

Faith in 5 – Adults The Paschal Mystery



1. The **Paschal Mystery** is a series of events, where God's plan of salvation was manifested through the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus to Heaven. "He (Jesus Christ) accomplished this work (salvation) principally by the Paschal Mystery of his blessed Passion, Resurrection from the dead, and glorious Ascension, whereby 'dying he destroyed our death, rising he restored our life' ..." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1067). It is the focus of the Good News we profess and proclaim (CCC, 571).

The Paschal Mystery put into motion our salvation: we are saved from sin and death through faith in Jesus. By the time Christ was born, He submitted Himself to God's plan of redemption for us. In loving obedience, Christ restored our relationship with God. The Paschal mystery gives us the hope that we will be with God someday for all eternity.

2. The word **paschal** comes from the Hebrew word for Passover—the event in Exodus where the angel of death passed over all the homes marked with the blood of a lamb on the lintel and door posts; death came to the firstborn in all houses that did not have the blood. The paschal lamb represented redemption for the Jews. The term **paschal lamb** also points to Christ, referred to as 'the lamb of God' (John 1:29); Christ the Lord, sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7) ([Source](#)). He was literally the Lamb of God - no other sacrifice was necessary.

The word **mystery** refers to something that cannot be known except by grace and revelation (1 Corinthians 2:14). Pope St. Paul VI defined mystery as 'a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God'. We have some revelation of God, but our human minds and hearts will never comprehend all that He is – there is knowledge of Him that remains hidden to us for now.

Paschal Triduum – Also known as the Easter Triduum, encompasses the events beginning with Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday. This would include the paschal mysteries of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection. The Paschal Triduum bridges the seasons of Lent to Easter.

3. In the **Agnus Dei symbol**, the lamb was used to symbolize innocence and was also a sacrificial animal. The Agnus Dei, or Lamb of God, is an ancient symbol of Christ and His sacrifice. The cross stands for Christ's victory over sin and death. Biblical references include John 1:29 and Revelation 14. In ancient examples of the Agnus Dei, it may be seen lying upon the Book of Seven Seals or carrying the Banner of Victory. The lamb is crowned with a three-rayed nimbus or halo, signifying that it is a symbol of divinity... Standing with a banner, the lamb represents the risen Christ triumphant over death. Standing with a cross and a gash in its side, it symbolizes the passion of Christ ([Source](#)). **Image Source: Google**



4. These events are further outlined:
 - a. **Passion** - the sacrificial suffering and death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion on Calvary. Jesus foretold these events and made it clear to his disciples that he would suffer freely for the salvation of the world (Matthew 20:18-19). From the beginning of his public life, at his baptism, Jesus is the "Servant", wholly consecrated to the redemptive work that he will accomplish by the "baptism" of his Passion (CCC 565).
 - b. **Death** - Jesus was sentenced to death by crucifixion and died on the cross in order to save us from our sins. As he died, he said, "It is accomplished" (John 19:30). By dying in this way, He illustrated the serious deadliness of sin. His death while so violent, demonstrated the deep love Jesus had for His Father and for us.
 - c. **Resurrection** - Jesus was raised from the dead and came back to life three days after his crucifixion. Death is defeated and we have the promise of salvation. St. Peter states that Jesus rose physically: "[we] ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead" (Acts 10:41), but his glorified body had extraordinary new abilities. He appeared at different times and places, and his body, though glorified and transformed in appearance, still bore the wounds of the crucifixion (John 20:28). The physicality of the Resurrection of Jesus, witnessed by so many, rules out the claim that the resurrection was all an elaborate hoax.
 - d. **Ascension** - Jesus rose up to Heaven after having been resurrected. This event took place after forty days of appearances and teaching following his Resurrection. The final apparition of Jesus united humanity to divinity, opening the gates of heaven for all. Scripture records him ascending to heaven, which signifies the "definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain" (CCC 665). On our own, we could not unlock the gates of heaven or have access to the Father. But with Jesus now in heaven, He allows us to live in the hope of one day being with Him forever. Jesus intercedes and prepares a place for us, and from where He shall come again at the end of time.
5. It is this Paschal Mystery that the Church proclaims and celebrates in the Liturgy, so that we, as disciples of Jesus, may live from it and bear witness to it in the world (CCC 1068). Every Mass makes present Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The Eucharist is a direct remembrance of the Paschal Mystery. However, it is not a "re-sacrifice." It is a re-presentation of the one sacrifice of Christ, which was sufficient (Hebrews 10:10,12). It is this one sacrifice that is made present at the Eucharistic celebration and from which all of the sacraments flow from – " ... in each celebration, there is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that makes the unique mystery present" (CCC, 1104).

This is a free resource! For more information, visit www.acatholicmomslife.com