

\The Mass and the Resurrection

The Paschal Sacrifice or Paschal Sacrament or The Paschal Event

Questions needing Answers

1. Why is there no Mass on Good Friday?
2. Why is Mass obligatory on Sunday, not Friday?
3. Why does the Canon of the Mass (Eucharistic Prayer n. 1) add the Resurrection and Ascension to the "making memorial" of the Passion?

The Resurrection and the Mass

Until VCII's *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) on the Liturgy in December, 1963, the theology and catechesis on the Mass did not usually mention Christ's Resurrection as a subsequent vital aspect of His self-sacrifice on the Cross.

The Resurrection did not receive explicit mention even in Pius XII's landmark encyclical *Mediator Dei* (Mediator of God) in 1947, on the Work of our Redemption is applied to us in our Liturgy, centring on the Eucharist.

VCII's SC enriches it with "Paschal Mystery".

The Mass was thought of only in terms of Christ on the Cross, the once-for-all **historic sacrifice** made present, re-presented, recapitulated, re-enacted around the world, down the ages, in the Mass, in a **sacramental sacrifice** – the terminology of the 16th century Council of Trent was "bloody" & "unbloody" sacrifice.

But where did His Resurrection fit in, if at all?

The **development of doctrine**, according to Vatican I in 1870, is by relating the mysteries one to another and with the ultimate end of man.

Less developed doctrines are not erroneous – the earlier versions are basically right, but less adequate for new challenges and need enrichment, but never negation.

For instance, the "old green" *Catechism of Christian Doctrine* (OGC) from 19th century, to its tapering off by 1960, was strong on the fact of the Resurrection, but weak on its religious significance. See *Handouts* n. 182.

However, in 1962, the tradition accuracy of

The Mass is the Sacrifice of the Cross offered by the Church. (Q&A 83: *Catholic Catechism Book One* (upper primary) issued by the Australian Bishops to replace the OGC.)

was augmented by this explanation of "the Cross:

"The Sacrifice the Cross was accepted by the Father and the Resurrection showed it was accepted", (*ibid* p. 150).

More recently, 30 years after VCII:-

*The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of **the work of salvation** accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action.* *Catechism of the Catholic Church* CCC n. 1409.

"ACCEPTANCE" of Sacrifice

In a general way, a sacrifice is a gift that cost an effort, offered by someone to someone else. e.g From man to God. Thus King David said to Araunah, "I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing," Samuel 24:24.

God tested Abraham's willingness to offer the human life of his son Isaac. God-incarnate made the supreme sacrifice of His human life for our redemption

And the gift doesn't count unless the recipient accepts it, receives it, though often this is implicit, as with a box of chocolates from a boy to his girlfriend, but it is all the better if manifested explicitly.

Note how Cain's sacrifice was not acceptable to God, but Abel's was. See Genesis 4:5; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12.

"RESURRECTION"

The Resurrection of the Crucified Christ on the third day was the most spectacular and manifest acceptance by the Father of His Incarnate Son's self-offering (Philippians 2:9), even as the Divine Son in the Trinity, He raised Himself (John 2;19-22; 10:17-18).

In the "Pray, brethren" (*Orate, fratres*) of the Offertory of the Mass, the priest turns to the people and asks them to pray that, "my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Almighty Father", and the congregation reply, "May the Lord accept the sacrifice."

In the Roman Canon, four times we ask "acceptance" or "approval" for our own self-offering linked with Christ's offering and its approval.

The third prayer after the Consecration, *Supplices te rogamus*, pleads: "In humble prayer we ask you, Almighty God, command that these gifts be borne by the hands of your holy angel to your altar on high, in the sight of your Divine majesty..." i.e. taken to Heaven as in the Ascension: "a lamb standing, as though it had been slain" (Apocalypse 5:6) – that's acceptance of Resurrection!

Living Christ's Paschal Mystery Day by Day

Paschal Sacrifice or Paschal Sacrament or Paschal Event

1. What is the Paschal Mystery?

The Paschal Mystery is Christ's self Sacrifice offered to God the Father on Good Friday and its acceptance by God the Father shown forth on Easter Sunday and His final Triumph for eternity at His Ascension into Heaven.

Paschal: concerning the Jewish Passover and Christian Easter.

Mystery: events or beings revealed by God for acceptance by faith so that man can give God the homage of his reason.

2. What well-known texts express this?

(a) Angelus

...that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ Thy Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may, by His Passion and Cross, be brought (*perducamur*) to the glory of His Resurrection...

(b) Rosary

...Whose only begotten Son, by His life, Death and Resurrection has purchased (*comparavit*) for us the rewards of eternal life... meditating on these. mysteries... we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise...

(c) Canon of the Mass – its anamnesis

(in a subtler translation of the Latin which implies **three episodes in one overall drama**)

Wherefore, O Lord, we, Thy servants as also (*sed et*) Thy holy people, mindful (*memores*) of the so very (*tam*) blessed Passion and nor lesser (*nec non et*) (blessed is implied) Resurrection from the dead as also (*sed et*) glorious Ascension into Heaven of the same Christ Thy Son Our Lord, offer to Thy noble majesty from Thy gifts to us a pure victim, a holy victim, a spotless victim, the holy bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation.

(d) Collect for Benediction & Corpus Christi

O God, Who in a wonderful sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion,... grant us... so to revere the Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Blood that we may always experience within ourselves the fruits of Thy Redemption...

St Thomas Aquinas, author of this Collect, said the efficient cause of our Redemption was the Passion and Resurrection together:

Summa Theologica IIIae, q56, a2, ad4), so "Passion" can be taken as inclusive of the Paschal Event.

(e) In the Gospels, Christ prophesied His Resurrection with His Passion:

thrice in **Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19;**

thrice in **Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34;**

twice in **Luke 9:22; [9:44-45 without Resurrection]; 18:31-33;**

twice in **John 2:19-21; 10:17-18.** cf. Romans 4:21; 1 Corinth. 15:14-17.

3. What does Redemption mean?

Redemption means that Christ paid Adam's debt so that we and all Adam's offspring can enter into a new & eternal covenant of sonship and friendship with God by sanctifying grace, 'sons in the Son' by Divine adoption, through sharing in His Paschal Mystery.

With all my heart, I thank you, God, for sanctifying grace, because this gift makes me your child and I shall see your face. It's only right that I should pray and offer all do, to show how much I love this gift which makes my soul like you .

4. How do I live the Paschal Mystery daily?

I live Christ's Paschal Mystery by disciplining myself to Him at Mass and in my own daily sufferings and joys.

"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the chief priests and scribes and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

And He said to them all,

"If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it;

and whoever loses his life for My sake, he will save it."

Luke 9:22-24

5. Say a Morning Offering of daily joys and sufferings.

O God, I offer Thee, through Jesus Christ Thy Son, all the prayers, works, joys & sufferings of this day, for Thine is the Kingdom*, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

* See *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nn. 2760, 2855

6. Recite promise to live by your Baptismal Covenant.

On my honour I promise I will do my best to be God's glory-giver, a child of the Father, a cross-bearer with Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Friend, with the Holy Spirit as my Helper & Guide. I reject Satan, sin and selfishness. I will be a child of Mary and the Church. a Good Samaritan to my neighbour and faithful to the duties of my vocation in life to which it has pleased to call me.

CFC Disciples' Edition Q&A n. 50; *Apostles' Edition* Q&A n. 500.

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