

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA  
Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • October 18, 2015



*Heavenly Father,  
we praise and thank you  
for your Son, Jesus,  
who was lifted  
high upon the Cross.  
He loved us  
and gave his life for us.  
His wounded side  
poured forth blood and water,  
fountain for the Sacraments,  
the deep wellspring  
of Salvation.*

## Sunday Word

Isaiah 53:10–11  
Psalm 33:4–5, 18–20, 22  
Hebrews 4:14–16  
Mark 10:35–45

### *Crushed*

The Suffering Servant of God freely offers himself for God's people. Afflicted, the Servant will act as a conduit for the Lord God's merciful kindness. In this mysterious exchange, the descendants of the Servant will gain long life. The Servant "shall make many righteous" (Isaiah 53:11) before God.

### *Tested*

Jesus, who shared our every weakness and was tested in every way but not overcome by sin, passes through pain and indignity to enter Heaven. He is our great High Priest. From the Cross, he intercedes for us. The fountain of grace and everlasting mercy flows from his sacrifice.

### *Baptized*

There is another baptism Jesus undergoes. It is not a bathing in water at the river Jordan, which marks the boundary into the Promised Land. It is another Passover, an eternal threshold, his suffering and Death on the Cross.

Great is the one in the kingdom who takes upon himself the burden of others. The Son of Man came to serve and to "give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

## Catholic Doctrine: Redemption by Christ's Suffering

Humanity finds itself beset by physical limits, faults, suffering, sin, and ultimately death. Into this broken situation arrived Jesus, who proclaimed God's forgiveness and love. In his ministry on Earth, he preached the healing power of God. He died accused of crimes he did not commit, willing to give his life for us.

The profound mystery of his Death and Resurrection stand as a focal point of faith. The Paschal Mystery gives Christianity its unique place among all religions. In his life, suffering, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, Jesus does for us what we cannot

do for ourselves—he redeems us from sin and death. In one Person, Jesus Christ, Salvation is accomplished, a ransom achieved for everyone without exception.

Pontius Pilate did not know the true significance of his own words when he referred to Jesus before the crowd, “Behold the man!” (John 19:5). The way in which the Son of God chooses to redeem us begins with the Incarnation, whereby he shares fully in our humanity without sinning. The mystery of the Incarnation unfolds to its conclusion in his Death and Resurrection.

Jesus, the Son of God, saves us by becoming one with us in our humanity while at the same time carrying within himself the full reality of his divinity. Jesus uniquely and definitively accomplishes Salvation precisely because he is both fully human and fully divine in one Person. His humanity becomes the instrument of our Redemption, atoning for our sins. His divinity draws all men and women into this saving sacrifice, making possible our eternal communion with God into which all are invited.

### ***Distinctiveness of Church Teaching***

It is from the heart of divine love that we are saved. Only our loving response from the heart, therefore, will suffice to open for us the Redemption offered. A loving heart enables us to:

- cooperate with the Holy Spirit to lead holy lives
- take up our own cross in imitation of Jesus
- surrender to God’s grace as members of the Church
- enter into partnership with Christ in his Paschal Mystery



### **Key Terms**

#### **REDEMPTION**

The saving action by which we are freed from sin and eternal death and given the possibility of union with God. Redemption accomplishes our ransom from sin. Jesus Christ is the one, eternal Redeemer. There is no other Redeemer who accomplishes this saving work for humanity (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 601).

#### **SACRIFICE**

The ritual offering made by a priest on behalf of the people. This activity is a sign of adoration, thanksgiving, and supplication. In Old Testament times, sacrifices were made at the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus Christ, as the Redeemer of humanity, is the High Priest of the New Covenant. His singular self-sacrifice on the Cross, freely offered to the Father, supersedes and replaces these former ritual offerings. Jesus’ self-offering on the Cross is mysteriously made present again each time the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church is celebrated (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2099–2010).

#### **SALVATION**

The forgiveness of sins, as well as the restoration of friendship with God. This is achieved by God alone, not through our own devices or desires (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 161, 169).

### **Voices of Faith**

Apart from the cross there is no other ladder by which we may get to heaven.

—Saint Rose of Lima, cf. P. Hansen, *Vita Mirabilis*

Above all, love is greater than sin, than weakness, than the “futility of creation”; it is stronger than death; it is a love always ready to raise up and forgive. . . . This revelation of love is also described as a mercy; and in [our] history this revelation of love and mercy has taken a form and a name: that of Jesus Christ.

—Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*

### **Further Reading**

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***: 608 (John the Baptist reveals Jesus as the Suffering Servant), 610 (at the Last Supper Jesus anticipates his self-sacrifice), 613 (Christ’s Death as the definitive sacrifice of the New Covenant)

***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults***: Chapter 8 (The Saving Death and Resurrection of Christ), especially the section entitled “Lift High the Cross,” pages 91–93

***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church***: 118 (Jesus’ saving Death in accord with Scripture), 120 (how Jesus’ offering is expressed at the Last Supper), 122 (the results of Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross)