

## The Paschal Mystery

Isaiah 50:4-7  
Psalm 22  
Philippians 2:6-11  
Matthew 26:14-27:66

The word, “mystery,” is used to mean many things. Sometimes, it is used to describe something that a man or woman personally doesn’t understand, although it can be scientifically understood. For example, fried ice-cream is a mystery to me. The word mystery is also used to describe something that is beyond scientific understanding—like a miracle. It is also used to describe something that is a secret. The word mystery is also used to describe “a religious truth that one can know only by revelation and cannot fully understand,” such as the Trinity or the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup>

Today we begin a special, week-long celebration of the *Paschal Mystery*. The phrase, “Paschal Mystery” describes the unified event of Christ’s Passion, death, and Resurrection. It also includes His Ascension and Pentecost, which we will celebrate in the upcoming weeks. We call these events the Paschal Mystery because they are the fulfillment of the God’s previously hidden plan of salvation and the fulfillment of the Jewish Passover.

The word, “paschal” comes from a Hebrew word meaning Passover. As Christians, we understand the Jewish Passover meal to be a foreshadowing of the Eucharist, and we understand the Eucharist to be the celebration of Christ’s suffering, death, and Resurrection. The Jewish Passover meal remembers a special way the original Passover event, when the angel of death passed over the Hebrew homes (before their exodus out of Egypt). As Christians, we understand that event to be a foreshadowing of Christ’s passing over to the Father for our eternal salvation.

Throughout this week, we will have a very special opportunity to spiritually journey with Christ through the Paschal Mystery. This week is called Holy Week because it holds a special place in our annual celebrations, particularly as it celebrates the central belief of our faith—that Christ suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation. My prayer for all of us this week is that we experience the Paschal Mystery in a new and deeper way—that it becomes even more than a series of events that brought us salvation. May the Paschal Mystery reveal to us God’s eternal love, which changes us and transforms us!

### **SUGGESTED PRAYER EXERCISE:**

✚ Spend some time reflecting on Saint Paul’s words about the Paschal Mystery—

Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in an instant, in the blink of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For that which is corruptible must clothe itself with incorruptibility, and that which is mortal must clothe itself with immortality. And when this which is corruptible clothes itself with incorruptibility and this which is mortal clothes itself with immortality, then the word that is written shall come about: "Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (1 Corinthians 15:51-58)

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary