



## Resources for worship - Easter Eve

### Contents:

**INTRODUCTION; EASTER VIGIL OUTLINE; TEXTS OF SELECTED VIGIL READINGS AND RESPONSORIAL PSALMS; NOTES FOR READERS; THE EASTER VIGIL WITH THE SERVICE OF LIGHT; PRAYERS; QUOTATIONS**

### INTRODUCTION

On Easter Eve/Holy Saturday the Church waits at the Lord's tomb, meditating on his suffering and death. The altar is left bare, and the Eucharist is not celebrated. Only after the solemn vigil during the night, held in anticipation of the resurrection, does the Easter celebration begin, with a spirit of joy that overflows into the following period of fifty days.

Holy Saturday gains lesser significance while compared to Good Friday and Easter Sunday because the Friday and Sunday attract the bulk of attention. This is the result of our failure to see the significance of Holy Saturday. In fact, it marks the terror and abandonment of Good Friday and the impossible new reality of Easter Sunday. So, it is between the two extremes of cross and resurrection. Ironically, Holy Saturday is the time of waiting period in which Jesus Christ lay in the tomb, and is a necessary bridge between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. So, on Holy Saturday we hold our breath waiting for more light and ray of hope to appear while simultaneously, we mourn the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. Even after two thousand years after crucifixion, this hope and wait still persists and hence, Holy Saturday is no less important.

### EASTER VIGIL OUTLINE

*Very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared and they found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

*Luke 24:1,3*

The night vigil of Easter signifies Christ's passage from the dead to the living by the liturgy, which begins in darkness (sin, death) and is enlightened by the fire and the candle representing *Lumen Christi* — the Light of Christ — just as the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, the community of believers, is led from spiritual darkness to the light of His truth. Christ's baptism, which our own baptism imitates, is represented during the liturgy by the

blessing of the water of baptism by immersing ("burying") the candle representing His Body into the font.

During the liturgy we recall God's sparing of the Hebrews whose doors were marked with the blood of the lamb; we are sprinkled with the blessed water by which we were cleansed from original sin through Christ's sacrifice, and we repeat our baptismal vows, renouncing Satan and all his works. We rejoice at Christ's bodily resurrection from the darkness of the tomb; and we pray for our passage from death into eternal life, from sin into grace, from the weariness and infirmity of old age to the freshness and vigor of youth, from the anguish of the Cross to peace and unity with God, and from this sinful world unto the Father in heaven.

## Readings

The following readings and Psalms are provided for use at the Easter Vigil. A minimum of three Old Testament readings should be chosen. The reading from Exodus 14 should always be used.

### Old Testament Readings and Psalms

- [Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26](#)
- [Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18; 9:8-13 and Psalm 46](#)
- [Genesis 22:1-18 and Psalm 16](#)
- [Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21 and Exodus 15:1b-13, 17-18](#)
- [Isaiah 55:1-11 and Isaiah 12:2-6](#)
- [Baruch 3:9-15, 3:32-4:4 or Proverbs 8:1-8, 19-21; 9:4b-6 and Psalm 19](#)
- [Ezekiel 36:24-28 and Psalm 42, 43](#)
- [Ezekiel 37:1-14 and Psalm 143](#)
- [Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Psalm 98](#)

### New Testament Reading and Psalm

- [Romans 6:3-11 and Psalm 114](#)

### Gospel

- [Luke 24:1-12](#)

Texts for above at:

<http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/texts.php?id=131>

## TEXTS OF SELECTED VIGIL READINGS AND RESPONSORIAL PSALMS

### Reading 1 Gn 1:1; 2:2

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

Then God said,

"Let there be light," and there was light.

God saw how good the light was.

God then separated the light from the darkness.

God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night."

Thus evening came, and morning followed-the first day.

Then God said,

"Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters,  
to separate one body of water from the other."

And so it happened:

God made the dome,

and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it.

God called the dome "the sky."

Evening came, and morning followed-the second day.

Then God said,

"Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin,  
so that the dry land may appear."

And so it happened:

the water under the sky was gathered into its basin,

and the dry land appeared.

God called the dry land "the earth, "

and the basin of the water he called "the sea."

God saw how good it was.

Then God said,

"Let the earth bring forth vegetation:

every kind of plant that bears seed

and every kind of fruit tree on earth

that bears fruit with its seed in it."

And so it happened:

the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed

and every kind of fruit tree on earth

that bears fruit with its seed in it.

God saw how good it was.

Evening came, and morning followed-the third day.

Then God said:

"Let there be lights in the dome of the sky,

to separate day from night.

Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years,

and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky,

to shed light upon the earth."

And so it happened:

God made the two great lights,

the greater one to govern the day,

and the lesser one to govern the night;

and he made the stars.

God set them in the dome of the sky,

to shed light upon the earth,

to govern the day and the night,

and to separate the light from the darkness.

God saw how good it was.

Evening came, and morning followed-the fourth day.

Then God said,

"Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures,

and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky."

And so it happened:

God created the great sea monsters

and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems,  
and all kinds of winged birds.

God saw how good it was, and God blessed them, saying,

"Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas;

and let the birds multiply on the earth."

Evening came, and morning followed-the fifth day.

Then God said,

"Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures:  
cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds."

And so it happened:

God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle,  
and all kinds of creeping things of the earth.

God saw how good it was.

Then God said:

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,  
the birds of the air, and the cattle,

and over all the wild animals

and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."

God created man in his image;

in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying:

"Be fertile and multiply;

fill the earth and subdue it.

Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air,  
and all the living things that move on the earth."

God also said:

"See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth  
and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;

and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air,

and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground,

I give all the green plants for food."

And so it happened.

God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

Evening came, and morning followed-the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.

Since on the seventh day God was finished

with the work he had been doing,

he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.

**Or Gn 1:1, 26-31a**

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth,

God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,

the birds of the air, and the cattle,

and over all the wild animals

and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."  
God created man in his image;  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.  
God blessed them, saying:  
"Be fertile and multiply;  
fill the earth and subdue it.  
Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air,  
and all the living things that move on the earth."  
God also said:  
"See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth  
and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;  
and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air,  
and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground,  
I give all the green plants for food."  
And so it happened.  
God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35**

**R. (30) Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

Bless the LORD, O my soul!  
O LORD, my God, you are great indeed!  
You are clothed with majesty and glory,  
robed in light as with a cloak.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

You fixed the earth upon its foundation,  
not to be moved forever;  
with the ocean, as with a garment, you covered it;  
above the mountains the waters stood.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

You send forth springs into the watercourses  
that wind among the mountains.  
Beside them the birds of heaven dwell;  
from among the branches they send forth their song.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

You water the mountains from your palace;  
the earth is replete with the fruit of your works.  
You raise grass for the cattle,  
and vegetation for man's use,  
Producing bread from the earth.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

How manifold are your works, O LORD!  
In wisdom you have wrought them all-the earth is full of your creatures.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul! Alleluia.

**R. Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.**

**Or Ps 33:4-5, 6-7, 12-13, 20 and 22**

**R. (5b)The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.**

Upright is the word of the LORD,  
and all his works are trustworthy.  
He loves justice and right;  
of the kindness of the LORD the earth is full.

**R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.**

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made;  
by the breath of his mouth all their host.  
He gathers the waters of the sea as in a flask;  
in cellars he confines the deep.

**R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.**

Blessed the nation whose God is the LORD,  
the people he has chosen for his own inheritance.  
From heaven the LORD looks down;  
he sees all mankind.

**R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.**

Our soul waits for the LORD,  
who is our help and our shield.  
May your kindness, O LORD, be upon us  
who have put our hope in you.

**R. The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.**

**Reading 2 Gn 22:1-18**

God put Abraham to the test.  
He called to him, "Abraham!"  
"Here I am, " he replied.  
Then God said:  
"Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love,  
and go to the land of Moriah.  
There you shall offer him up as a holocaust  
on a height that I will point out to you."  
Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey,  
took with him his son Isaac and two of his servants as well,  
and with the wood that he had cut for the holocaust,  
set out for the place of which God had told him.

On the third day Abraham got sight of the place from afar.  
Then he said to his servants:  
"Both of you stay here with the donkey,  
while the boy and I go on over yonder.  
We will worship and then come back to you."  
Thereupon Abraham took the wood for the holocaust  
and laid it on his son Isaac's shoulders,  
while he himself carried the fire and the knife.

As the two walked on together, Isaac spoke to his father Abraham:

"Father!" Isaac said.

"Yes, son, " he replied.

Isaac continued, "Here are the fire and the wood,  
but where is the sheep for the holocaust?"

"Son," Abraham answered,

"God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust."

Then the two continued going forward.

When they came to the place of which God had told him,  
Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.

Next he tied up his son Isaac,  
and put him on top of the wood on the altar.

Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

But the LORD's messenger called to him from heaven,

"Abraham, Abraham!"

"Here I am!" he answered.

"Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger.

"Do not do the least thing to him.

I know now how devoted you are to God,  
since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son."

As Abraham looked about,  
he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket.

So he went and took the ram  
and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Abraham named the site Yahweh-yireh;

hence people now say, "On the mountain the LORD will see."

Again the LORD's messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said:

"I swear by myself, declares the LORD,

that because you acted as you did

in not withholding from me your beloved son,

I will bless you abundantly

and make your descendants as countless

as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore;

your descendants shall take possession

of the gates of their enemies,

and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing—

all this because you obeyed my command."

### **Or Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18**

God put Abraham to the test.

He called to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am, " he replied.

Then God said:

"Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love,  
and go to the land of Moriah.

There you shall offer him up as a holocaust  
on a height that I will point out to you."

