



LESSON EIGHT

The Paschal Mystery: Jesus Delivers Us from Evil

Opening Prayer

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds, hide me.

Permit me not to be separated from you.

From the wicked foe, defend me.

At the hour of my death, call me

and bid me come to you,

that with your saints I may praise you

forever and ever. Amen.

Lesson Objectives:

- ❖ Understand what the Paschal Mystery is (the suffering, death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ) and why it is the central event of all human history.
- ❖ Explore how the Cross is not a sign of defeat but of God's total self-giving love, and how Christ's death atones for sin in a way that mere forgiveness alone could not accomplish.
- ❖ Understand how the Resurrection is historically grounded and what it means for our own lives: we are called to live the Paschal Mystery—dying to sin and rising to new life.

BURNING QUESTIONS

❖ How does the Cross save us? Couldn't God just forgive humanity?

What does it say to you that he chose to do it this way?

❖ The Resurrection seems impossible. How do we know the disciples didn't simply make it up?

What would convince you that a historical event really happened?

St. Francis of Assisi

Feast Day: October 4

c. 1181–October 3, 1226 · Assisi, Italy · Patron of Animals, Environment, Merchants

Born to a wealthy cloth merchant, Francis lived for pleasure and military glory until a serious illness and a vision of Christ speaking from the Cross, asking him to rebuild his Church, changed everything. He renounced his inheritance, embraced radical poverty, and founded the Franciscans in 1210. In 1224, two years before his death, he received the stigmata—the wounds of Christ—becoming the first recorded person to bear them. He died as he had lived: on bare ground, praising God.



“I have given thee the stigmata which are the insignia of My Passion.”

The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi



What Is the Paschal Mystery?

Passover and the Paschal Lamb

The word “paschal” comes from the Hebrew *Pesach*—Passover. When God delivered Israel from Egypt, the blood of a spotless lamb on the doorpost protected the people from death. This was not coincidence; it was foreshadowing. Jesus is the true Paschal Lamb, the one whose blood was shed on the Cross and who delivers us from a deeper slavery than Egypt ever was.

The Paschal Mystery

The Paschal Mystery is the name the Church gives to the four-part event at the heart of the Gospel: Jesus suffered, died, rose from the dead, and ascended to the Father. These are not separate events. They form one saving act, the act by which God defeats sin and death and opens eternal life to every human being.

“For Christ, our Paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed.”

1 Corinthians 5:7

The Cross: God's Indescribable Love

Triumph over Sin

Christ willingly embraced suffering and death. On the same night he instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper, he entered into his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, where he prayed, “Not my will, but yours” (Luke 22:42). Where Adam said no to God, Christ said yes. His obedience heals the disobedience of the Fall. On the Cross, he took the burden of every sin—past, present, and future—restoring communion with God.

Triumph over Death

On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, fulfilling the Scriptures. St. Paul writes that Christ “appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time” (1 Corinthians 15:5–6). The apostles, who didn’t expect the resurrection and even hid in fear, later proclaimed this truth to the point of martyrdom. The *Catechism* says the Resurrection “constitutes the confirmation of all Christ’s works and teachings” (CCC 651).

“He was buried, and he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.”

1 Corinthians 15:4

The Ascension and Our Participation

Jesus Reigns in Glory

At the Ascension Jesus opens heaven to humanity. Fully human and fully divine, he intercedes for us at the Father's right hand and pours out the Holy Spirit on his Church.

Sharing in the Mystery

Baptism unites us to Christ's death and Resurrection. The Eucharist makes Christ's sacrifice truly present: "The Eucharist is thus a sacrifice because it *re-presents* (makes present) the sacrifice of the cross" (CCC 1366). Redemptive suffering allows us to unite our own crosses to his Passion for the salvation of souls.



"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that ... we too might walk in newness of life."

Romans 6:4



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The Paschal Mystery: The Work of Salvation



Discussion Questions

- ❖ How do Jesus' death, Resurrection, and Ascension help us understand the purpose of his mission and teachings?
- ❖ Jesus' death is a gift of love he offers freely to the Father. How does understanding this differ from seeing his death as God punishing an innocent victim?
- ❖ In the video, we hear that, through Jesus, "God gives love back to God with an undivided heart." What does this mean?

Faith and Fun

According to the Gospels, who was the first person to see the risen Jesus?

a. Peter

b. John

c. Mary Magdalene

d. Thomas

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In the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb where Jesus was laid and finds that the stone has been moved. Afraid that Jesus' body has been taken or moved, she runs to tell Peter and John—a.k.a., “the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved” (John 20:2). The three of them return to the tomb, and after Peter and John look inside, they return home. But Mary Magdalene stays at the tomb weeping. A man asks her why she is weeping and says, “Whom do you seek?” She thinks at first that he is the gardener, but when he says her name, she realizes with joy that it is the risen Lord (see John 20:1–18).

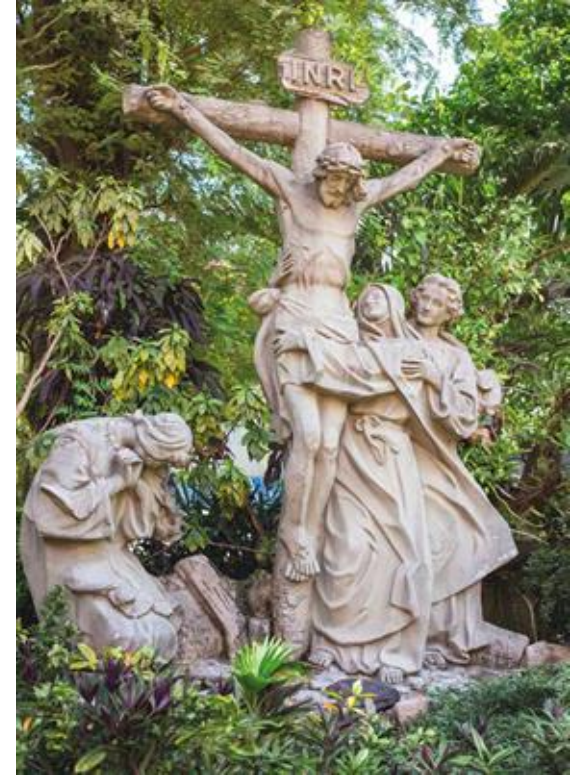
Stations of the Cross

Origin and History

This devotion, also known as the *Via Crucis* or Way of the Cross, is a prayerful reflection on the suffering and death of Jesus. It is a spiritual walk with Christ on the road to Calvary. It began when Christian pilgrims traveled to Jerusalem to walk the route Christ took from his condemnation to burial. Those unable to make that difficult journey began tracing the Passion at local shrines.

The Fourteen Stations

Through the Franciscans, stations were placed on church grounds and later inside the nave. The fourteen stations most used today were standardized in the eighteenth century. The Church granted indulgences to those who prayed them devoutly, as if they had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Scriptural alternatives approved by the Church also exist.



Living It Out:

Choose one small sacrifice this week as an offering of love in union with Christ's Passion.

Closing Prayer

*We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy Cross
you have redeemed the world.*

Amen.

Announcements / Reminders — add notes here