



WHY DID JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS AND RISE FROM THE DEAD?

GOSPEL



ANSWERS

JESUS SAID TO NICODEMUS: "JUST AS MOSES LIFTED UP THE SERPENT IN THE DESERT, SO MUST THE SON OF MAN BE LIFTED UP, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY SON, SO THAT EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM MIGHT NOT PERISH BUT MIGHT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. FOR GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT THAT THE WORLD MIGHT BE SAVED THROUGH HIM. WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE CONDEMNED, BUT WHOEVER DOES NOT BELIEVE HAS ALREADY BEEN CONDEMNED, BECAUSE HE HAS NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY SON OF GOD. ...FOR EVERYONE WHO DOES WICKED THINGS HATES THE LIGHT AND DOES NOT COME TOWARD THE LIGHT, SO THAT HIS WORKS MIGHT NOT BE EXPOSED. BUT WHOEVER LIVES THE TRUTH COMES TO THE LIGHT, SO THAT HIS WORKS MAY BE CLEARLY SEEN AS DONE IN GOD. JOHN 3: 14

SAINTS & INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

ST VERONICA

St Veronica is remembered in the 6th station of the cross for the kindness and charity she showed to Christ in wiping her face. Even before the resurrection, she showed her love for Christ. We need to have that same faith and love for Christ.



BLESSED TERESA BRACCO

As a young girl and throughout her adolescence Blessed Teresa was often found in church in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. She spared no sacrifice to nourish her love for Christ in the Eucharist, walking over a mile to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion. She appreciated the sacrifice Christ made for her on the cross.



TALK ABOUT IT!

TEAM DISCUSSION

After reading over the YOUCAT numbers on the following pages, how do you think the Youth Catechism answers the question of the week? Were there any words or ideas that you did not fully understand that you would like to understand better?

ANSWER IN YOUR OWN WORDS:



YOUCAT NUMBERS FOR THIS WEEK



#96 WHY WAS A MAN OF PEACE LIKE JESUS CONDEMNED TO DEATH ON A CROSS?

Jesus posed a decisive question to his contemporaries: Either he was acting with divine authority, or else he was an impostor, a blasphemer, and a violator of the Law and who had to be called to account. In many respects Jesus was a unprecedented challenge to the traditional Judaism of his time. He forgave sins, which God alone can do; he acted as though the Sabbath law were not absolute; he was suspected of blasphemy and brought upon himself the accusation that he was a false prophet. All these were crimes punishable under the Law by death.

#98 DID GOD WILL THE DEATH OF HIS ONLY SON?

The violent death of Jesus did not come about through tragic external circumstances. Jesus was “delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). So that we children of sin and death might have life, the Father in heaven “made him to be sin who knew no sin” (2 Cor 5:21). The magnitude of the sacrifice that God the Father asked of his Son, corresponded to the magnitude of Christ’s obedience: “And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, for this purpose I have come to this hour” (Jn 12:27). On both sides, God’s love for men proved itself to the very end on the Cross. In order to save us from death, God embarked on a dangerous mission: He introduced a “medicine of immortality” into our world of death—his Son Jesus Christ. The Father and the Son were inseparable in this mission, willing and yearning to take the utmost upon themselves out of love for man. God willed to make an exchange so as to save us forever. He wanted to give us his eternal life, so that we might experience his joy, and wanted to suffer our death, our despair, our abandonment, our death, so as to share with us in everything. So as to love us to the end and beyond. Christ’s death is the will of the Father but not his final word. Since Christ died for us, we can exchange our death for his life

#97 ARE THE JEWS GUILTY OF JESUS’ DEATH?

