

Notes for the 2020 Paschal Candle – St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
The theme of the 2020 Paschal Candle is *The Word Became Flesh*.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth;...” is taken from John’s Gospel: chapter 1, verse 14. The explanatory note in our *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible* states that this phrase “Asserts the mystery of the Incarnation. It means that Christ, who is fully divine, eternal, and equal in being with the Father, came from heaven to earth and entered history as a man. The word *flesh* signifies all that is natural, earthly, and human.”

Around the candle at the top, and for the first 20 inches down, is painted a rendition of the Annunciation – where the Angel Gabriel is sent to the Virgin Mary to announce that she has ‘found favor with God’ and would give birth to a son who ‘will be called holy, the Son of God’. The gestures of Mary and Gabriel on our candle are inspired by a Michelangelo drawing. Around the back of this scene are the words scripted in gold paint, “The Word Made Flesh”.

Next is a 2 inch band noting the century, 20, the Alpha letter, and a small painted Lamb of God with the banner of the Cross.

The Crucifix for this year’s candle was inspired by a crucifixion panel painted by the Late Medieval artist Cimabue (1240-1302) in the 13th century. The master painter Cimabue (his star pupil was Giotto) broke from the Byzantine tradition of crucifixion depictions by painting Christ more realistically than what had been done previously. Cimabue painted two large crucifixes in this style, one for the Church of San Domenico in Arezzo, and another for the Basilica of Santa Croce in Florence, both in Italy. Around the back of our candle’s crucifix is painted Christ in Majesty, depicted in a gold and colorful mandorla, - a mandorla is an almond shaped aureole that frequently surrounds Christ in pictures of the Last Judgment, and on occasions in representations of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

A 2 inch band below shows the year, 20, the Omega letter, and a small dove, the Holy Spirit.

The bottom 23 inches of the candle are devoted to the Four Evangelists, the Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I have sculpted and painted hollow beeswax renditions of the symbols of the Evangelists that refer to the description found in the Prophecy of Ezekiel (first chapter): the four winged-creatures. The winged Eagle represents St. John, holding the open book of his Gospel, with the words, “In the beginning was the Word. . .”; the winged Lion represents St. Mark, the winged Ox is St. Luke, and the winged Man represents St. Matthew.

At the very bottom of the candle are painted the sun in front and the moon around back. The sun and moon are often represented in scenes of the Crucifixion to indicate the sorrow of all creation at the death of Christ.

Thank you for the privilege of decorating our St. John’s 2020 Paschal Candle. A.M.D.G.

Art Cislo

Front

