

Passion Sunday

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Date: 22 March 2026

Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0:00] Amen. Every Christmas, the church celebrates the greatest miracle of all, the birth of our Savior, the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

The birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The Passion Sunday, Holy Week, and Good Friday explain the why. The why of those words we hear in John's Gospel in chapter 1, verse 14, which says, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The Word that became flesh refers to Jesus and His coming, which we call the Incarnation. God became man. And the language of dwelling among us literally means God tabernacled, God pitched His tent here on earth.

God came and tabernacled among us in real flesh and blood. Here in our epistle text from the book of Hebrews chapter 9, we read that Christ came as our high priest with a more perfect tabernacle not made with the hands of men.

As a matter of fact, this tabernacle is not of this creation, according to Hebrews chapter 9, verse 12. What is meant by this is that God came from the realm of the eternal.

[1:28] He came to this temporal world. He tabernacled among us. He came to this earth taking upon Himself our flesh and our blood, so that in Him we might be raised to the eternal and immortal dwelling of God.

But there's a problem. A big problem. Hebrews chapter 12, verse 14 says that without holiness, no one can see the Lord.

This is reiterated in Revelation chapter 21, verse 27, that says that nothing unclean can enter into the presence of God. Therefore, the old covenant, the movable tabernacle, which became the more permanent temple, was established by God for people to have their sins atoned for, or we could say removed, by the offering of blood sacrifice.

The offering of blood was not because God was some kind of bloodthirsty vampire. Blood in the ancient world represented life.

Think of when Cain killed his brother Abel, and the Lord said that Abel's blood cried to him from the ground. Therefore, in the old covenant, the blood of a goat provided a temporary removal of sin for the people, and the blood of a bull temporarily provided the covering of sins for the priest and his family.

[3:10] Why am I explaining this to you this morning? Because today is Passion Sunday, and the whole thrust of Passion Sunday, is that our Lord is now preparing for his death upon the cross.

And without understanding the old covenant sacrifices, we fail to grasp the meaning, the profound meaning of the cross of Jesus, as well as his resurrection.

The problem with the old covenant sacrifices is that they had to be repeated year after year. The temple was a bloody place. Therefore, God became man, taking upon himself human flesh, the flesh of his mother Mary, and was born in Bethlehem.

God tabernacled, or he made his dwelling among us in the person of Jesus. And Jesus came to be the final, perfect, spotless, sinless sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

There would no longer be the need for yearly atoning sacrifices. Hebrews chapter 9 verse 12 says, Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood.

[4:30] Speaking of Jesus, he entered into the most holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. redemption. Redemption.

Redemption means to purchase or to buy back. Jesus redeems us from the penalty of sin and the finality of eternal death by paying for our sins through his own blood, by laying down his own life.

The writer of Hebrews concludes by saying here in verse 15 of Hebrews chapter 9, And for this reason, he, that is Jesus, is the mediator of a new covenant by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

We receive eternal life and immortality through the death and through the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, you might be wondering, for those that worship with us, why then do we talk about sacrifice in the liturgy? If Jesus is the once and for all sacrifice, why does the priest say, pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours might be acceptable to God the Father Almighty?

[6:00] Let's be clear. There is only one atoning sacrifice. The sacrifice that Jesus made upon the cross cannot be repeated again and again.

It's once for all. But what we and the church throughout the ages believe is that this sacrifice is not repeated, but it is represented.

That's what offering is about. It is represented. The sacrifice is not merely something that happened in the past. Its benefits are ongoing. It is perpetual.

And that's why we read of our Lord bringing what? Eternal redemption. Eternal redemption. Jesus died and then he conquered death by his own resurrection from the grave.

He then ascended into the realm of the eternal and the immortal, where he is our high priest. And as our great high priest, the offering of his once and for all sacrifice is eternal, ongoing.

[7:09] In other words, it's not bound by time or space. Therefore, we now offer or we present our Lord's once and for all sacrifice in our praise of thanksgiving.

And we do this with joy, and we do this with joy, but with deep reverence, bowing before the throne of our victorious Lamb and our God, who is our Lord and King.

Passion Week, therefore, is the journey that we make with our Lord as he sets his sights on the cross. Passion Week intensifies the reality that Jesus came to be the offering and sacrifice of God for the sins of the world.

Therefore, dear friends, let us contemplate on the profound mystery and the profound love that our Savior has for each and every one of us.

He came to give his own life for you. He came to be the atoning sacrifice for your sins so that in him you might have life, eternal life and immortality.

[8:26] He offers prayers for you in the Holy of Holies, the realm of the eternal, where he reigns as our victorious and immortal King, surrounded with those that have gone before us as they offer their prayers and their praises to our everlasting God, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And we join with the saints around the throne as we unite our voices with theirs, giving all praise and adoration to Jesus, who is the conquering Lamb, who has overcome sin, death, and the grave. Our Lord is the temple of God, the final temple of God. There will be no other temple. There is no such thing as a third temple.

That is complete blasphemy. Our Lord is the temple. As we read in John chapter 2, verses 19 through 21, Jesus answered and said to them, destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

Then the Jews said, it's taken us 46 years to build this temple and you will raise it up in three days. But Jesus was speaking of the temple of his body.

[9:48] The temple fulfilled in Christ was destroyed in death, but it was raised again in his glorious resurrection and the trampling down of death. And therefore, by the Spirit, we the church are united to Christ, his body being erected into a holy temple in order to do what?

To offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Father through our great high priest, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Let us then begin our journey to the cross, contemplating on the passion of our Lord.

Let us be overwhelmed by his love for us, which is demonstrated at the cross. And may our lives be one of perpetual offering, of praise, adoration, and thanksgiving to our God, who came in human flesh as he made his dwelling among us, so that by his cross, his passion, his death, and his resurrection, we might have eternal life.

Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen.