



The Easter Vigil Service

(modified)

From earliest times Christians have gathered through the night of Easter to recall the story of God's saving work, from creation through to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Easter Liturgy is meant to be a real experience of new life for the worshipper, a passing from darkness to light which offers hope to all the faithful.

The Easter Vigil liturgy is rich with symbol and ritual, and the Scripture readings connect us to our ancestors in faith, living the very same hope that we live today. The Genesis reading highlights God's incredible work of creation, and reminds us that creation and recreation continue today. Moses encounters God in the burning bush and it changes him forever. The reading from Exodus in which the Israelites cross the Red Sea prefigures Christ's own resurrection. Readings from the prophets follow, those great heralds of God's message throughout the ages. The Epistle from Paul to the Romans reinforces our baptismal identity and relationship with Jesus Christ who died and rose. Each of these stories highlights God's love for God's people and helps us to celebrate Christ's resurrection by recalling God's saving action.

In many churches the Exsultet, the ancient hymn of triumph and rejoicing, is sung. This wonderful piece links this night of our Christian redemption to the Passover night of Israel's redemption out of Egypt. Christian baptism is also commonly celebrated on this night. The Easter Vigil was from early Christian times a preferred occasion for baptism and often the only time of year when baptisms took place. It is fittingly a time when those who are already Christians may repeat with renewed commitment the promises of their own baptism, and strengthen their sense of incorporation into the ministry of the whole people of God.

Much of this we will not be able to observe this year as the conditions under which

we keep the Vigil are unique. But we join together via our live broadcast—God’s people coming together in a new way to remember God’s love for us all.

There will be a brief silence before the service itself begins.

¶ The Service of Light

The priest says

Dear brothers and sisters 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.

We remember his death and resurrection by hearing his word and celebrating his mysteries, confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him forever in God.

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: set us aflame with the fire of your love, and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The priest lights the remaining candles, saying

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

¶ The Vigil

Introduction

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.

I The Creation

Genesis 1.1– 2.4a

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind

bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so.

God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind 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.

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

Silence is kept.

Let us pray that we may see God’s image restored.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.

Your love cannot be contained

and overflows in the wonder of creation.

You formed the universe out of nothing

and moulded us from the clay of the earth.

All you have made sings of your marvellous deeds,

O Lord, our maker and redeemer.

All **Amen.**

II Moses and the burning bush

Exodus 3.1-6

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Silence is kept.

Let us pray for a renewed vision for the people of God
and a new commitment to break the chains of oppression.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.

You revealed yourself to your servant Moses

in the awesome wonder of the burning Bush

and appointed him to lead your people to freedom in the promised land.

By the fire of your Spirit today reveal yourself afresh and strengthen us

to free the enslaved and break the bonds of the captive,

that they may openly sing your praise,

O Lord, our maker and redeemer.

All Amen.

III Crossing the Red Sea

Exodus 14.10-31 & 15.1a

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians’? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” But 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.” The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army,

and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." 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; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses. Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

Silence is kept.

Let us pray that God will give freedom to his enslaved people.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.

You heard the agony of your people as they cried out from their slavery, and you gave them Moses to lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Hear the cry of the enslaved and the homeless today

and lead us through the turbulent sea of life

to our true home with you,

O Lord, our maker and redeemer.

All **Amen.**

IV God promises a new heart

Jeremiah 31.31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

Silence is kept.

Let us pray that God will rekindle in us a renewed love for him.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.

Even when your people broke your covenant,
your heart cried out for them

and you remained steadfast as a faithful husband.

Renew in us our love for you

and write your law on our hearts,

that we may truly be your people, and you our God,

O Lord, our maker and redeemer.

All Amen.

V Sprinkled with the water of life

Ezekiel 36.24-28

I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries,
and bring you into your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses,
and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit
I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you
a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes
and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave
to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Silence is kept.

Let us pray that God will give to the thirsting
a new outpouring of his refreshing spirit.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of our salvation.

When we are overwhelmed by the wasting world,
gather us again and renew us.

Create in us a new heart and a renewed spirit,
that we may be a people prepared
to live in your land and walk in your ways,
O Lord, our maker and redeemer.

All Amen.

The Easter Acclamation

The priest says

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Gloria in Excelsis

**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

Silence is kept.

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

New Testament Reading

Romans 6.3-11

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 28.1-10

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew:

All Glory to you, O Lord.

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

A brief silence for reflection follows the homily.

The Lord's Prayer

**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, the power and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

Prayer

Lord of all life and 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.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*This service concludes with the Easter Day Eucharist tomorrow,
the last of the services of the Triduum which began Maundy Thursday.*

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