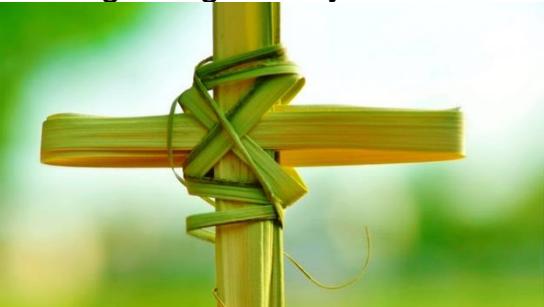


Feasts and other days to celebrate in your Domestic Church before and during Lent	Ways for you to celebrate these days
<p>Carnival – Epiphany to Mardi Gras “Carne vale” meaning farewell to the meat or flesh. Because Lent was a period of fasting, Carnival represents a last period of feasting and celebration before the spiritual rigors of Lent. Meat was plentiful during this part of the Christian calendar and it was consumed during Carnival as people abstained from meat consumption during the following liturgical season, Lent. In the last few days of Carnival, known as Shrovetide, people confessed (shrived) their sins in preparation for Lent as well.</p>	<p>Carnival is a time of mental and physical preparation for the Lenten time of self-denial. This is a time for family, food and fun before we face Ash Wednesday and fill our days with prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Feel your home with feasting before the fasting. Give thanks to the almighty gift giver, but celebrating his gifts. Just remember the order of having good fun: Jesus, Others, You.....JOY</p> <p>Carnival: A Season of Contrasts</p>
<p>Feast of the Chair of Peter – Feb. 22 “And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church,* and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.* Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” Matthew 16:18-19</p> <p>This feast brings to mind the mission of teacher and pastor conferred by Christ on Peter, and continued in an unbroken line down to the present Pope. We celebrate the unity of the Church, founded upon the Apostle, and renew our assent to the Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, extended both to truths which are solemnly defined <i>ex cathedra</i>, and to all the acts of the ordinary Magisterium.</p>	
<p>Mardi Gras – Feb. 16 French for “Fat Tuesday”. Last day before the season of Lent begins at Midnight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a breakfast dinner! Pancakes, Waffles, Bacon, Sausage, Hash. Perhaps a nice glass of wine, beer, or cider. If not you thing, have your families soul food today! There are some ideas for recipes and activities here.
<p>Ash Wednesday – Feb. 17 The time has now come in the Church year for the solemn observance of the great central act of history, the redemption of the human race by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the Roman Rite, the beginning of the forty days of penance is marked with the austere symbol of ashes which is used in today's liturgy. The use of ashes is a survival from an ancient rite according to which converted sinners submitted themselves to canonical penance. The Alleluia and the Gloria are suppressed until Easter.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  <p>ASH WEDNESDAY</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try your best to make it to Mass today and receive ashes. If you can't, take the readings of the day and read them by yourself or together as a home. Abstinence from eating meat is to be observed on all Fridays during Lent. This applies to all persons fourteen years of age and older. The law of fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday applies to all Catholics who have completed their eighteenth year to the beginning of the sixtieth year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today parents should encourage their children to reflect upon what regular penances they will perform throughout this season of Lent. Ideally, each member of the family should choose his own personal penance as well as some good act that he will perform (daily spiritual reading, daily Mass, extra prayers, almsgiving, volunteer work, housecleaning, etc.), and the whole family may wish to give up one thing together (TV, movies, desserts) or do something extra (family rosary, Holy Hour, Lenten Alms Jar). • The use of Sacrifice Beans may help children to keep track of their Lenten penances. Some families begin this activity (with undyed beans!) on Ash Wednesday and then use the collected beans to cook a penitential bean dish for Good Friday at the end of Lent. • Consider making a night prayer an essential part of your home schedule. Do whatever fits your home's schedule and culture, the important thing is to do it and try to do it as a home and family.