When they came to the place of which God had told him,

Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.  
Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.  
But the LORD's messenger called to him from heaven,  
"Abraham, Abraham!"  
"Here I am, " he answered.  
"Do not lay your hand on the boy, " said the messenger.  
"Do not do the least thing to him.  
I know now how devoted you are to God,  
since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son."  
As Abraham looked about,  
he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket.  
So he went and took the ram  
and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Again the LORD's messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said:  
"I swear by myself, declares the LORD,  
that because you acted as you did  
in not withholding from me your beloved son,  
I will bless you abundantly  
and make your descendants as countless  
as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore;  
your descendants shall take possession  
of the gates of their enemies,  
and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find blessing—  
all this because you obeyed my command."

### **Responsorial Psalm Ps 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11**

#### **R. (1) You are my inheritance, O Lord.**

O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup,  
you it is who hold fast my lot.  
I set the LORD ever before me;  
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

#### **R. You are my inheritance, O Lord.**

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices,  
my body, too, abides in confidence;  
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,  
nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption.

#### **R. You are my inheritance, O Lord.**

You will show me the path to life,  
fullness of joys in your presence,  
the delights at your right hand forever.

#### **R. You are my inheritance, O Lord.**

### **Reading 3 Ex 14:15-15:1**

The LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me?"



Tell the Israelites to go forward.  
And you, lift up your staff and, with hand outstretched over the sea,  
split the sea in two,  
that the Israelites may pass through it on dry land.  
But I will make the Egyptians so obstinate  
that they will go in after them.  
Then I will receive glory through Pharaoh and all his army,  
his chariots and charioteers.  
The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD,  
when I receive glory through Pharaoh  
and his chariots and charioteers."

The angel of God, who had been leading Israel's camp,  
now moved and went around behind them.  
The column of cloud also, leaving the front,  
took up its place behind them,  
so that it came between the camp of the Egyptians  
and that of Israel.  
But the cloud now became dark, and thus the night passed  
without the rival camps coming any closer together  
all night long.  
Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,  
and the LORD swept the sea  
with a strong east wind throughout the night  
and so turned it into dry land.  
When the water was thus divided,  
the Israelites marched into the midst of the sea on dry land,  
with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.

The Egyptians followed in pursuit;  
all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and charioteers went after them  
right into the midst of the sea.  
In the night watch just before dawn  
the LORD cast through the column of the fiery cloud  
upon the Egyptian force a glance that threw it into a panic;  
and he so clogged their chariot wheels  
that they could hardly drive.  
With that the Egyptians sounded the retreat before Israel,  
because the LORD was fighting for them against the Egyptians.

Then the LORD told Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea,  
that the water may flow back upon the Egyptians,  
upon their chariots and their charioteers."  
So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,  
and at dawn the sea flowed back to its normal depth.  
The Egyptians were fleeing head on toward the sea,  
when the LORD hurled them into its midst.  
As the water flowed back,  
it covered the chariots and the charioteers of Pharaoh's whole army  
which had followed the Israelites into the sea.  
Not a single one of them escaped.  
But the Israelites had marched on dry land

through the midst of the sea,  
with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.  
Thus the LORD saved Israel on that day  
from the power of the Egyptians.  
When Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore  
and beheld the great power that the LORD  
had shown against the Egyptians,  
they feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:  
I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant;  
horse and chariot he has cast into the sea.

**Responsorial Psalm Ex. 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18**

**R. (1b) Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**

I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant;  
horse and chariot he has cast into the sea.  
My strength and my courage is the LORD,  
and he has been my savior.  
He is my God, I praise him;  
the God of my father, I extol him.

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**

The LORD is a warrior,  
LORD is his name!  
Pharaoh's chariots and army he hurled into the sea;  
the elite of his officers were submerged in the Red Sea.

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**

The flood waters covered them,  
they sank into the depths like a stone.  
Your right hand, O LORD, magnificent in power,  
your right hand, O LORD, has shattered the enemy.

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**

You brought in the people you redeemed  
and planted them on the mountain of your inheritance  
the place where you made your seat, O LORD,  
the sanctuary, LORD, which your hands established.  
The LORD shall reign forever and ever.

**R. Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory.**

**Reading 4 Is 54:5-14**

The One who has become your husband is your Maker;  
his name is the LORD of hosts;  
your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,  
called God of all the earth.  
The LORD calls you back,  
like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit,

a wife married in youth and then cast off,  
says your God.  
For a brief moment I abandoned you,  
but with great tenderness I will take you back.  
In an outburst of wrath, for a moment  
I hid my face from you;  
but with enduring love I take pity on you,  
says the LORD, your redeemer.  
This is for me like the days of Noah,  
when I swore that the waters of Noah  
should never again deluge the earth;  
so I have sworn not to be angry with you,  
or to rebuke you.

Though the mountains leave their place  
and the hills be shaken,  
my love shall never leave you  
nor my covenant of peace be shaken,  
says the LORD, who has mercy on you.  
O afflicted one, storm-battered and unconsoled,  
I lay your pavements in carnelians,  
and your foundations in sapphires;  
I will make your battlements of rubies,  
your gates of carbuncles,  
and all your walls of precious stones.  
All your children shall be taught by the LORD,  
and great shall be the peace of your children.  
In justice shall you be established,  
far from the fear of oppression,  
where destruction cannot come near you.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13**

**R. (2a) I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

I will extol you, O LORD, for you drew me clear  
and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.  
O LORD, you brought me up from the netherworld;  
you preserved me from among those going down into the pit.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

Sing praise to the LORD, you his faithful ones,  
and give thanks to his holy name.  
For his anger lasts but a moment;  
a lifetime, his good will.  
At nightfall, weeping enters in,  
but with the dawn, rejoicing.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

Hear, O LORD, and have pity on me;  
O LORD, be my helper.  
You changed my mourning into dancing;  
O LORD, my God, forever will I give you thanks.

**R. I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.**

## Reading 5 Is 55:1-11

Thus says the LORD:  
All you who are thirsty,  
come to the water!  
You who have no money,  
come, receive grain and eat;  
come, without paying and without cost,  
drink wine and milk!  
Why spend your money for what is not bread,  
your wages for what fails to satisfy?  
Heed me, and you shall eat well,  
you shall delight in rich fare.  
Come to me heedfully,  
listen, that you may have life.  
I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,  
the benefits assured to David.  
As I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander of nations,  
so shall you summon a nation you knew not,  
and nations that knew you not shall run to you,  
because of the LORD, your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found,  
call him while he is near.  
Let the scoundrel forsake his way,  
and the wicked man his thoughts;  
let him turn to the LORD for mercy;  
to our God, who is generous in forgiving.  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.  
As high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so high are my ways above your ways  
and my thoughts above your thoughts.

For just as from the heavens  
the rain and snow come down  
and do not return there  
till they have watered the earth,  
making it fertile and fruitful,  
giving seed to the one who sows  
and bread to the one who eats,  
so shall my word be  
that goes forth from my mouth;  
my word shall not return to me void,  
but shall do my will,  
achieving the end for which I sent it.

**Responsorial Psalm Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6**

**R. (3) You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

God indeed is my savior;  
I am confident and unafraid.  
My strength and my courage is the LORD,  
and he has been my savior.  
With joy you will draw water  
at the fountain of salvation.

**R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

Give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name;  
among the nations make known his deeds,  
proclaim how exalted is his name.

**R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

Sing praise to the LORD for his glorious achievement;  
let this be known throughout all the earth.  
Shout with exultation, O city of Zion,  
for great in your midst  
is the Holy One of Israel!

**R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

**Reading 6 Bar 3:9-15, 32-4:4**

Hear, O Israel, the commandments of life:  
listen, and know prudence!  
How is it, Israel,  
that you are in the land of your foes,  
grown old in a foreign land,  
defiled with the dead,  
accounted with those destined for the netherworld?  
You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom!  
Had you walked in the way of God,  
you would have dwelt in enduring peace.  
Learn where prudence is,  
where strength, where understanding;  
that you may know also  
where are length of days, and life,  
where light of the eyes, and peace.  
Who has found the place of wisdom,  
who has entered into her treasures?

The One who knows all things knows her;  
he has probed her by his knowledge—  
The One who established the earth for all time,  
and filled it with four-footed beasts;  
he who dismisses the light, and it departs,  
calls it, and it obeys him trembling;  
before whom the stars at their posts  
shine and rejoice;

when he calls them, they answer, "Here we are!"  
shining with joy for their Maker.  
Such is our God;  
no other is to be compared to him:  
He has traced out the whole way of understanding,  
and has given her to Jacob, his servant,  
to Israel, his beloved son.

Since then she has appeared on earth,  
and moved among people.  
She is the book of the precepts of God,  
the law that endures forever;  
all who cling to her will live,  
but those will die who forsake her.  
Turn, O Jacob, and receive her:  
walk by her light toward splendor.  
Give not your glory to another,  
your privileges to an alien race.  
Blessed are we, O Israel;  
for what pleases God is known to us!

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11**

**R. (John 6:68c) Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

The law of the LORD is perfect,  
refreshing the soul;  
the decree of the LORD is trustworthy,  
giving wisdom to the simple.

**R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

The precepts of the LORD are right,  
rejoicing the heart;  
the command of the LORD is clear,  
enlightening the eye.

**R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

The fear of the LORD is pure,  
enduring forever;  
the ordinances of the LORD are true,  
all of them just.

**R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

They are more precious than gold,  
than a heap of purest gold;  
sweeter also than syrup  
or honey from the comb.

