

The Easter Vigil

THE LIGHTING OF THE FIRE

The people gather in the dark. The following words are spoken.

Brothers and sisters! We have gathered in the *darkness* of the night because the Lord willingly entered the night of death.

Today we celebrate his *victory* over the night. The light tells us that Christ has power to overcome all the darkness of the world and of our individual lives.

We have gathered in the *dark* because there is so much darkness in us and around us: war, hate, murder, the sin that lies within . . .

In this night that shall become as bright as the day, we will hear the message: hope is ours because of the resurrection of Jesus; we must begin anew, we must be courageous, for *in every darkness we have a light*, the risen Lord!

We meet him in this celebration in the symbol of light, and we cry out to him: *Lumen Christi - Christ our light!*

We meet him in his *word* and reflect on how mightily this word has acted in the history of salvation and what it intends to do in our day.

The *waters of baptism* will remind us of our own call to faith and will summon us to a new “Yes!”

In the *Eucharist* God calls us to share in the Easter banquet which the risen Lord himself prepares for us.

The Lighting of the Fire

The Light is lighted. The following words or something like this is spoken:

Dear friends in Christ, on this most holy night,

when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life, the Church invites her children throughout the world to come together in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord: Tonight we remember his death and resurrection and celebrate his victory over death.

Then the fire is blessed.

PASTOR: Let us pray.
Pause for silent prayer.

**Father,
we share in the light of your glory
through your Son, the light of the world.
Make this new fire holy, and inflame us with
new hope. Purify our minds by this Easter
celebration and bring us one day to the eternal
light.**

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Easter candle is lighted from the new fire.

The Greeting of the Light

As the people process into the sanctuary the light is raised and greeted in these words:

Lightbearer: The Light is Christ
PEOPLE: Thanks be to God

The greeting is sung three times. Once as the procession begins. Again, half way to the sanctuary. Finally after all are assembled. As people enter the door the candle they hold is lighted so that the whole sanctuary is made bright by the light of the candles.

The Praise of the Light

Once the people are assembled and the Light has been raised for the third time, the Exsultet is sung.

All stand with Lighted candles.

The Easter Proclamation

Sung:
Rejoice, heavenly powers!

Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation around God's throne!
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,
radiant in the brightness of your King!
Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Savior shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

Spoken:

PASTOR: The Lord be with you.

PEOPLE: And also with you.

PASTOR: Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE: We lift them up to the Lord.

PASTOR: Let us give thanks to the Lord our
God.

**PEOPLE: It is right to give him thanks and
praise.**

Sung:

It is truly right that with full hearts and minds
and voices we should praise the unseen God,
the all-powerful Father, and his only Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

For Christ has ransomed us with his blood,
and paid for us the price of Adam's sin
to our eternal Father!

This is our Passover feast, when Christ,
the true Lamb, is slain, whose blood
consecrates the homes of all believers.

This is the night when first you saved our
fathers: you freed the people of Israel from
their slavery and led them dry-shod through
the sea.

This is the night when Christians
everywhere, washed clean of sin and freed
from all defilement, are restored to grace

and grow together in holiness.

This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the
chains of death and rose triumphant from the
grave.

Father, how wonderful you care for us!
How boundless your merciful love! To
ransom a slave you gave away your Son.

O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam,
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!

The power of this holy night dispels all evil,
washes guilt away, restores lost innocence,
brings mourners joy.

Night truly blessed when heaven is wedded
to earth and man is reconciled with God!

Therefore, heavenly Father, in the joy of this
night, receive our evening sacrifice of praise.

Accept this Easter candle. May it always
dispel the darkness of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets find
this flame still burning: Christ, that Morning
Star, who came back from the dead, and shed
his peaceful light on all mankind, your Son
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen

All are seated.

THE SERVICE OF READINGS (Short form)

The following words introduce the readings.

Dear friends in Christ, we have begun our solemn
vigil. Let us now listen attentively to the word of
God, recalling how he saved his people
throughout history and, in the fullness of time,
sent his own Son to be our Redeemer.

Through this Easter celebration, may God bring
to perfection the saving work he has begun in us

The First Reading: Genesis 1:1 - 2:2

Congregational Response: (After each reading there follows a response such as a choir number, a solo, a congregational hymn or song).

PASTOR: Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer, if this has not preceded.

Almighty and eternal God, you created all things in wonderful beauty and order. Help us now to perceive how still more wonderful is the new creation by which in the fullness of time you redeemed your people through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Second Reading: Exodus 4:15 - 15:1

Congregational Response.

PASTOR: Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer, if this has not preceded.

Father, even today we see the wonders of the miracles you worked long ago. You once saved a single nation from slavery, and now you offer that salvation to all through baptism. May the peoples of the world become true sons of Abraham and prove worthy of the heritage of Israel. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Third Reading: Isaiah 55:1-12

Congregational Response.

PASTOR: Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer, if this has not preceded.

Almighty, every-living God, only hope of the world, by the preaching of the prophets you proclaimed the mysteries we are celebrating tonight. Help us to be your faithful people, for it is by your inspiration alone that we can grow in goodness. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

An Easter Proclamation

All Stand

Here is sung a Gloria:

**Glory, glory to God in the highest,
glory to God 2x (Celtic Gloria)**

Here a Gospel account of the resurrection may be read or this:

PASTOR: “Who is it you are looking for?” (Matt. 20:15).

