

Church of St. Francis

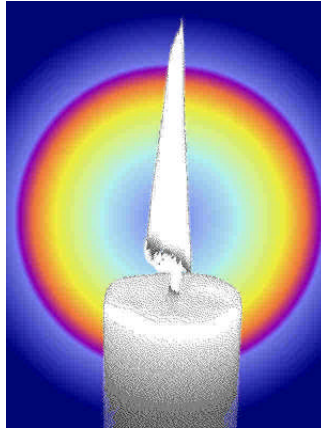
EASTER 2008

THE PASCAL CANDLE

The Paschal Candle is a large, white candle used liturgically in the Western Rite of Christianity (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, etc.). A new Paschal Candle is blessed and lit every year at Easter, and is used throughout the Pascal season. The candle is then left standing upon the Gospel side of the altar until after the Gospel on Ascension Day, when it is extinguished and removed.

Meaning

The flame of the paschal candle symbolizes Christ's illuminating light, and his presence in the midst of his people. The term "paschal" comes from the word *pesach*, which in Hebrew means Passover. It in many ways signifies the Divine pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that lead the Israelites in their exodus from slavery in Egypt.



The EASTER VIGIL

For churches that celebrate the Easter Vigil on the Saturday evening before Easter, the ceremonial lighting of the Paschal candle is one of the most solemn moments of the

service. An outside brazier is used for kindling the "New Fire".

In The Liberal Catholic Church the fire is also kindled outside the church, but is ignited from the sun by means of a lens or flint and steel is used. The fire placed in an open thurible and is blessed by the priest. The five

pellets of incense are blessed and a triple candle is lighted from the new fire and blessed. After a procession into the church, the triple candle is raised three times, accompanied by the chant "Christ is our light." to which the people respond "May His light shine in our hearts".

Later in the Holy Saturday service, a deacon fixes to the paschal candle five grains of incense, an al-

CHURCH OF ST. FRANCIS

THE PASCHAL CANDLE (CONTINUED)

pha and omega, and the current year, saying, "Christ is yesterday; and today; the beginning and the end; Alpha and Omega; his are the seasons, his the ages; to him be glory and dominion throughout the ages of ages. Amen" Then the paschal candle, and altar candles, are lit from the triple candle

In accordance with ancient custom this service may be held in the evening, followed by a baptism or confirmation, or both may be performed. If held late in the evening, the service is followed by a midnight Eucharist. Most often, the Easter Eucharist is celebrated the morning of the next day.

History

Already in the time of Constantine we are told by Eusebius, Bishop of Cæsarea in Palestine, that the emperor "transformed the night of the sacred Easter vigil into the brilliancy of day, by lighting throughout the whole city pillars of wax..."

The medieval tendency was to glorify the paschal candle by making it bigger and bigger. At the Ancient Catholic Diocese of Durham, on the border of Scotland, the candlestick was decorated with dragons, shields and seven branches. It was so big that it had to stand in the center of the choir.

In 1517 the paschal candle of the English Salisbury Cathedral was thirty-six feet in height, and in 1558, three hundred pounds of wax were used for the Westminster Abbey candle. In England, these huge candles were usually melted down and made into tapers to be used at the funerals of the poor.



Paschal Candle common symbols:

- The cross is the central symbol, most clearly identifying it as the paschal candle.
- The Greek letters *alpha* and *omega* signify that God is the beginning and the end.
- The current year represents God's presence here and now.
- Five grains of incense are embedded in the candle (sometimes encased in wax "nails") to represent the five wounds of Jesus.

THE LITURGICAL COLORS AND THEIR MEANING

The color of certain of the vestments and of the altar frontal varies according to the season of the year or festival being observed.

White is the color of joy and is used on great festivals, on those of our Lady, of angels and of those saints who are not martyrs. It synthesizes all the colors. For this calendar, white is represented by black type.

Red is used on festivals of the Holy Ghost, of apostles and of martyrs, and in the service of healing. Its influence is that of expansiveness and glowing power.

Violet is used in Lent and Advent, at times of self-examination and self-preparation, at exorcisms and the visitation of the sick, at extreme unction, and at funerals. Lying at the opposite side of the spectrum to red, its influence is cleansing and piercing.

Green is used after Epiphany and Trinity and in the service of healing. It holds the balance in the middles of the spectrum and its influence is one of sympathy and general good will.

Rose, supersedes violet on the fourth Sunday in Lent and the third Sunday in Advent, but its use is left to the discretion of the priest in charge. It indicates the love which is the central thought in those seasons of preparation.

SPRING RETREAT 2008 IN DUBUQUE, IOWA

Where: Shalom Center, 1001 Davis St. Dubuque, Iowa

When: May 16-18 [from dinner on the 16th thru lunch on the 18]

Host: St. Gabriel & All Angels of Fairfield, Iowa

Registration: Friday 3-6 p.m.
(Dinner 6 p.m.)

Cost: \$166/\$176 after May 9.

Liberal Catholic Church retreats are spaces of holy silence and warm fellowship. Open to all, they are good times for quiet reflection and spiritual refreshment. Meals will be organic and vegetarian.

St. Francis is planning to provide transportation for anyone who signs up for the retreat.

For those with financial difficulties, St. Francis has scholarships in the Harry McAlister Retreat Fund.

For more information, contact Deaconess Julie Hamilton.

Shalom Center web site address:
<http://members.aol.com/dbqshalom/>

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES SNOWED OUT

Close to 2' of snow on Feb. 6 cancelled that night's service. Rev. T. Metz announced that in lieu of the canceled services, there will be a Healing and Benediction scheduled for Thursday, May 22, the feast of Corpus Christi.



"Resurrection of Jesus" by Matthias Grunewald, 16th c.

March 16 Palm Sunday

10:00 a.m. Blessing of the Palms
Followed by the Holy Eucharist

March 23 Easter Sunday

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Procession of the Blessed Sacrament

Communion Open to All

www.liberalcatholic.com

<http://www.stfrancisvillapark.org/>

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