**R. Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

**Reading 7 Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28**

The word of the LORD came to me, saying:

Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their land,  
they defiled it by their conduct and deeds.  
Therefore I poured out my fury upon them  
because of the blood that they poured out on the ground,  
and because they defiled it with idols.  
I scattered them among the nations,  
dispersing them over foreign lands;  
according to their conduct and deeds I judged them.  
But when they came among the nations wherever they came,  
they served to profane my holy name,  
because it was said of them: "These are the people of the LORD,  
yet they had to leave their land."  
So I have relented because of my holy name  
which the house of Israel profaned  
among the nations where they came.  
Therefore say to the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord GOD:  
Not for your sakes do I act, house of Israel,  
but for the sake of my holy name,  
which you profaned among the nations to which you came.  
I will prove the holiness of my great name, profaned among the nations,  
in whose midst you have profaned it.  
Thus the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD,  
when in their sight I prove my holiness through you.  
For I will take you away from among the nations,  
gather you from all the foreign lands,  
and bring you back to your own land.  
I will sprinkle clean water upon you  
to cleanse you from all your impurities,  
and from all your idols I will cleanse you.  
I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you,  
taking from your bodies your stony hearts  
and giving you natural hearts.  
I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes,  
careful to observe my decrees.  
You shall live in the land I gave your fathers;  
you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 42:3, 5, 43:3, 4**

*When baptism is celebrated.*

**R. (42:2) Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God.**

Athirst is my soul for God, the living God.  
When shall I go and behold the face of God?

**R. Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God.**

I went with the throng  
and led them in procession to the house of God,  
Amid loud cries of joy and thanksgiving,  
with the multitude keeping festival.

**R. Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God.**

Send forth your light and your fidelity;  
they shall lead me on  
And bring me to your holy mountain,  
to your dwelling-place.

**R. Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God.**

Then will I go in to the altar of God,  
the God of my gladness and joy;  
then will I give you thanks upon the harp,  
O God, my God!

**R. Like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God.**

**Responsorial Psalm Is 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6**

*When baptism is not celebrated.*

**R. (3) You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

God indeed is my savior;  
I am confident and unafraid.  
My strength and my courage is the LORD,  
and he has been my savior.  
With joy you will draw water  
at the fountain of salvation.

**R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

Give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name;  
among the nations make known his deeds,  
proclaim how exalted is his name.

**R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

Sing praise to the LORD for his glorious achievement;  
let this be known throughout all the earth.  
Shout with exultation, O city of Zion,  
for great in your midst  
is the Holy One of Israel!

**R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.**

**OrPs 51:12-13, 14-15, 18-19**

*When baptism is not celebrated.*

**R. (12a) Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

A clean heart create for me, O God,  
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.  
Cast me not out from your presence,  
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.

**R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

Give me back the joy of your salvation,  
and a willing spirit sustain in me.  
I will teach transgressors your ways,



and sinners shall return to you.

**R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;  
should I offer a holocaust, you would not accept it.  
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;  
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you will not spurn.

**R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.**

**Epistle Rom 6:3-11**

Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus  
were baptized into his death?

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death,  
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead  
by the glory of the Father,  
we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his,  
we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

We know that our old self was crucified with him,  
so that our sinful body might be done away with,  
that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.

For a dead person has been absolved from sin.

If, then, we have died with Christ,  
we believe that we shall also live with him.

We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more;  
death no longer has power over him.

As to his death, he died to sin once and for all;  
as to his life, he lives for God.

Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being dead to sin  
and living for God in Christ Jesus.

**Responsorial psalm Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23**

**R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his mercy endures forever.

Let the house of Israel say,  
"His mercy endures forever."

**R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

The right hand of the LORD has struck with power;  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.

I shall not die, but live,  
and declare the works of the LORD.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

The stone the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.  
By the LORD has this been done;

it is wonderful in our eyes.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

### **Gospel Mk 16:1-7**

When the sabbath was over,  
Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome  
bought spices so that they might go and anoint him.  
Very early when the sun had risen,  
on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb.  
They were saying to one another,  
"Who will roll back the stone for us  
from the entrance to the tomb?"  
When they looked up,  
they saw that the stone had been rolled back;  
it was very large.  
On entering the tomb they saw a young man  
sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe,  
and they were utterly amazed.  
He said to them, "Do not be amazed!  
You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified.  
He has been raised; he is not here.  
Behold the place where they laid him.  
But go and tell his disciples and Peter,  
'He is going before you to Galilee;  
there you will see him, as he told you.'"

### **NOTES FOR READERS**

*Tonight the liturgy of the word is much longer than usual - the vigil is meant to last through the night, and to be a relaxed listening to the Word. Do not think that because there are more readings than usual you have to 'get through them quickly'. Tonight, more than any other time, we must linger over the Word of God, allowing God to explain his plan to us. Ensure that you know which readings are being proclaimed, well in advance.*

#### **First Reading: Genesis 1:1-2:2.**

In looking at God's eternal plan, where else should we begin but 'In the beginning...'? Before we get into the messiness of human life, we contemplate the perfection of Creation. This piece of scripture certainly had its origins, before being written down, as a story handed on by word of mouth. This is why it has a distinctive pattern, or rhythm: "God said..." begins each section, which ends with "Evening came and morning came, the [ ] day." Use these sections to split up your reading, and almost imagine yourself as one of the elders of Israel, sitting round the fire, telling the story to the young, to ensure that it is passed on. The tone of voice you use to proclaim this reading should speak very clearly of the bountiful generosity of God, who made all this wonderful world to give to men and women. Perhaps it would be useful to picture in your mind the things that God makes, as you read, to ensure that you transmit the message of the wonders of God's work. Because of its structure, and because of its importance, it is certainly worth reading the longer version.

