, which commences the Easter Triduum or “Paschal Triduum,” a three-day period named after Jesus offering Himself as the New Covenant Passover Lamb of God, and which concludes with Evening Prayer (Vespers) on Easter Sunday. Ideas to honor the day: Attend the Mass of Our Lord’s Supper. Consider having a family foot washing. At the conclusion of Holy Thursday Mass, Jesus is processed to an Altar of Repose. Many churches keep the church open to allow people to spend time with Jesus. Find an Altar of Repose and spend time with your Beloved. “Keep watch and stay with me.”

Good Friday: Commemorates Jesus’s Sacrifice of the Cross - Good Friday, the most solemn day of Holy Week, commemorates the Passion of Jesus Christ. It is a day of reflection, penance, and deep contemplation on the ultimate sacrifice made for the redemption of humanity. Christ’s Passion, culminating in His crucifixion and death, reminds us of the weight of our sin and the unfathomable love of God. Catholics around the world participate in solemn liturgies, reflecting on our Lord’s redemptive suffering, venerating the Cross, and receiving Holy Communion. Ideas to honor the day: It is a somber day; wear black or dark colors to remind you of the pain and suffering of Jesus. Consider taking the day off or a half day off work to enter more fully into the day. If possible, from noon to three have quiet time to enter more fully into the suffering and death of Jesus.

Holy Saturday: A Day of Vigil and Anticipation - Holy Saturday is a day of vigil, a period of waiting and anticipation. The Easter Vigil, the summit of the Paschal Triduum on Holy Saturday evening, is a profound liturgical celebration that takes place after nightfall. This ancient tradition, dating back to the fourth century, marks the high point of the Triduum and thus ignites the celebration of our Lord’s Resurrection from the dead. At the Easter Vigil Mass, the Paschal—or Easter—Proclamation is made, which is part of the ceremony to light the paschal candle. Ideas to honor the day: The USCCB recommends a voluntary continuation of the Good Friday fast: “If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the ‘paschal fast’ to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily his Resurrection.”

DRAWING DEEPER INTO THE REAL PRESENCE



The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist is the heart of Catholic faith—Jesus truly present, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. Yet, many struggle to grasp this mystery fully. How can we deepen our awareness and love for Christ in the Eucharist?

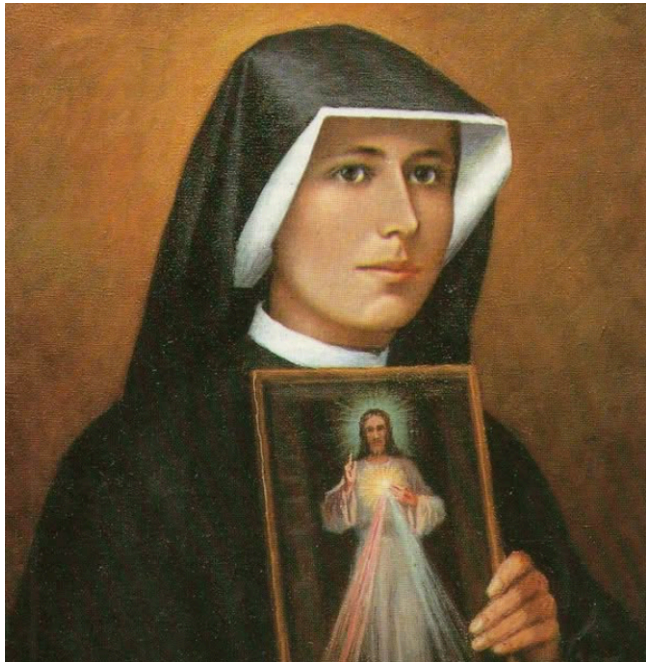
One powerful way is Eucharistic Adoration. Spending time in His presence outside of Mass fosters a more intimate relationship with Him. In silent adoration, we allow our hearts to be transformed by His love, much like St. Mary Magdalene, who remained at the tomb, longing for her Lord and encountering Him in a profound way.

