

Dear Padre,

A Protestant friend tells me that Jesus died to take the punishment for our sins. That doesn't seem accurate. Is that what the Church teaches?

Jesus understood his mission to be sacrificing his own life “as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). His fidelity to that mission was even at the cost of death. However, saying Jesus’ death was payment for our sins doesn’t mean that a vengeful God was appeased by the slaughter of his own innocent Son. Rather, we are redeemed because of the mutual love between Father and Son, as well as the love Christ had for us all when he offered his life.

“It is love ‘to the end’ [John 13:1] that confers on Christ’s sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 616). It is in this sense that Jesus’ death was a payment—not one to be exacted—but a unique sacrifice “that completes and surpasses all other sacrifices,” when “the Father handed his Son over to sinners in order to reconcile us with himself,” and the Son of God freely and lovingly offered his human life to his Father “in reparation for our disobedience” (CCC 614).

Christ “bore our sins in his body upon the cross....By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24). Viewed in light of the resurrection, Christ’s death has meaning in eternal life’s triumph over sin.



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Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about Dear Padre.



A WORD FROM Pope Francis

In many situations of suffering, Christ's cross is like a beacon that indicates the port to ships that are still afloat on stormy seas. Christ's cross is the sign of hope that does not disappoint; and it tells us that not even one tear, not one sigh is lost in God's plan of salvation.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, MARCH 31, 2021

Monday

SEPTEMBER 26

Weekday

Jb 1:6–22

Lk 9:46–50

Tuesday

SEPTEMBER 27

St. Vincent de Paul,
Priest

Jb 3:1–3, 11–17, 20–23

Lk 9:51–56

Wednesday

SEPTEMBER 28

Weekday

Jb 9:1–12, 14–16

Lk 9:57–62

Thursday

SEPTEMBER 29

Sts. Michael, Gabriel
and Raphael,
Archangels

Dan 7:9–10, 13–14

or Rv 12:7–12a

Jn 1:47–51

Friday

SEPTEMBER 30

St. Jerome, Priest and
Doctor of the Church

Jb 38:1, 12–21; 40:3–5

Lk 10:13–16

Saturday

OCTOBER 1

St. Thérèse
of the Child Jesus,
Virgin and Doctor
of the Church

Jb 42:1–3, 5–6, 12–17

Lk 10:17–24

Sunday

OCTOBER 2

Twenty-seventh Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Hb 1:2–3; 2:2–4

2 Tm 1:6–8, 13–14

Lk 17:5–10