#### **Second Reading: Genesis 22:1-18.**

From the beauties of the new creation we enter the chaos of human history - a dreadful time when pagan cults would happily sacrifice their children to gain blessing from their gods. This story of Abraham illustrates many things: our God, the God of Israel, rejects such sacrifice; the trust of Abraham is revealed in his complete obedience; and perhaps the most obvious meaning: our God is not prepared to ask anything he will not do himself - even as Abraham is asked to give up his only son, God the Father is prepared to give up his only Son, as the ultimate offering and expression of trust. The difference is that Abraham's son is spared by the God of mercy, while the Son of God is condemned by sinful men. As you read, there is a great build up of tension, even of revulsion, that Abraham could even contemplate such a dreadful thing as killing Isaac; there is a powerful drama about the story, a great fear and anxiety. This is only released when the voice of the angel intervenes at the last minute - a real cliff-hanger! Then, very quickly, the reading passes from fear and horror to a great and wonderful promise and blessing. The relief should be apparent in the reader's proclamation. Again because of the dramatic tension of this reading it is better to proclaim the long version, which emphasises the blessing which establishes the chosen people of God.

**Third Reading: Exodus 14:15-15:1. This reading must always be read.**

The fact that this is the only reading that is not optional must tell us something about the importance of its content. It is absolutely central to this night's liturgy. It very clearly tells a story, but a story that for centuries has been central to the faith of the people of Israel: that once God, who had chosen them, intervened in a most wonderful way, in order to free them from the enemy that oppressed them. The passage through the Red Sea was the decisive moment in the escape we refer to as the Exodus, and escape somehow prefigured in the Passover meal that the people shared before they left (see Maundy Thursday). The key for our understanding - what this has to do with us - is twofold: first it reveals the loving care of God for those who are his own (for we are the new Israel). Secondly, and more importantly, it is by passing through the waters that the people enter into their new, free life - and by passing through the waters of baptism we enter into a new, free life. For Israel the enemy was Egypt, for us it is death. The line to emphasise is: "That day the Lord rescued Israel from the Egyptians," which sums it all up. The tone of this reading (as indeed of the whole Vigil) is triumph, which is perhaps best emphasised by the way in which the Psalm follows immediately - the only time this happens in the whole year. Liaise with your musicians, and make sure that you, the reader, lead into the Song of Triumph by proclaiming clearly and confidently.

**Fourth Reading: Isaiah 54:5-14.**

From the drama of the last two readings, this section of Isaiah takes us somewhere new. It answers a fundamental question: 'Who is this God who calls and rescues us? What is he like? Why are we his people?' The unique truth of the revelation to the people of Israel is this: that their God is a God who loves, with extreme tenderness. Unlike other gods, who were jealous, angry, frightening and distant, Isaiah reveals that the God we profess is as tender and loving as a mother, as caring as a devoted husband. The tone of this reading is compassion: one who has been angry, but now love washes over that anger: the past is forgotten, and a new future awaits. The prophet wants us to hear the voice of God as that of a loving husband comforting his wife - it would not be unsuitable for the reader to 'get into' this reading by imagining him or herself to be speaking these words to someone they love. Then those to whom it is addressed - the congregation sitting in front of you - will hear the voice of our loving Father. Especially after the boisterousness of the previous reading, your voice should be calm and gentle throughout the whole of this beautiful profession of love.

**Fifth Reading: Isaiah 55:1-11.**

This reading is very clearly addressed to those who will be baptised in a very short time at the Vigil, but not only to them; each Vigil is our opportunity to return, as it were, to the font, and allow the life and light of baptism to be renewed in us - which we show forth by the renewal of our baptismal promises. So this invitation to 'Come to the waters' is for all who have been baptised. It is almost as though the Lord, through Isaiah, is trying to convince us: "Listen, listen to me !", "Pay attention, come to me !" Make a special effort to be convincing as you read. Be careful with the last paragraph: in the Lectionary it is printed as a single chunk of text - be sure not to read it as a single chunk, but divide it up so that the meaning can be clear.

