

## Q&A

***Q: Fr. Alex, why did Jesus have to die for our sins?***

Think about all the gifts God has given you, and make a list of your own personal “top ten.” Chances are, “free will” is right near the top. This is one of the greatest gifts God has given us—but it is a risky gift, because we have the ability to misuse it. And we do ... lots! So God loves us enough to give us incredible gifts and take risks on us. First of all, we should do the same with those in our lives. Second, it gives us a clue as to why Jesus came to suffer, die and rise for our sakes. He didn't *have to* do anything. Christ came to us through that same risky gift I just mentioned—free will. Because He was not only fully God but fully human as well, He was struggling with the cup (his coming arrest and death) that His Father had put before Him. This is what the night in the garden is all about. Jesus was facing His future and struggling with what His human instincts were telling Him, as opposed to what He knew He should do. This is sometimes called “spiritual warfare.” He went through it, and we go through it every time we struggle with our conscience.

In the end, He laid His life in the hands of His Father and was obedient. He made the right choice and became, for us, the “new Adam.” He showed us that we can fight sin, that we don't have to give into temptation. In a similar way, the Virgin Mary is the “new Eve”: even though she had the ability to deny God's plan and was nervous about it, she embraced God's will and trusted Him.

Jesus didn't have to die for us; He did so out of perfect obedience to the Father—and the most pure, selfless and endless love you could ever imagine. This is how much He loves you. Our choice? Whether or not to love Him back—sounds like an easy one to me!