PEOPLE: **“Sir . . . we would like to see Jesus” (John 12:21).**

PASTOR: “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are not looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay” (Matt. 28:5-6).

PEOPLE: **“Praise be to the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds” (Ps. 72:18).**

PASTOR: “Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20).

PEOPLE: **“Praise be to the Lord, for he showed his wonderful love to me” (Ps. 31:21).**

PASTOR: Where oh death is your victory? Where of death is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law” (1 Cor. 15:55-56).

PEOPLE: **“Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).**

PASTOR: “Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name” (Phil. 2:9).

PEOPLE: **“Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen” (Ps. 72:19).**

PASTOR: “Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where

Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (Col. 3:1).

PEOPLE: “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, ‘Amen’” (Ps. 106:48).

TOGETHER: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!” (Rev. 19:6-7).

The congregation sings an “Alleluia” as signs of life are brought into the sanctuary

Alleluia

The Easter Sermon

A Service for the Reaffirmation of Baptism into the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

A Reading: Romans 6:4-12

A Prayer over the water

The tip of the Easter candle may be placed in the water as the following prayer is spoken or sung.

Father, you express your grace through sacramental signs, which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power.

In baptism we use your gift of water, which you have made a rich symbol to express your grace.

At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness.

The waters of the great flood you made a sign of the waters of baptism, that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness.

Through the waters of the Red Sea you led Israel out of slavery, to be an image of God’s holy people, set free from sin.

In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit.

Your Son willed that water and blood should flow from his side as he hung upon the cross.

After his resurrection he told his disciples: “Go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism rise also with him to newness of life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant

Dear friends, through the paschal mystery we have been buried with Christ in baptism, so that we may rise with him to a new life. Now that we have completed our lenten observance, let us renew the promises we made in baptism when we rejected Satan and his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church.

And so:

PASTOR: Do you reject Satan?

ALL: I do.

PASTOR: And all his works?

ALL: I do.

PASTOR: And all his empty promises?

ALL: I do.

Or:

PASTOR: Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God’s children?

ALL: I do.

PASTOR: Do you reject the glamor of evil,

and refuse to be mastered by sin?
ALL: I do.
 PASTOR: Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?
ALL: I do.
 PASTOR: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?
ALL: I do.
 PASTOR: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?
ALL: I do.
 PASTOR: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?
ALL: I do.
 PASTOR: God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth symbolized by water and the Holy Spirit symbolized by oil. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ for ever and ever.
ALL: Amen.

The Sprinkling of Water

Water is sprinkled on the people as they sing.

Sprinkling Rite:

**Refrain: Save us, O God, wash away our sin.
 Make us your own, one people in your name.**

Verse 1. With water of life, refresh us.

Give us new life. *(Refrain)*

Verse 2. Renew us in soul and body.

Give us new life. *(Refrain)*

Verse 3. Your Spirit renews creation.

Give us new life. *(Refrain)*

Verse 4. By dying to sin with Jesus:

Give us new life. *(Refrain)*

Verse 5. By rising with Christ in glory:

Give us new life.

ALL: Give us new life.

THE EASTER EUCHARIST

PASTOR:

Christ our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the festival.

[The Bread and Wine are brought forward and the table is set]

A song may be sung

The people remain standing. The pastor faces them and sings or says:

PASTOR: The Lord be with you.

PEOPLE: And also with you.

PASTOR: Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE: We lift them to the Lord.

PASTOR: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

PEOPLE: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the pastor proceeds

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. *(A prayer of praise may be added here).*

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

TOGETHER: (Said or Sung)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The people stand or kneel.

Then the Pastor continues

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

At the following words concerning the bread, the Pastor is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Together: Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

The Pastor continues

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **Amen.**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

TOGETHER:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen**

The Breaking of the Bread

The Pastor breaks the consecrated Bread and pours wine in the chalice (if small cups are being used, they should be filled before the service).

A period of silence is kept.

Then may be sung or said:

PASTOR: Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

PEOPLE: **Therefore let us keep the feast.
Alleluia.**

In place of, or in addition to, the preceding, some other suitable anthem may be used.

Facing the people, the Pastor says the following invitation:

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

and may add:

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving.

The people come forward to receive as the congregation sings sons of death, then resurrection, then communion, and finally of thanksgiving. Prayers for healing may be offered simultaneously.

After Communion, the Pastor says:

Let us pray.

TOGETHER:

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Dismissal

Benediction

A processional hymn

The Sending Forth

PASTOR: Go forth into the world to love and serve the Lord.

**PEOPLE: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!
Alleluia!**

The Easter Vigil contains material from Rupert Berger (ed.) Celebrating the Easter Vigil. New York: Pueblo, 1983; The Sacramentary: New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1985 and The Book of Common Prayer. New York: The Seabury Press, 1949. For the origins of the Easter Vigil see Thomas J. Talley. The Origins of the Liturgical Year. New York. Pueblo, 1986.