

Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Paschal Mystery in the Liturgy

[God] destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:5-6)

Insight

What are the symbolic treasures in your house that carry deep meaning for you?

The officer saluted and received the flag from the military pallbearers. Then he reverently placed it into the young widow's lap. After solemnly speaking the ritual words while giving the flag into her care, he backed off very slowly and saluted again. It was an acknowledgment of the husband's sacrifice and his wife's sacrifice as well. The salute symbolized that a country wept in sorrow and gratitude with her, and the flag signified much more than just colored cloth, stars, and stripes.

In the group of mourners, the soldier's uncle grieved. He saw the flag as the wife clutched it to her heart and held her son close. The uncle wondered if the son would see the flag displayed in its case at a later time and think of this day and his father. Would the flag always be for him sadness, love, and pride mixed together?

For Reflection . . .

The source of all blessings originates in God the Father and gives us an abundance of life. The liturgy of the Church not only recalls the events that saved us but makes them present again in our lives.

As you think back over the last week, where and how have you been blessed?

What are some of the most significant "snapshots" in your memory and why are they so formative or powerful for you?

Additional Background

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 1077–1134

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: pages 165–179

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 218–226

Church Teaching

Wellspring and Endpoint of Liturgy

From the beginning of creation, God blesses every creature and all of humanity. Despite humanity's falling into sin, God showers blessings upon Noah and his descendants, and redirects us toward the path of life through Abraham. Divine blessings are continued and intensified in the Chosen People, the Promised Land, the Law of Moses, and the Temple. An entirely unique initiative of God the Father further blesses us in the saving event of his Son, Jesus Christ, who suffers, dies, is raised, and ascends to the right hand of glory.

The Church, the Body of Christ on earth, proclaims and perpetuates divine blessings. In the liturgy, we acknowledge and adore God the Father as we thank him for his many blessings. The liturgy itself makes present, signifies, and makes us sharers in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ. The saving event of the Cross and Resurrection transcends time and abides even now, drawing us deeper into the heavenly life God intends for us.

The liturgy of the Church is a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. In the liturgy we join with Christ, we sing God's praises, we join our voices with all the angels and saints, and we anticipate the Second Coming of Christ when he who is our life will appear in glory.

In the celebration of a sacrament, past, present, and future uniquely come together. A sacrament commemorates what has come before it—Christ's saving Death and Resurrection. At the same time it also demonstrates what is accomplished here and now through the Paschal Mystery—God's abundant grace. Moreover, it prefigures what that Paschal Mystery pledges to us—a future, heavenly glory.