

# Laetare Sunday

"Rejoice Sunday"

Today is **Laetare Sunday**, but what does this mean?

Laetare means "Rejoice" in Latin. Because the midpoint of Lent is the Thursday of the third week of Lent, today has traditionally been viewed as a day of celebration, on which the austerity of Lent is briefly lessened. On this Sunday, we look with expectation to the great celebration of Easter for which we have been preparing ourselves as a Church during the Lenten season. By its anticipation of the joy of Easter, Laetare Sunday is meant to give us hope and encouragement as we slowly progress towards the Paschal Feast. Today the purple vestments and altar cloths of Lent are set aside, and rose ones are used instead. The colour **ROSE** is used as a sign of the joy. The use of rose vestments probably stems from an ancient papal tradition of blessing golden roses which would be sent to Catholic heads of state in Europe on the 4th Sunday of Lent. Flowers, which are normally forbidden during Lent, may be placed on the altar. Traditionally, the organ was never played during Lent, except on Laetare Sunday. It's also known as **Rose Sunday** or **Refreshment Sunday**.



In addition to attending Sunday Mass, a family might choose to mark **Laetare Sunday** by anticipating the Easter feast; a Sunday brunch with roses on the table would be appropriate. You might also wish, during this beginning period of spring, to plant a rose bush on this day. Finally, there was a medieval tradition of visiting one's "mother church" (*the church where you were baptized*) on this day. A family trip to see where Mum and Dad or the children began their journey of faith could make for a fine Sunday afternoon outing!!