Another opportunity for deep reflection comes on Holy Thursday, when the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the Altar of Repose after the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. This represents the movement of Our Lord from the house of the Last Supper to the Garden of Olives, where He underwent His agony and where He would be betrayed by Judas. Just like during His agony in Gethsemane, he invites us to “watch and pray” with Him. Sitting in His presence and contemplating His sacrifice unites us more deeply to the mystery of the Eucharist.

Additionally, studying Eucharistic Miracles—such as the Host that turned into visible flesh and blood in Lanciano—strengthens faith in His true presence. These miracles remind us that the Eucharist is not a mere symbol, but a living encounter with Christ.

By adoring, meditating, and learning, we grow in love for the Eucharist. The more we seek Him, the more we realize He is already here, waiting for us.

Featured Saints of April



St. Faustina Kowalska

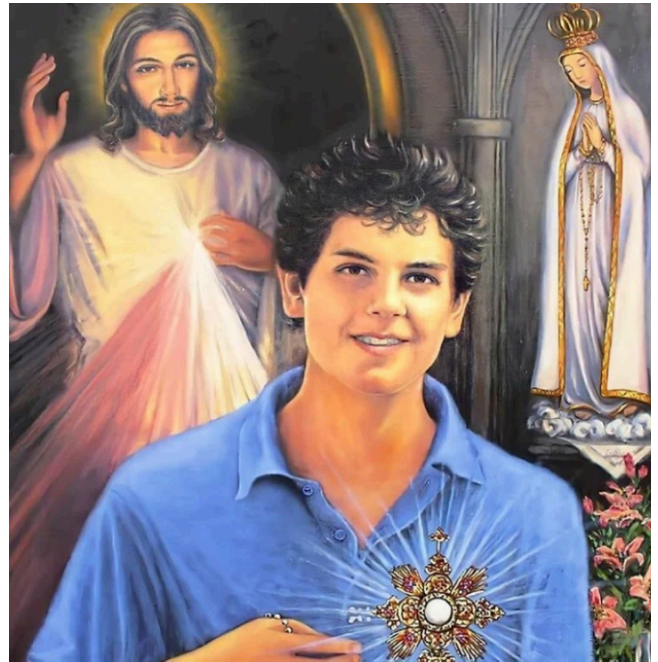
Feast Day: October 5th
Patron Saint of Mercy

St. Faustina Kowalska's feast day is October 5, but she is a great saint to learn about this April in anticipation of the upcoming Feast of Divine Mercy Sunday on April 27, 2025. Through her visions and writings, she shared Christ's urgent call to trust in His mercy, leading to the devotion of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Divine Mercy Sunday.

Born on August 25, 1905, in Poland, Helena Kowalska felt a call to religious life from a young age. In 1925, she joined the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and took the name Sister Maria Faustina. Over the years, she experienced mystical visions of Jesus, who instructed her to spread devotion to His Divine Mercy. He asked her to have the Divine Mercy Image painted with the words "Jesus, I trust in You" and to promote the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a means of grace for the world.

Despite suffering from tuberculosis, she remained faithful to her mission, recording her experiences in a diary that would later inspire millions. She passed away on October 5, 1938, at the age of 33. St. Faustina was canonized by St. John Paul II in 2000, solidifying her role in spreading Divine Mercy devotion.

Ways to celebrate St. Faustina's feast day: pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet at 3pm, the Hour of Mercy, as Jesus requested; meditate on her diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, to reflect on its powerful message; perform an act of mercy, such as visiting the sick or helping the poor, to live out the call to trust and share God's mercy with others.



Blessed Carlo Acutis

Feast Day: October 12th
Popularly known as the "Patron of the Internet"

Like St. Faustina, Blessed Carlo Acutis's feast day is also in October, but he is another fitting saint for this April due to his devotion to the Eucharist and upcoming canonization on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 27, 2025.

Born to Italian parents on May 3, 1991, in London, Carlo moved to Milan shortly after. From a young age, he exhibited a deep love for the Eucharist, making it central to his spirituality. At 11, Carlo combined his faith with his passion for technology by creating a website cataloging Eucharistic miracles worldwide, aiming to share these divine occurrences with others (see Resources section for more information). Carlo's life was marked by his dedication to attending daily Mass, praying the Rosary, and spending time in Eucharistic Adoration. He believed, "The Eucharist is my highway to heaven." His virtuous life and commitment to spreading the faith profoundly impacted those around him.

