

Sermon – April 14, 2019 – Palm/Passion Sunday

The Paschal Mystery – that is what Holy Week is all about. But what does ‘Pascal Mystery’ mean?

Well "paschal" is from the Greek "pascha", meaning "the passing over". It refers to the passage of God on the Passover night, when the Israelites left Egypt. God passed over all the Israelite homes because as instructed, they had the blood of a lamb on the lintel and door posts. But the firstborn died in all houses that did not have the blood. God struck the houses of Egyptians and left the Israelites untouched,

The word 'mystery', is regarded in Christian theology as one of the most important key-words of Christianity. There are Divine mysteries which cannot be grasped by human reasoning and can only be revealed by God through grace.^{[7][8]} *Mystery* describes not an idea that must be unlocked or solved, but Divine truth and life, to which God initiates the faithful, through the Church, sacraments, word of God and faith,

1 Cor 2:14

Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are discerned spiritually.

‘Pascal Mystery’ refers to the suffering, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation of Jesus Christ; the whole thing! The paschal mystery involves Jesus as the final Passover Lamb who died so that God’s judgment will “pass over” those who claim His blood by faith.

There is an emphasis on “mystery” in the Catholic Church; however, Protestants would also agree that the significance of Christ’s work cannot be grasped unless God reveals it to the individual by grace.

(Paul explains: “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.’ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength” (1 Corinthians 1:18–25).)

In summary, the term *paschal mystery* simply refers to the events of Christ’s death and resurrection and their significance for us. We can only truly understand when

our hearts are enabled to do so by God's grace. For us who believe, Jesus' death is the most wonderful, powerful, and important event in history.

"Mystery" explains how two people can look at the same events and come to such divergent conclusions—one is approaching them purely from the standpoint of human reason, and one is approaching them through insight given by God.

In this coming week, Holy week, let each of us resolve to be present to the passion of Christ and the mystery of it. Being present just means to remember deeply.

For us to "remember" is to have deeply present in our minds and hearts what the Lord has done for us so that we are grateful and different. We can take a little time every day this week, even a few minutes, to remember deeply the events of the last week of Jesus' life; the entry into Jerusalem, the last supper, the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus' arrest, his trial, his scourging, carrying his cross to Golgotha, his crucifixion. If you like, listen to Holy Week hymns while you remember. We are invited, to take the time in order to remember deeply and to enable the activity of the Holy Spirit.

This Holy Week

We can pray that God will reveal to us by grace the significance of Christ's work. We can pray that what is revealed to us will change us.

WE can pray that we will be astonished by our Lord's lavish love and mercy and be grateful. Amen.