**Sixth Reading: Baruch 3:9-15.32- 4:4.**

This is possibly the hardest reading of the vigil. The prophet is pleading with the people of Israel to remember the Lord: to remember the wisdom that comes from God, remember the life and light that come from following his commands. The whole tone of this reading is confident pleading - one who sees the world as it is (through God's eyes) and recognises that things are going wrong: one who is deeply and utterly convinced of this truth: without God, there is chaos, with God there is order, life and light. The reader utters these words of the prophet, and they are true for our own time: you, as the proclaimer, must see the meaning of this reading, so that you can be the voice of the Lord and plead with people to 'make their way to light'. [Note: 'Sheol' is the land of the dead, the place without God. The 'she' referred to throughout the reading is 'wisdom' or the 'commandments of God'; this refers to the simple understanding of the closeness of God and the need to follow his ways.]

**Seventh Reading: Ezekiel 36:16-28.**

This reading is about the Covenant: God had established a Covenant (or a Testament) with the people of Israel, which said "If you follow my laws and commandments, then I shall be your God and you will be my people." But this Covenant was constantly being broken by the people. So through the prophets God proclaimed that there would be a New Covenant (or a New Testament). That is what this reading is all about. So it leads us very neatly to the next reading which we will hear, from the New Testament. It concludes this review, in the light of the risen Christ (and literally in the light of the Paschal Candle), of the plan of God revealed in the history of Israel. This promise of a New Covenant leads us back to the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ: in him, especially by his obedient sacrifice, God 'displays the holiness of his great name'. In the water flowing from Jesus' side on the cross, we see the waters of baptism, as Ezekiel says: "I shall pour clean water over you, and you will be cleansed." Through these waters, we become the people of the New Covenant, with a 'new spirit' in us. The reader should be aware of who is speaking: God, summing up what man has done, and what God will do. The tone is first almost severe, but then melts into the glorious promise which we, by our baptisms, have claimed. The final line is awesome in its intensity: the reader speaks the words of the eternal Lord, who says to us gathered in our church this night: "You shall be my people, and I will be your God." What an amazing statement !

**New Testament Reading: Romans 6:3-11.**

It may be with a sense of relief that we get to this reading: this is the one that links everything together, and explains why we are here and what we are celebrating. The mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection is the mystery of our baptism: in the waters we die with him and rise from them in his new life. That is why this night of resurrection is the night of baptism; that is why this most marvellous night is the night of great joy - because baptism is the ultimate answer to our greatest fear - the fear of death. Death itself

is conquered by death, and we have life. This reading is very obvious in its meaning, and so is a gift for the reader. But be careful to remember the supreme importance of this proclamation - this is the message of Easter: this is quite literally a life and death matter! A simple tip to help read this: remember to smile, while reading it. Easter is about a deep joy, the deepest joy we humans can possibly possess. This reading sums up where that joy comes from. So be glad in this Easter message!

## **Responsorial Psalms**

The Responsorial Psalm is always to be an interlude - a way of breaking up the flow of words with a moment of reflection, prayer or praise. It may be sung, proclaimed or recited. But whichever way is used, it must be *different*. To have the same reader going, almost without breath, from the Reading into the Psalm does not allow it to do its work - to be an interlude, a moment of reflection. This is especially true at the Easter Vigil.

Ideally Psalms are sung. In many parishes, however, it is difficult to find cantors who are able to do this. An alternative that may be used is for the whole congregation to sing a setting of the Psalm appointed after a reading.

## **THE EASTER VIGIL WITH THE SERVICE OF LIGHT**

Note - There is a long-standing tradition in the church that Christians should "*make Vigil*" the night before Easter. Having gone through Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, the church has become a dark and depressing place. On Ash Wednesday, the Pascal Candle that symbolises Christ's sacrifice is extinguished, and it remains, unlit, on the platform at the front of the sanctuary throughout Lent.

One rector comments, "We gather with students and adults on Holy Saturday at 10 p.m. by a small brazier outside the sanctuary. Taking a flame from the fire, we relight the paschal candle and follow it into the totally dark sanctuary. People are invited to take the flame from the paschal candle and light all of the other candles in the sanctuary."

The following liturgy reflects the ancient practice of focusing on many of the biblical passages about light and dark and about water, all leading to Easter morning—the light of Christ and the saving waters of baptism.

### **Welcome**

### **Opening prayer**

### **Liturgy of the light**

*Leader:* It is truly right and good, always and everywhere, with our whole heart and mind and voice, to praise you, the invisible, almighty, and eternal God, and your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who at the feast of the Passover paid for us the debt of Adam's sin, and by his blood delivered your faithful people.

*Students:* This is the night, when you brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.

*Leader:* This is the night when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life.

*Students:* This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave.

*Leader:* How wonderful and beyond our knowing, O God, is your mercy and loving-kindness to us, that to redeem a slave, you gave a Son.

*Students:* How holy is this night, when wickedness is put to flight, and sin is washed away. It restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to those who mourn. It casts out pride and hatred, and brings peace and concord.

*Leader:* How blessed is this night, when earth and heaven are joined and men and women are reconciled to God.

*All:* Holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor. May it shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find it ever burning—he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Procession of the light into the sanctuary**

#### **Responsive greeting**

*Leader:* Jesus Christ is the light of the world,  
*Students:* the light no darkness can overcome.