In 2006, Carlo was diagnosed with leukemia. He offered his suffering for the Pope and the Church, expressing a desire to be with Jesus. He passed away on October 12, 2006, at age 15. Carlo's beatification took place on October 10, 2020, in Assisi, where his tomb became a pilgrimage site. His canonization will make him the first millennial saint, inspiring young people to integrate faith with technology, evangelizing and deepening Eucharistic devotion.

Ways to honor Blessed Carlo: watch his canonization Mass, spend time in Eucharistic Adoration, and encourage youth to share faith through technology.

To help celebrate these and other saints throughout the year with your children, CatholicAllYear.com offers many free articles and downloads, as well as amazing subscription packs to help Liturgical Living.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS



Divine Mercy Sunday, celebrated on the Sunday after Easter, is a special feast established by St. John Paul II in response to Jesus's request to St. Faustina Kowalska. It falls on April 27th this year. Families can make Divine Mercy Sunday meaningful for kids through engaging, faith-centered activities. One fun way is by making Divine Mercy Sunday Sundaes, as featured on CatholicCing.com, using red and blue toppings to represent the rays of mercy flowing from Jesus's heart.

Another hands-on option is the Divine Mercy Triptych Craft, a free downloadable activity from HolyHeroes.com that helps children visualize the Divine Mercy image while learning about the feast. These activities not only make the day memorable but also help children connect with the message of Jesus's mercy in a tangible and joyful way.



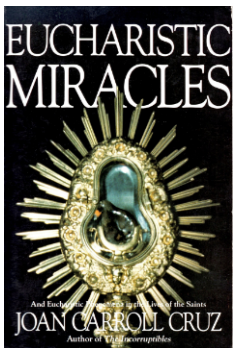
SUGGESTED RESOURCES



Miracoli Eucaristici Website by Blessed Carlo Acutis

An online exhibition created by Blessed Carlo Acutis, showcasing documented Eucharistic miracles from around the world. It provides detailed accounts, historical context, and images of these miraculous events, helping to deepen faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Scan the QR code to visit the site.



Eucharistic Miracles by Joan Carroll Cruz

This book explores a collection of documented Eucharistic miracles throughout history, providing powerful evidence of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.



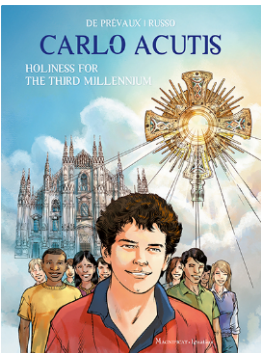
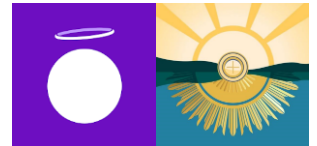
Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist by the Augustine Institute

A 7-episode series exploring the truth and beauty of Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, from its origins in Sacred Scripture, to its profound role in the life of the Church and her members.

Available on Formed.org.

Eucharist Alive Series on the Hallow App

This podcast series for children features a narrator portraying Blessed Carlo Acutis sharing engaging stories about Eucharistic miracles, helping them learn about the Real Presence in a fun and accessible way.



Carlo Acutis: Holiness for the Third Millennium

(Graphic Novel)
by Magnificat
(Ages 9+)

A graphic novel telling the inspiring true story of Carlo Acutis, the tech-savvy teen on the path to sainthood. A story of faith, miracles, and holiness in the modern world.

Carlo Acutis: Roadmap to Reality

A powerful new documentary exploring the life, faith, and legacy of

Blessed Carlo Acutis is arriving in approximately 1,000 theatres across the U.S. the same day Pope Francis

will make Carlo the Catholic Church's first millennial saint. The film will be in theaters April 27-29, 2025 ONLY. Visit CarloAcutisFilm.com to see if it's playing at a theater near you and to purchase tickets.



Have a Liturgical Living idea? Contact: holyheartsandhomes@gmail.com

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