

“Ten Thousand Resurrections” Revised, April 2018

The Paschal Mystery

The Paschal Mystery is the phrase we use to express the culmination of Jesus' mission in his passion, death, and resurrection. In his passing over from death to life Jesus becomes himself our Passover, and since the sending forth of his Spirit at Pentecost, those united to Jesus through Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist share in his lifeⁱ and in the processⁱⁱ of his bringing his way of life to fulfillment throughout all creation.ⁱⁱⁱ

Jesus Died For Our Sins

The phrase "Jesus died for our sins" is true but not quite true enough. It is an abbreviation for the much broader and deeper truth that Jesus *lived and* died for our sins. His dying is integral with his living. What if Jesus had lived a playboy's life up until the Last Supper? By focusing too exclusively on the last few days of Jesus' life we can all too easily miss the vital and salvific connection between his life of faithful love and his death of faithful love.

Love Not Sacrifice

"For it is love that I desire, not sacrifice, and knowledge of God rather than holocausts," proclaims God through the prophet Hosea.^{iv} We all know that sacrifice can exist without love; I can make tremendous sacrifices in order to achieve some selfish and destructive end. Love, on the other hand,

cannot exist without sacrifice; I cannot truly say that I love you unless I am prepared to sacrifice for you. It's a little too simple to say that we are saved through Jesus' sacrifice. More precisely, we are saved through Jesus' love, which *includes* Jesus' sacrifices---culminating in Jesus' sacrifice unto death on the Cross.

Jesus Lived and Died for Our Sins

The Incarnation is the context within which the Paschal Mystery occurs. The Incarnation is the process which the Paschal Mystery completes. The Paschal Mystery begins in the womb of Mary, and concludes about thirty-four years later with the descent of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem on Pentecost. Jesus saves us by his life, which comes to completion in his death.^v More precisely, Jesus saves us by his obedience, by his becoming--day in and day out--obedient unto death^{vi}

No Resurrection, No Christianity

The fundament of our faith is the belief that Jesus rose on Easter Day. St. Paul writes that if Christ is not raised then the apostle's preaching is void of content and our faith is empty.^{vii} We do believe that Jesus rose on Easter Day; we often neglect to reflect on the more inclusive truth that Jesus rose *Each Day*, too. The Resurrection occurs within the context of the Incarnation.

10,000 Resurrections

This in no way detracts from the meaning of the Resurrection of Easter morning; rather, this inclusion of the 10,000 daily resurrections^{viii} of Jesus enhances our understanding and appreciation of the depth of Jesus' lifelong act of faithfulness-unbroken. As the poet wrote: "To give one's life through all the years is harder than to give it in one moment gloriously. To give one's life on weary days and hopeless, to give one's life again and again, is harder than to give it in one moment gloriously."^{ix} Jesus died for our sins---everyday of his life as he died to each temptation to turn away from the will of his Father. We sometimes see signs which proclaim, "Jesus died for our sins." The truth of this statement could only be enhanced and clarified if we added some signs which said: "Jesus lived to save us from our sins", or "Jesus loved us unto death," or "Jesus saves us by his life, which culminated in his death, his descent into hell, his resurrection, his ascension, and his sending of the Holy Spirit upon us."

Taking The Plunge

Pope John Paul has called on each Christian to "Open Wide the Doors to Christ!"^x The act of walking through a door into something new can be compared with taking a plunge into the unknown, and the Greek verb for taking a plunge is *baptidzein*.

We Were Baptized Into Christ

In Baptism we were plunged into the Paschal Mystery---into the Person and the Process who is Jesus the Christ. As St. Paul puts it, "Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death...so that just

as Christ was raised from the dead...we too might live in newness of life.... Consequently, you must think of yourselves as being dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus."^{xi} We renew our awareness of this baptismal union each time we make the Sign of the Cross, bless ourselves with holy water, and participate in the Mass. Especially, though, we renew our awareness of our sharing in the Person and the Process of the Christ in the Masses of Easter, when all the faithful renew their baptismal promises and are showered with the new water blessed at the Easter Vigil.

ⁱ **John 15:1-8** "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and everyone that does he prunes ³ so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

ⁱⁱ **Colossians 1:24-25** Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church, of which I am a minister in accordance with God's stewardship given to me to bring to completion for you the word of God,

ⁱⁱⁱ **Colossians 1: 15-20** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he himself might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile all things for him, making peace by the blood of his cross (through him), whether those on earth or those in heaven.

^{iv} Hosea 6:6.; See also Matthew 9:13; 12:7

^v **John 19:30**

^{vi} **Hebrews 5:7-10** In the days when he was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, declared by God high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Philippians 2: 6-8 Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; 5 and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

^{vii} **1 Corinthians 15:14** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty (too) is our preaching; empty, too, your faith.

^{viii} Assuming that Jesus died around the age of 33, and reached the age of discretion around the age of 7.

^{ix} Cabrini College Yearbook 1967

^x The motto for the Great Jubilee in the year 2000.

^{xi} Romans 6:3-11 (This text is from the Epistle of the Easter Vigil)