



The Paschal Candle

The Paschal candle is one of the most sacred and enduring elements in Christianity. Made of beeswax to represent the purity of Christ, the candle's wick signifies Christ's humanity, and the flame His Divine Nature.

It is adorned with one or more Christian symbols, often the cross to represent His redemptive sacrifice; the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet - Alpha and Omega – to signify that He is the beginning and the end;

The Paschal candle is a rich symbol of our faith. Each year during the Easter Vigil service on Holy Saturday night, a fire is kindled in a brazier. From the brazier comes a "new" and blessed fire that lights the Paschal candle which is carried in procession into the dark church. The "new" fire serves as an image of the Resurrection. The candle, which represents Christ himself, is placed on a special Paschal candle stand near the altar.

Five grains of incense are inserted into the candle to recall the aromatic spices that were used to prepare Christ's body for the tomb, and the wounds in His hands, feet and side, which remained after His resurrection.

Numbers representing the current calendar year are also inserted.

The Paschal candle remains in the Sanctuary on its special candle stand during the full 50 days of the Easter season, and is lit for liturgical services during that time.

After Pentecost the candle will be placed next to the Baptismal Font. The candle is lit during all baptisms throughout the year, passing the light of Christ to each person baptized, starting with the Catechumens at the Easter Vigil service.

The candle may also be used at funeral services, and placed next to the casket during a funeral Mass. At funeral services it is a reminder that the sacrament of Baptism is itself a death and resurrection in Christ, and testifies to Christian certainty in the resurrection of the dead and life with Christ in the world to come.

This candle, also called the Easter Candle, originated in the earliest days of Christianity, when evening prayer began with the lighting of a candle.

This practice was probably inspired by the Jewish custom of lighting a lamp at the conclusion of the Sabbath.

The lighting of the candle dispelled the darkness and represented Christ – the Light of the World.

