

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY



The Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the absolute heart of our Christian Faith. This Paschal Mystery, this sacred passing over from death to eternal life, offers us the gracious forgiveness of the Father and the promise of eternal life. The crux

of the Gospel, the Paschal Mystery is the very core of our evangelization efforts, as witnessed by the proclamation of Saint Peter on the morning of Pentecost.

In the Passion and death of Jesus, God the Son embraces everything that is sinful, broken and dead within us, and in one great act of self-offering, lifts it up to the Father. In that sacred embrace of our sinfulness and immortality, we are saved forever! This astonishing Good News is the heart of what Jesus calls us to share with every person we know and meet. As we move deeper into our relationship with the Lord and practice our Faith with greater ardor and devotion, we will fall more profoundly in love with God and feel a fiery urgency to want everyone to experience the amazing grace we have found.

As Christians, we should have a daily familiarity with the Paschal Mystery, reflecting on it in our prayer, experiencing its power in the sacraments, living the dying and rising of Jesus in our road of conversion. Evangelization is sharing the Gospel and the Gospel is the Paschal Mystery.

A NOTE FROM BISHOP HYING

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**THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST
IS THE ABSOLUTE
FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR
PASTORAL ACTIVITY.
- POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II**

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YEARLY FORMATION NEWSLETTER TOPICS

EASTER 2020

The Paschal Mystery

JUNE 2020

Evangelization

JULY 2020

Discipleship

AUGUST 2020

Baptism and Confirmation

SEPTEMBER 2020

Reclaiming Sunday

OCTOBER 2020

Interior Life: Prayer

NOVEMBER 2020

Interior Life: Mortification

DECEMBER 2020

Confession

JANUARY 2020

Goodness

FEBRUARY 2020

Beauty

MARCH 2020

Truth

APRIL 2020

New Methods

THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

LINDSAY FINN

Every day throughout the spring, I rejoice over the extra five minutes of daylight we get, pushing the sunset back to the glorious 9 o'clock hour. A handful of beautiful early summer nights makes dark, cold Wisconsin winters totally worth it, in my opinion. And, I certainly do not keep this enthusiasm about these lengthening spring and early summer days quiet.

Yet, every Easter, I am challenged to think about which light I am most passionate about proclaiming - the late sunsets or Jesus Christ, the light of the world, who opens for us the way to eternal life. A review of these holiest days leading to Easter, reminds me why the answer is clear.

The Jewish feast of Passover commemorates the deliverance from death by the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the doorposts of Egypt, which the angel of death saw and "passed over." On Holy Thursday, we remember that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Every time we go to Mass the Eucharist celebrates the new Passover - that Jesus, the Paschal Lamb, passes over to his Father by his death and Resurrection.¹

Just as the Israelites were liberated from their slavery in Egypt by the blood of the lamb, so Christians are liberated from our former slavery to sin by the blood of Christ our Redeemer; and just as the first-born sons of the Israelites were saved from death by the blood spread on the doorposts, which caused the avenging angel to pass over their homes, so Christians are saved from eternal death, which we deserved for our sins, by the blood of Christ our Savior.

On Good Friday, we recalled Jesus' sorrowful steps entering Jerusalem, his solitary steps before the Praetorium, his steps weighed down by the cross on the road to Calvary, and ultimately his failed steps, dead and buried in a tomb not his own.² By his death, we have been liberated from sin.

And, then the beautiful liturgy of the Easter Vigil opened with these words about the power of Jesus' Resurrection:

*The sanctifying power of this night
dispels wickedness, washes faults away,
restores innocence to the fallen,
and joy to mourners,
drives out hatred, fosters concord,
and brings down the mighty.*

It is clear that the light of the world, Jesus Christ, and the mystery of his death and Resurrection, is cause for sharing with enthusiasm this incredibly good news. As the Catechism beautifully states in paragraph 571, "The Paschal Mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ."

And yet, while we can know this story, this truth of the Paschal Mystery in our minds, we have to be convinced of it in our hearts. Let us pray that God gives us the grace to be more enthusiastic than ever about Jesus' work of redemption and the life of heaven it has won for those who follow him.

¹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pasch Definition

² Five Loaves and Two Fish, Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan

FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

VIDEOS

- [The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ](#) (Echo)
- [The Paschal Mystery: The Mystery of Jesus's Death & Resurrection](#) (Symbolon: Knowing the Faith)
- [Jesus's Suffering, Death, and Resurrection](#) (Lectio: Gospel of Mark)

STUDY PROGRAMS

- [Lectio: Salvation](#) (Formed)
- [No Greater Love: A Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion](#) (Ascension)

BOOKS

- [Moving Outward: A Proposal for the New Evangelization in the United States](#) (Vincent Bernardin)
- [The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ](#) (St. Alphonsus Ligouri)
- [That You Might Have Life: An Introduction to the Paschal Mystery of Christ](#) (Formed in Christ Series)

TIPS FOR PARISH LEADERSHIP

As we embark on this journey to revitalize our evangelical efforts in the Diocese, our first step is to invest in the development of parish staff and leadership.

