

Elements of the Mass

The Paschal Candle

The Paschal Candle represents the light of Christ at the Easter Vigil and through the year. Before it is lit it is ceremonially decorated and blessed. It is marked with the sign of the cross to remind us of the crucifixion. It is marked with an Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) to remind us that God is the beginning and the end. The candle is also marked with the year in which it is blessed to remind us that God reigns through all time. Placed into the cross are five studs traditionally made or filled with incense grains to represent the nails of the cross. These remind us of the five wounds given to Christ on the cross. The Candle once it is blessed is lit from the Easter Fire. It is then processed through the church like the pillar of light that led the Israelites in the desert. The candle is then used to bless the font and at all baptisms in the year. It represents Christ's presence with us and reminds us of the resurrection; it is for this reason that the candle is also present at funerals in church. Have a close look at your Paschal Candle today – look at the way it is decorated and consider what it can tell you about your faith.

Prayers to Remember

Almighty and everlasting God, who didst form thy Church to be of one heart and one soul in the power of the resurrection and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit: Renew her evermore in her first love; and grant to thy people such a measure of thy grace that their life may be hallowed, their way directed, and their work made fruitful to the good of thy Church and the glory of thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

From the *Community of the Resurrection*

From the Fathers

From a sermon by St Maximus of Turin, Bishop (380 – c.423)

The light of Christ is an endless day that knows no night. Christ is this day, says the Apostle; such is the meaning of his words: Night is almost over; day is at hand! He tells us that night is almost over, not that it is about to fall. By this we are meant to understand that the coming of Christ's light puts Satan's darkness to flight, leaving no place for any shadow of sin. His everlasting radiance dispels the dark clouds of the past and checks the hidden growth of vice. The Son is that day to whom the day, which is the Father, communicates the mystery of his divinity. He is the day who says through the mouth of Solomon: I have caused an unfailing light to rise in heaven. And as in heaven no night can follow day, so no sin can overshadow the justice of Christ. The celestial day is perpetually bright and shining with brilliant light; clouds can never darken its skies. In the same way, the light of Christ is eternally glowing with luminous radiance and can never be extinguished by the darkness of sin. This is why John the evangelist says: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never been able to overpower it. And so, my brothers, each of us ought surely to rejoice on this holy day!

Cultivating the Vine



'I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me with me in him, bears fruit in plenty.' In the Fourth Gospel the Lord often uses the word 'abide' to describe both his relationship with his heavenly Father, and his closeness with those whom he has called to himself, the Church. Abide expresses an intimacy of relationship, a closeness that is quite so close as to be not merely a 'living with' or 'alongside' someone, but – radically! - a living within them, an 'in-dwelling.' St John's telling of the Gospel explores deeply this theme of in-dwelling. In today's Mass we hear that it is only in and through this intimate in-dwelling that we can 'bear fruit'. The Gospel's wonderfully earthy and organic language speaks to us of growing, maturation, a coming over time to fruitfulness. It speaks of and proclaims fecundity! Our life in Christ is a life of nothing less than our active participation *in* Christ, participation in him who is the source and ground and glory of our faith, participation in the Word made flesh, a participation in the one who is the fulfilment of all God's salvific intent. Participation in Christ makes holy our lives, directs our works, and draws us ever onward, ever upward, to the perfection of life we call salvation, the life that is eternal. To strengthen us in this life of active and dynamic participation in Christ, the Lord has given himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of his Body and Blood, the sacrament of his in-dwelling, to which sacrament day-by-day and week-on-week we must return for life-giving nourishment.