

Key Concepts

Jesus' Passion	The events of the last period of Jesus' life ending with his crucifixion	Sarcophagi	Stone coffins that have carved images on them
Holy Week	The week leading up to Easter from Palm Sunday to Easter Saturday	Alpha & Omega	The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet

Artefacts

- How Christian beliefs about eternal life influenced the iconography in Christian sarcophagi
- How Christian beliefs in the resurrection are expressed by the paschal candle

Key Sources of Authority

The priest takes the paschal candle and says:

1. Christ yesterday and today (*he cuts a vertical line*)
2. the Beginning and the End (*he cuts a horizontal line*)
3. the Alpha (*he cuts the letter Alpha above the vertical line*)
4. and the Omega (*he cuts the letter Omega below the vertical line*).
5. All time belongs to him (*he cuts the first number of the current year*)
6. and all the ages (*he cuts the second number of the current year*).
7. To him be glory and power (*he cuts the third number of the current year*)
8. through every age and for ever. Amen (*he cuts the fourth number of the year*)

Words taken from the Easter Vigil Liturgy



Key Beliefs

The images reinforce the belief that Jesus' death and resurrection were a triumph over sin and a sign of hope.

The meaning of Sarcophagus with scenes of the Passion of Christ in the Museo Pio Cristiano in the Vatican, Rome

- Chi (X)-Rho (P) = an ancient symbol of resurrection
- Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his cross
- Crown of thorns (made with jewels= Jesus is triumphant king)
- Trial before Pilate
- Jesus is NOT on the cross – Jesus in glory, not suffering. The wreath is a Roman symbol of victory.

Symbol of Jesus' resurrection and victory over death

Symbols on the candle:

- Alpha/omega = First & Last letters of Greek alphabet = Jesus is the beginning & the end
- Cross = Jesus' death & resurrection. Five marks in incense = five wounds of Jesus
- The year = Jesus' sacrifice is for all time
- The candle is a constant reminder of the Resurrection in the church and is lit at Baptisms, Funerals and Easter Sunday as a reminder of New Life/ Jesus' resurrection.

The meaning and importance of the Paschal Candle

Exam Practice

Explain why the paschal candle is used in the Easter Vigil and during a Catholic Baptism. (8)

Key Connections

- How are Christian beliefs about eternal life portrayed in the Sarcophagus with Scenes of the Passion in the Museo Pio Cristiano, Vatican, Rome?
- How are Christian beliefs about resurrection expressed through the use of the paschal candle at Easter and at Baptism?