*Leader:* Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening  
*Students:* and the day is almost over.

*Leader:* Let your light scatter the darkness  
*Students:* and illumine your church.

**Hymn:** "O Gracious Light, Lord Jesus Christ"  
*The Phos Hilarion is an ancient hymn of light, found in most hymnals.*

### **The Service of Lessons**

**First lesson:** The Story of Creation *Genesis 1:1-2:4a*

#### **Silence**

#### **Prayer**

**Second lesson:** The Flood *Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:13-18; 9:8-13*

#### **Silence**

**Third lesson:** Israel's Deliverance *Exodus 14:21-15:1a*

#### **Song of Moses and Miriam** (*responsively*)

*Leader:* I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea.

*Students:* The Lord is my strength and my song; he has been my Savior.



*Leader:* This is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

*Students:* Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.

*Leader:* Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in splendor, doing wonders?

*Students:* In your mercy you led forth the people you set free; you guided them in your strength to your holy habitation.

*Leader:* You will bring them in and plant them on the mount that is your possession,

*Students:* The place, O Lord, you have made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have prepared.

*All:* The Lord shall reign forever and ever.

## **Silence**

**Song:** "Jesus, I Surrender"

Jesus, I surrender, all my life I give.

I'm sick of only dying, I want to really live.

You're the only one who can bring peace to my life,  
so you can have me, Jesus, I yield you all my rights.

Lord, I'm yours. I surrender, I am yours. (*Repeat line.*) (*Repeat all.*)

**Fourth lesson:** Salvation Offered Freely to All *Isaiah 55:6-11*

## **Silence**

## **Prayer**

**Fifth lesson:** A New Heart and New Spirit *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

*All (in unison):* 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.

**Sixth lesson:** Dying and Rising with Christ *Romans 6:3-11*

## **Silence**

**Seventh lesson:** Sealing the Tomb *Matthew 27:57-66*

## **Affirmation of faith**

## **Apostles' Creed**

All (in unison): I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Closing song:** "All in All"

## **PRAYERS**

O God, who make this most sacred night radiant with the glory of the Lord's Resurrection, stir up in your Church a spirit of adoption, so that, renewed in body and mind, we may render you undivided service. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Faithful Midwife,  
as you delivered the Hebrews safely  
out of the long labor of slavery,  
so, morning by morning,  
you draw us forth into the new day.  
Surround us with a cloud of witnesses,  
and sustain us by your powerful word,  
that, in the night of loneliness and fear,  
we, being weary, may not lose heart  
but push toward the joy that is to come,  
labouring with Christ  
to give birth to your promised kingdom. Amen.

Creator of the universe,  
you made the world in beauty,  
and restore all things in glory  
through the victory of Jesus Christ.  
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured  
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war, and greed,  
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace,  
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Mighty God,  
in whom we know the power of redemption,  
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.  
As we move through every sorry and trial of this life,  
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning  
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,  
we will share in his resurrection,  
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life  
and forever freed to be your people. Amen.



*Intercessory*

As we remember the story  
of God's gracious presence with us  
through life and death,  
we lift our prayers on behalf of all creation.

*Prayers of the People, concluding with:*

God of salvation,  
your wisdom and compassion guide us  
in the midst of pain and grief,  
in the midst of temptation and fear.  
Through your resurrection power  
heal our sorrow and uplift us in delight,  
that we may know that fulfilment of your promise  
in our restoration to wholeness. Amen.

Ever-faithful God,  
by divine wisdom you gather us out of the darkness  
that has spoken its worst in the death of our Saviour,  
into the light of Christ.  
Enable us to recall your many acts of mercy,  
the miracles by which you delivered us,  
and the signs of your unwavering love for humankind,  
which proclaim the gospel of resurrection and life. Amen.

## QUOTATIONS

[Holy Saturday: Rest  
well, indeed. For  
tomorrow there is work  
to be done and a grave  
to be conquered.  
NT Wright](#)

[Holy Saturday: the darkest day. 'There in the ground His body lay. Light of the world by  
darkness slain.' Feel it. Tomorrow will be sweeter.](#)

[The Holy Saturday moment: when all seems dark & grim and the only thing left to do is  
wait...on the Lord for tomorrow morning's hope is risen.](#)

[Waiting, in prayer, for the final fulfillment. The raising from the dead, the Messiah in the  
grave. The tomb sealed by the authorities, guards stood watch the disciples, confused,  
waited, despairing, hoping Would the prophesy be made real. Would he rise? They waited.  
Lucky for us; we know the rest of the story revealed to them that first Easter 'morn.](#)

[Holy Saturday acknowledges those struggling between post-traumatic defeat and pre-  
resurrection hope.](#)

The clock ticks slowly on Holy Saturday, pressing reactionaries beyond their capacities. It was a day fashioned for handwringing.

Holy Saturday: a celebration of the sacrament of honest, raw doubt that precedes the resurrection and reigniting of faith.