Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him” (Romans 6:8).

Easter Vigil

Gen 1:1—2:2; Gen 22:1-18; Ex 14:15—15:1; Is 56:5-14; Is 55:1-11’ Bar 3:9-6, 32—4:4; Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28; Rom 6:3-11; Luke 24:1-12

The Easter Vigil, like Passover, takes place at night and is devoted to family storytelling. Begin at the beginning and see where the story leads. Get the big picture. See the promises made, then fulfilled. Recount the events and people who handed on their faith in ever increasing assurance that God will keep the covenant that is the living heart of the pilgrim community advancing through salvation history.

Night robs us of other assurances, our backs to the encircling darkness beyond the light and the voices that warm us, huddling close to one another and to the fire and the story. Creation, the testing of Abraham, Moses and Exodus, Nuptial Covenant, Exile and Restoration, Promise, Fulfillment, Death to Resurrection.

From bonfire to Paschal Candle, then to our individual candles, the story radiates outward, pushing back the darkness. Through the prayers, readings and psalms, the community renews its faith in the light of Christ that overcomes the death. “Don’t be afraid,” announce the dazzling messengers. “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised.”

The community of the baptized welcomes its newest members into this Paschal pattern, a lifelong formation and way of life. If the entire liturgical year repeats this process of becoming other Christs, the Easter Vigil is its reprise and pinnacle. “We are Easter people and ‘Alleluia’ is our song,” St. Augustine affirms.

Luke ends his Gospel account of Easter morning with the apostles rejecting the women’s testimony as “nonsense.” But Peter runs to the empty tomb, bends down to examine the burial cloths, and then goes home “amazed at what had happened.” The story is open-ended, and the mystery is just beginning.

We depart the Vigil asking ourselves the same question. What has happened, and what difference does it make in our lives? Faith formation will continue during the next 50 days of the Easter season, until Pentecost arrives to harvest the results of the graces we have opened our hearts to receive. Happy Easter. Let us begin again our faith journey in a world that needs our faith, our light and our courage.

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