

What Is the Paschal Mystery?

The Paschal Mystery is God's plan for the salvation of mankind, as fulfilled in the passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has shown us that death does not have the final word.

The Eucharist As a Remembrance

We may be most aware of the Paschal Mystery in it in the liturgical seasons and the celebration of the sacraments. In particular, the celebration of the Eucharist is a direct remembrance of the Paschal Mystery.

Liturgy is always in the first place communion or fellowship with Jesus Christ. Every liturgy, not just the celebration of the Eucharist, is an Easter in miniature. Jesus reveals his passage from death to life and celebrates it with us.

[YOUCAT – The Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) – 171

When we take part in the Eucharistic feast, we are actually present at the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In the liturgy of the Church, it is principally his own Paschal mystery that Christ signifies and makes present. During his earthly life Jesus announced his Paschal mystery by his teaching and anticipated it by his actions. When his Hour comes, he lives out the unique event of history which does not pass away: Jesus dies, is buried, rises from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father "once for all." His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. The Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. The event of the Cross and Resurrection *abides* and draws everything toward life. –

[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) – 1085

At Mass, the presence of the living Christ is present in the priest, in the Word, in the Eucharist, and in the congregation.

So What Does This Mean for Us?

The Paschal Mystery is about the process of dying and rising. We constantly see in our world that death is transformed into new life. For example, many plants die in the fall, yet when spring comes, they return from seed or from unseen roots.

<https://young-catholics.com/7314/what-is-the-paschal-mystery/>

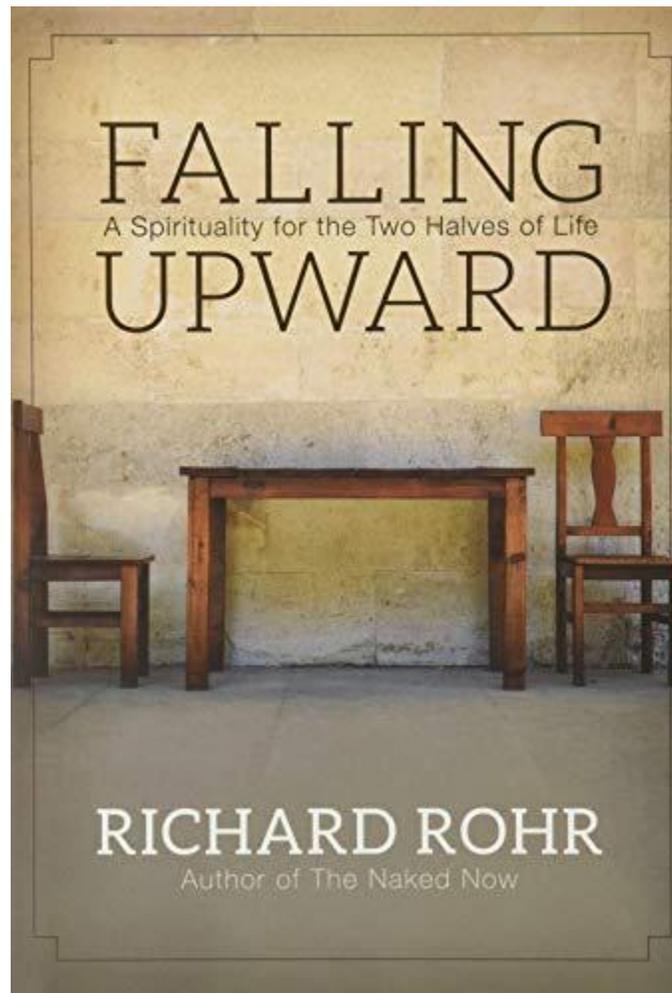
Yet we seem to find it difficult to believe that God can accomplish this same transformation in our own lives. We cling to what we think we need. Yet often it is in dying that we find new life. We might find that when we lose the self-image and the need for approval that we were so attached to, that we are suddenly more free. We might die to our comfort zone and go serve the homeless and in the process find a new life and joy which comes only from letting go of our self-centeredness.

And of course, these are just all smaller examples of what will be our final death and resurrection.

Further Reading

If you are interested in a new way of looking at death and loss and considering how it needs to new life, check out Fr. Richard Rohr's book, [Falling Upward](#). He proposes that we spend the first part of our lives building up our ego structure. But it is only in our second act, when we let that structure die, that we can really understand the meaning of resurrection. This can lead into a fuller understanding of the Paschal Mystery. And this is certainly not the way our modern world teaches us to think.

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