No one can assign collective guilt for the death of Jesus to the Jews. Instead, the Church professes with certainty that all sinners share in the guilt for Jesus’ death. The aged prophet Simeon foresaw that Jesus would become “a sign that is spoken against” (Lk 2:34b). And in fact Jesus was resolutely rejected by the Jewish authorities, but among the Pharisees, for example, there were also secret followers of Jesus, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. Various Roman and Jewish persons and institutions (Caiaphas, Judas, the Sanhedrin, Herod, Pontius Pilate) took part in Jesus’ trial, and only God knows their guilt as individuals. The idea that all Jews of that time or living today are guilty of Jesus’ death is irrational and biblically untenable.



PASSION (LATIN PASSIO = SICKNESS, SUFFERING):

term designating Christ's suffering.

#99 WHAT HAPPENED AT THE LAST SUPPER?

Jesus washed the feet of his apostles on the evening before his death; he instituted the Eucharist and founded the priesthood of the New Covenant. Jesus showed his consummate love in three ways: He washed his disciples' feet and showed that he is among us as one who serves (cf. Lk 22:27). He symbolically anticipated his redeeming Passion by speaking these words over the gifts of bread and wine: "This is my body which is given for you" (Lk 22:19ff). In this way he instituted the Holy Eucharist. When Jesus commanded the Apostles, "Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11:24b), he made them priests of the New Covenant.

#100 ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS DEATH, DID JESUS REALLY EXPERIENCE FEAR OF DEATH?

Since Jesus was true man, he truly experienced fear of death on the Mount of Olives. With the same human strength that we all possess, Jesus had to fight in order to consent interiorly to the Father's will that he give his life for the life of the world. Abandoned in his darkest hour by everyone, even his friends, Jesus managed after a struggle to say Yes. "My Father, if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done" (Mt 26:42).

#101 WHY DID JESUS HAVE TO REDEEM US ON THE CROSS, OF ALL PLACES?

The Cross on which Jesus, although innocent, was cruelly executed is the place of utmost degradation and abandonment. Christ, our Redeemer, chose the Cross so as to bear the guilt of the world and to suffer the pain of the world. So he brought the world back home to God by his perfect love. God could not show his love more forcibly than by allowing himself in the person of the Son to be nailed to the Cross for us. Crucifixion was the most shameful and most horrible method of execution in antiquity. It was forbidden to crucify Roman citizens, whatever crimes they were guilty of. Thereby God entered into the most abysmal sufferings of mankind. Since then, no one can say "God does not know what I'm suffering."

#102 WHY ARE WE TOO SUPPOSED TO ACCEPT SUFFERING IN OUR LIVES AND THUS "TAKE UP OUR CROSS" AND THEREBY FOLLOW JESUS?

Christians should not seek suffering, but when they are confronted with unavoidable suffering, it can become meaningful for them if they unite their sufferings with the sufferings of Christ: "Christ . . . suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps" (1 Pet 2:21). Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Mk 8:34). Christians have the task of alleviating suffering in the world. Nevertheless, there will still be suffering. In faith we can accept our own suffering and share the suffering of others. In this way human suffering becomes united with the redeeming love of Christ and thus part of the divine power that changes the world for the better.

#103 WAS JESUS REALLY

DEAD? Maybe he was able to rise again because he only appeared to have suffered death. Jesus really died on the Cross; his body was buried. All the sources testify to this. In John 19:33, the soldiers even make an explicit determination of death: They open the side of Jesus' dead body with a lance and see blood and water come out. Furthermore, it says that the legs of the men crucified with him were broken—a step that hastened the dying process; this was not required in Jesus' case since his death had already occurred.



#104 CAN YOU BE A CHRISTIAN WITHOUT BELIEVING IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST?

No. "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor 15:14).

#105 HOW DID THE DISCIPLES COME TO BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS RISEN? The disciples, who before had lost all hope, came to believe in Jesus' Resurrection because they saw him in a different way after his death, spoke with him, and experienced him as being alive. The Easter events that took place in Jerusalem in the year 30 are not a made-up story. Following the death of Jesus and the defeat of their whole cause, the disciples fled ("We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel", Lk 24:21) or else barricaded themselves behind locked doors. Only their encounter with the risen Christ freed them from their paralysis and filled them with an enthusiastic faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and death.

