



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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“Baptized into Death of Jesus” Foundations series begins

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

The resurrection is not only about Jesus, it is about us, Fr. Paul Fachet, OMI, said in the first of four sessions of “Baptized Into the Death of Jesus,” a new Foundations series in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

“The resurrection is not a ‘back there and then’ reality ... it is always here, always now,” said Fr. Fachet. “It is as here and now as love is,” he added. “As real and as important as love is in our lives, so is the resurrection.”



Fr. Paul Fr. Fachet is leading a four-part Foundations series.

From death to life, from fear to joy, the resurrection brings a 180-degree turn to the apostles, entombed in their fears behind locked doors. The resurrection changes everything in one moment: everything is now different, and the apostles go forth as new creations, filled with the desire to share what they have received, Fr. Fachet said.

The two pillars of the death and the resurrection of Jesus hold up Christianity, but the primary pillar is the resurrection, he stressed. “The reason the Christian community knew this was the Saviour was because of their experience of the resurrection.”

In chronicling the death and resurrection of Jesus, each of the four gospels shines light according to the particular perspective of the writer. “According to Mark, according to Matthew, to Luke, to

John. There’s one gospel, with four traditions, but these traditions give you the coloration, the variety of the here and now,” explained Fr. Fachet, adding: “The gospels are not for the head only, the gospel is for the heart.”

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Fr. Fachet focused on the gospel of Mark in the first session, noting that Mark is the only evangelist that makes the direct link between the baptism of Jesus and the death of Jesus. In both cases, he uses the same word to describe something being ripped in two, removing a barrier: at Christ's baptism, the barrier between heaven and earth is ripped apart; at Christ's death, the curtain of the temple is ripped away.

Fr. Fachet described how the temple veil separated the people from the holy of holies, the presence of God. "What was available to Jesus alone is now available to the world, thanks to the death of Jesus," he said. "That which was inaccessible is now available to everybody. It is grace, grace, grace."

Fr. Fachet went through the account of Christ's death in the gospel of Mark, noting how carefully he times his account, marking the hours from the cock's crow, to the first hour (6 a.m.), the sixth hour (noon) and the ninth hour (3 p.m.) when darkness covers the whole land. "People are deriding Jesus," he said "And nature alone seems to understand and be in mourning mode."

Mark records Christ's words from the cross as "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me." this expresses a sense of the fully human Jesus, filled with the sense of being abandoned. Fr. Fachet related it to the "dark night of the soul" experienced by so many mystics who are intimate with God, including John of the Cross, Therese of Lisieux, and Mother Theresa of Calcutta.

Jesus is actually quoting Psalm 22, the lament of a just person who feels abandonment but never stops trusting in God, Fr. Fachet said. It is also a psalm without a hint of vengeance, he said. "It so reflects the spirit of Jesus who never had one iota of revenge in him: always forgiveness, always compassion."

Mark describes Jesus making a loud cry at his death – something that would be seemingly impossible, given the slow suffocation process that accompanied crucifixion. Seeing how he dies, the centurion recognizes that "truly, this is God's son." Jesus has given a victory cry, Fr. Fachet maintained. "He shouts – yes, I made it!"

The gentile centurion who makes the profession of faith at the foot of the cross is a symbol of Mark's community, made up of foreigners, Fr. Fachet related. Throughout the gospel of Mark, Jesus has been seen as the boundary breaker, and that continues with his death, as the first confession of Jesus as the Son of God comes from a non-Jewish outsider.

Finding the meaning that the gospels have in our own lives, in how we get through our own crosses is part of the "here and now" nature of the Good News, Fr. Fachet said. "Jesus Christ is here and now: presently alive, powerfully active, personally near."

The next session of "Baptized into the Death of Jesus" will be held 7:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 19 at St. Paul's Cathedral in Saskatoon.