Read this newsletter and spend time reflecting on the questions below. If parish and school leadership groups are not already meeting regularly (at least monthly), such meetings should be established so that priests and leadership can pray together, get to know one another better, and work more effectively together: priest with parish staff (including principal), principal with school teachers and staff, priest with pastoral and finance councils, and DREs/YMs with catechists and volunteers. We would encourage virtual meetings, if in person meetings are not possible in light of COVID-19.

Choose at least one of the recommended resources on the left to watch or study together as a team. **Bishop's top pick from the list this Easter season is the book *Moving Outward*.**

FORMATION IN THE PARISH

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- How comfortable are you articulating the gospel story to your friends and loved ones?
- What graces do you need to be able to confidently share this good news with your friends and loved ones?
- What experiences have you had in your life that have made the Paschal Mystery come alive?
- How could you immerse yourself more deeply in the Paschal Mystery?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

- What opportunities do you have for sharing the Paschal mystery in your role in the parish?
- How can the Paschal Mystery become an even more solid foundation in the life of our parish?
- How would you explain the Paschal Mystery to an adult who is coming back to the practice of their Catholic faith? What stories from your life would you use to make the story of the faith come alive for them?

TIMELINE UPDATES

PHASE ONE

LEADERSHIP FORMATION | Begins Pentecost 2020

ACTION ITEMS for APRIL and MAY

1. All parish and school leadership should read and discuss Vision Statement available on website.
2. All parish and school leadership should read and discuss Phase 1 as detailed on website, including desired outcomes, goals, objectives, and what is expected of parish and school leadership.

IMPORTANT DATES

May 31, 2020 - Pentecost Sunday | Bishop will publish pastoral letter about evangelization.

PHASE TWO

SEEKING HOLINESS | Begins Advent 2020

Beginning Advent 2020, the Bishop is asking every parish to make concerted efforts to help all members of their community to do four things: (1) re-claim Sunday as the Lord's day; (2)

pray 15 minutes every day, especially with Scripture; (3) observe Fridays as days of penance throughout the year; (4) make a monthly confession.

Reflect on your own fidelity to these basic Catholic practices and start thinking about how they could be cultivated more effectively in your own parish and/or school.

PHASE THREE

CREATING PARISH PLANS | Pentecost 2021 - Advent 2021

PHASE FOUR

IMPLEMENTING PARISH PLANS | Begins Advent 2021

HOW CAN THE DIOCESE HELP?

“REGIONAL” GATHERINGS

THURSDAY, APRIL 2 | 10:30 - NOON OR 12:30 - 2:00PM

TUESDAY, APRIL 14 | 10:30 - NOON

TUESDAY, APRIL 21 | 10:30 - NOON OR 12:30 - 2:00PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 | 10:30 - NOON

In light of COVID-19 and limiting the gathering of groups this spring, we are moving this series of Regional Gatherings online. Watch for information on the Diocesan website and through e-mail this spring to learn about how to participate in these online gatherings. We will be asking for folks to re-register for these virtual meetings.

YOUR DIOCESAN PARISH “EVANGELIZATION MENTOR”

Around Pentecost 2020, the Diocese will assign each parish a chancery staff member who will be available to walk with you through the phases of the GO MAKE DISCIPLES evangelization initiative. In particular, this Evangelization Mentor will communicate with the pastor and a parish evangelization leader.

BISHOP’S VIDEOS

Along with the content in this newsletter, stay tuned to the Diocesan YouTube channel for complementary videos from Bishop Hying.

CONTACT INFORMATION

ON THE WEB:

WWW.MADISONDIOCESE.ORG/GMD

E-MAIL:

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**LES DISCIPLES PIERRE ET JEAN
COURANT AU SÉPULCRE LE MATIN
DE LA RÉSURRECTION, 1898**

EUGÈNE BURNAND

In this moving image we see Peter and John running to the empty tomb on Easter morning. After the heartbreak and agony of the cruel death Jesus suffered for our sins, we see in their eyes a beautiful expression of sorrow mixed with

hope and joy, drawing us into their experience of the urgency of this moment and the joy of the Resurrection. Are we disciples of Jesus as they were? Do we walk the journey of the cross with him daily? And do we run to the tomb when we hear of his Resurrection? Ponder this image from the perspective of one who has recently received the initial proclamation of the Gospel, perhaps someone in RCIA, an adult rediscovering the faith, or a child in sacramental preparation. Upon first hearing the good news, they are moved, as the disciples were, to run. To run to Christ, to embrace him, to accept his teaching and all that means for the rest of their lives. His Paschal Mystery changes us.