#106 ARE THERE PROOFS FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS? There are no proofs for the Resurrection of Jesus in the scientific sense. There are, however, very strong individual and collective testimonies by a large number of contemporaries of those events in Jerusalem. The oldest written testimony to the Resurrection is a letter that St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians around twenty years after Christ's death: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:3-6). Paul is recording here a living tradition that was present in the original Christian community two or three years after Jesus' death and Resurrection, when he himself became a Christian—on the basis of his own staggering encounter with the risen Lord. The disciples took the fact of the empty tomb (Lk 24:2-3) as the first indication of the reality of the Resurrection. Women, of all people, discovered it—according to the law of that time they were not able to testify. Although we read about the apostles John that he "saw and believed" (Jn 20:8b) already at the empty tomb, full assurance that Jesus was alive came about only after a series of appearances. The many encounters with the risen Lord ended with Christ's Ascension into heaven. Nevertheless, there were afterward and there are even today encounters with the living Lord: Jesus Christ lives.

#107 THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION, DID JESUS RETURN TO THE PHYSICAL, CORPOREAL STATE THAT HE HAD DURING HIS EARTHLY LIFE? The risen Lord allowed his disciples to touch him; he ate with them and showed them the wounds of his Passion. Nevertheless, his body belonged no longer only to this earth, but rather to the heavenly kingdom of his Father. The risen Christ, who bore the wounds of the Crucified, was no longer bound by space and time. He could enter through locked doors and appear to his disciples in various places in a form in which they did not recognize him immediately. Christ's Resurrection was, therefore, not a return to a normal earthly life, but rather his entrance into a new way of being: "For we know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him" (Rom 6:9).

#108 WHAT CHANGED IN THE WORLD AS A RESULT OF THE RESURRECTION? Because death is now no longer the end of everything, joy and hope came into the world. Now that death "no longer has dominion" (Rom 6:9) over Jesus, it has no more power over us, either, who belong to Jesus.



#277 WHAT ARE THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS?

Following Jesus on his Way of the Cross by praying and meditating on the fourteen Stations is a very ancient devotion in the Church, which is practiced especially in Lent and Holy week.

#109 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT JESUS ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN?

With Jesus, one of us has arrived home with God and remains there forever. In his Son, God is close to us men in a human way. Moreover, Jesus says in the Gospel of John, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (Jn 12:32). In the New Testament, the Ascension of Christ marks the end of forty days during which the risen Lord was especially close to his disciples. At the end of this time, Christ, together with his whole humanity, enters into the glory of God. Sacred Scripture expresses this through the images of "cloud" and "heaven" or sky. "Man", says Pope Benedict XVI, "finds room in God." Jesus Christ is now with the Father, and from there he will come one day "to judge the living and the dead". Christ's Ascension into heaven means that Jesus is no longer visible on earth yet is still present.

The fourteen Stations of the Cross are:



1. Jesus is condemned to death.



2. Jesus takes up his Cross.



3. Jesus falls the first time.



4. Jesus meets his sorrowful Mother.



5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross.



6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.



7. Jesus falls the second time.



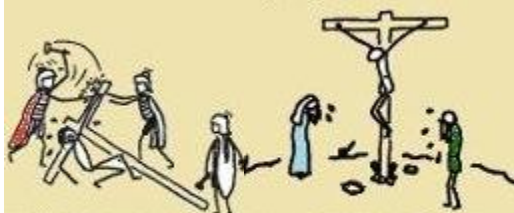
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.



9. Jesus falls the third time.



10. Jesus is stripped of his garments.

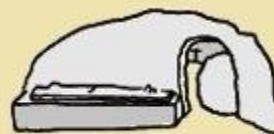


11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross.

12. Jesus dies on the Cross.



13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross and presented to his sorrowful Mother.



14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.