<p style="text-align: center;">Feast of St. Patrick – March 17</p> <p>On March 17 the Church honors St. Patrick, who in the fifth century came to Ireland as a missionary and converted all the country a span of thirty-three years. He changed Ireland forever. Not only did St. Patrick convert Ireland, his influence was universal. With his work, religious orders and monasteries were established and spread. These orders preserved the Faith during the period often referred to as the "Dark Ages." And his work continues for many centuries. As the Irish emigrated, they took their Faith with them all over the world. In the eyes of the Church his sanctity isn't about the marvelous accomplishments of his life, but the actual living his Catholic faith.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As with any Saints feast day it important to include something that gets you to know more about the saint especially the events in their life that lead them to the Lord and his calling for them. For adults I would recommend reading The confession of St. Patrick or his biography on Catholic Encyclopedia. Also considering including the Breastplate of St. Patrick in your evening prayers. For youth and the whole family there are some great animated movies and real life movies. • When it comes to feasting today, that's up to you and how traditional you want to be. Head's up, corned beef and cabbage has a NYC Irish beginning with help from their Jewish neighbors trying to find a cheaper substitute for lamb. However, in your domestic church, your tradition is Tradition.
<p style="text-align: center;">Solemnity of St. Joseph – March 19</p> <p>March 19 marks the Solemnity of St. Joseph on the Universal Calendar of the Church. This is the other great saint of March, actually considered after Mary to be one of the greatest saints of the Church. St. Joseph is now included into the Eucharistic Prayer at every Mass. St. Joseph was the foster-father of Jesus and the husband of Mary. He had such a privileged position to be in such intimate company of the Son of God and Mother of God. But he also had such a great responsibility to care for his wife and foster-son. There is not one recorded word of St. Joseph. We know so little about him, and yet his silence, his obedience, his tender care speaks volumes of his sanctity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check out this wonderful site that explains the St. Joseph Altar more in detail, includes recipes, history, and allows virtual offerings. • Here is a link to several meditations on St. Joseph — choose the one that is perfect for you and your family! • Here are some ideas for teaching children about St. Joseph. • Young girls ought to pray to St. Joseph for their future spouse. 

<p style="text-align: center;">Laetare Sunday – March 14</p> <p>"Rejoice, Jerusalem! Be glad for her, you who love her; rejoice with her, you who mourned for her, and you will find contentment at her consoling breasts." This Sunday is known as <i>Laetare</i> Sunday and is a Sunday of joy. This is the halfway mark of Lent, and Easter is enticingly near.</p>	<p><u>Laetare, Jerusalem! Rejoice!</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is up to you and your family and home. Celebrate! Rejoice! We are almost there and WE ARE AN EASTER PEOPLE! A RESURRECTION PEOPLE! Christians did not and do not die for their faith in a Good man who had good teachings, they died and continue to die because of their faith in Jesus the Christ, son of God who conquered death. Who rose from the dead!
<p style="text-align: center;">Solemnity of the Annunciation – March 25</p> <p>Again Lent's austerity is interrupted as we solemnly keep a feast in honor of the Annunciation. The Annunciation is a mystery that belongs to the temporal rather than to the sanctoral cycle in the Church's calendar. For the feast commemorates the most sublime moment in the history of time, the moment when the Second Divine Person of the most Holy Trinity assumed human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Thus it is a feast of our Lord, even as it is of Mary, although the liturgy centers wholly around the Mother of God</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This feast is very important in the defense of the life of unborn children. Even with small children, this is a good day to begin teaching about the high value God places on human life. He loved us so much that he became one of us, took on our human nature and became an innocent, completely dependent infant. • This is a Solemnity, so when this feast falls during the Lenten season, our Lenten penance obligations are lifted. We should celebrate by some special food or dinner. This feast day forecasts the blessed event of Christmas, and illustrates how the liturgical year is an endless circle of days. To celebrate this circle or cycle, serve a cake, coffee rings, or wreath-shaped cookies, or foods shaped in ring molds for this feast day. A perfect symbolic food would be an angel food cake for the archangel Gabriel, baked in a tube pan for the endless circle, decorated with the frosting highlighted with blue for Mary.
<p style="text-align: center;">Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord – March 28</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Beginning of Holy Week</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The palms distributed at Mass are blessed, so are sacramentals. Read <u>Blessed Palms in the Home</u>. Placing them prominently in the home is a great idea. Placing red on you home altar and near the palms is another common practice. • This is also known as "Fig Sunday" due to the tradition that Christ ate figs after his entry into Jerusalem. Adding some type of figs to your meal would be a nice touch. • Read <u>Pope Francis' Homily</u> for Palm Sunday 2014. Also read the <u>History of Palm Sunday</u> by Fr. Francis X. Weiser