

Catechism Course 2021
Clondalkin
#9 Jesus' Passion and Death

For a long time, the Hebrew people had sought to atone for sin through the sacrifice of animals. But this was insufficient: 'For it is impossible that with the blood of oxen and goats sin should be taken away' (Rom 10:4). According to many of the prophets, God asks for steadfast love rather than sacrifice. (cf. Hosea 6:6, Isaiah 1:11, Psalm 40:60).

Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament Law in his life, which the Hebrew people were unable to do. He did not abolish the Law of the Old Testament, but rather fulfilled it (cf. *Mt* 5:17-19) with such perfection that he revealed its ultimate meaning : Love.

He is accused by the Jewish religious leaders of blasphemy. For this reason he is condemned to death by crucifixion. This is in accordance with Scripture.

Names/Images for Jesus from the Old Testament to help us to understand Christ's passion and death:

'Lamb of God' who takes away the sins of the world. Jesus is called this by John the Baptist. Recalls the Paschal lamb eaten at Jewish Passover. See Exodus 12.
'Suffering Servant.' A prophesied figure who would bear the people's sins and who would be raised up by God. See Isaiah 53.

Jesus takes on our sins in his passion and death. He does this for the sins of all people, not just a few. This results in the redemption from sin: he gave his life so that we might be "ransomed from the futile ways inherited from [our] fathers" (*I Pt* 1:18).

Various writers have put forward different theories as to how Jesus' death accomplishes the forgiveness of sins. The Church does not propose any one theory. Ultimately, it is a mystery.

Further reading:

Read the passion narrative in one of the Gospels.

Catechism, paragraphs 571-630

Pope Benedict XVI: Jesus of Nazareth: Holy Week

Other sessions available at:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/175156396168463/225387409208015>