



First Mass of Easter

THE ENDING OF THE VIGIL

Brothers and sisters in Christ, on this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather together in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which through word and sacrament we share in his victory over death.

As we await the risen Christ, let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer; and let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection in each of us the saving work he has begun.

READINGS

(as each reading is finishing, a candle is lit: a total of 5)

We begin our reflection on the story of our salvation by recalling how God created the world, good, full of beauty and promise. God created order out of chaos; the light and the darkness; day and night; the sun, moon and stars; the seas and the rains; dry land and plants, fruit trees, vegetation; all the animals and fishes - every living thing. Then God created us:

God created human beings in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth,

everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. [Genesis 1 & 2]

But from the start human beings chose our own way, rather than God's. We thought we were the centre of the universe; we thought we could manage things better than God; we tried to be God. So we turned away from God, we turned our back on the light and freedom of God and walked our own way; we were banished from the Garden of Eden and became limited to our own horizons, slaves to sin, oppressed and weighed down by our broken and disjointed lives and relationships.

Whilst the stories of Noah and the flood; the calling of Abraham; the making of a covenant; the establishment of Israel, and the rescue by Joseph during the famine show God's love wooing us back....

...the stories of the tower of Babel, and the slavery of the Israelites in Egypt remind us that we still chose to ignore God's love.

In the liberation from slavery in Egypt and the memory of the Passover we see a foreshadowing of Christ's redemptive work.

Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still."

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers."...

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians. [Exodus 14]

The people of Israel were established in the Promised Land. Their role was to draw all nations to God by their example, by their prayers, by their trust in God.

But again and again we showed that we prefer our ways to God's ways. God sent the prophets to draw the nation back to him - people such as Isaiah:

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

...

Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. [Isaiah 55]

The prophets called people back to God, but still we went astray. The prophets began to speak about a “Day of the Lord” when God would visit his people. Prophets like Ezekiel talked about a new relationship.

I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, so that they may follow my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their God. [Ezekiel 11]

The Messiah - or anointed one (the “Christ”) - was promised to usher in this new era. In the person of Jesus of Nazareth God stepped into history. By his birth and childhood, baptism and temptation; by his ministry in word and work; by his mighty acts of power and by his preaching of the kingdom; by his agony and trial, by his cross and passion; by his precious death and burial; by his mighty resurrection, glorious ascension and by the sending of the Holy Spirit... Jesus delivered us from the darkness of slavery to sin into the glorious kingdom of God: he has become our Passover, our deliverance, our salvation, our pattern of what is to come...

If we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. [Romans 6]

So with joy and expectation, having watched with him in Gethsemane, having stood at the foot of his cross, having watched his entombment, we now prepare to greet his triumphant resurrection...

Let us pray saying together:

○ God your saving plan has brought us to the glory of this night.

**Slaves, we become your sons and daughters;
poor, your mercy makes us rich;
sinners, you count us among your saints.**

**Bring us to know the place that is ours
in the unfolding story of your purpose,
and instil in our hearts
the wonder of your salvation.**

**Grant this through Jesus Christ,
our passover and our peace,
who lives with you now and always
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
God for ever and ever. Amen**

According to ancient tradition the light for the Easter Candle was taken from newly kindled fire and not from an existing source of light. So tonight - because things are a bit different - we'll light the Pascal Candle from the light used to illuminate the Vigil readings

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The candle is lit

May the light of Christ, rising in glory
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The Light of Christ
All: **Thanks be to God**

The candle is placed in its stand.

The first EASTER ACCLAMATION:

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
All: **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

GLORIA

All: **Glory to God in the highest
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God heavenly King
Almighty God and Father
we worship you, we give you thanks
we praise you for your glory.**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us.
You are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One
you alone are the Lord
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ
with the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father
Amen.

The COLLECT

Lord of life & power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might
now and in all eternity. Amen

We stop broadcasting and Rev Emma shares her thought at about 7.45pm

...

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
All: **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we remember that through the paschal mystery we have died and been buried with him in baptism, so that we may rise with him to a new life within the family of his Church. Now that we have completed

our observance of Lent, we renew the promises made at our baptism, affirming our allegiance to Christ, and our rejection of all that is evil.

Therefore I ask these questions:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

And now I ask you to make the profession of Christian faith into which you were baptized and in which you live and grow.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father who made the world?

I believe and trust in him

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ who redeemed us all?

I believe and trust in him

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God?

I believe and trust in him

This is the faith of the Church

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God,
Father Son and Holy Spirit.**

Almighty God, we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith with all those who have been baptized in your name. Keep us faithful to our baptism and so make us ready for that day when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

...the mass continues with The Peace...

Prayer after Communion

God of life,
who for our redemption gave your only begotten Son
to the death of the cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
have delivered us from the power of our enemy:
grant us so to die daily to sin,
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son
and brought us home.
Dying and living, he
declared your love,
gave us grace
and opened the gate of glory.
May we, who share Christ's body,
live his risen life;
we who drink his cup
bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights
give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope
you have set before us,
so we and all your children
shall be free,
and the whole earth live
to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.****

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

The God of peace
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the sternal covenant
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is
well-pleasing in his sight:
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the + Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among you and remain with you always
Amen

(sung) Go in the peace of Christ, Alleluia, alleluia
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia