

## Easter Vigil 2009

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Separated by darkness

Gathered by the Light of Christ

filled with hope,

casting out fear

rejoicing in the newness of resurrection joy

**we stand together**

**this night:**

*united* in faith,

*immersed* in the love of God,

*lavished* on us across the ages.

Created by the Spirit-filled Word of God,

we have pondered the marvels of God's forgiveness

which rescued us from the slavery of sin,

our disconnect from God.

The impossible happened:

the sea split in two and an unexpected,

dearly desired path appeared.

God-in-Christ took on our human flesh,

vanquished our sins,

faced death down,

and rose triumphant from the tomb

radiant with the glory of **unimagined** new life.

**No play-acting here!**

What we do together THIS NIGHT  
gives us **access** to the mystery of salvation.  
Our singing, our candle-carrying,  
our full throated pleas for mercy,  
our deep desires for the **cleansing healing** waters of  
salvation.  
all the actions we do together gives us access  
to that one, unrepeatable outpouring of love  
that washed away our sins  
and united us together in Christ.  
**We are his Mystical Body.**

Our gracious God stands in our midst  
breathing healing spirit on us  
who long and thirst for healed relationship.

As the scriptures are proclaimed  
we hear that eternal word spoken definitively in Christ Jesus:

“My beloved,  
I forgive you.  
I am especially fond on you.  
I love you. “

The One who bore the cross,  
the One who felt abandoned,  
the One who suffered for our sins  
takes upon Himself our failures, our needs.

Through this night,  
through this time we spend together  
in God’s Name and in faith-filled union with one  
another  
we wait and watch.

**This night is our passover feast.**

**This night we touch that one night  
when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death  
and rose triumphant from the dead.**

“The power of this holy night  
dispels all evil,  
washes guilt away,  
restores lost innocence,  
brings mourners joy;  
it casts out hatred,  
brings peace, and humbles earthly pride.”

While we remember with thanksgiving  
the mystery of our salvation in Christ every  
Sunday—the Lord’s Day—  
We know that for centuries Christians  
have set aside one Sunday, yearly,  
to *extend* that commemoration of the Resurrection  
into what we call a TRIDUUM of the crucified,  
buried and risen One.

### **One Big Sunday!!**

And *THIS NIGHT*— leading into the super-sized Sunday— has  
been called the *MOTHER OF ALL VIGILS*.

Our watching and waiting continues the  
tradition of our Jewish forebears, during which  
the Hebrews kept an annual watch for the Lord’s Passover,  
which was to free them from slavery to Pharaoh.

That Vigil prefigured the true pasch of Christ that was to  
come,  
the night that brings true liberation, in which Christ  
destroyed the bonds of death and rose as victor  
from the depths.

For this reason the Church has long history of celebrating  
baptisms on this night which sacramentally  
connects us with that primal act of salvation.

Thus,  
Two among us  
—Alicia and Nick—  
will reject the Evil One  
will descend into the waters of baptism  
as an act of faith.

And we who are already configured to Christ  
—as his mystical Body—  
pray that these Elect may  
find the font of the church to be  
both the tomb in which they die with Christ to sin  
and the womb from which they rise reborn,  
a new creation.

Two others amongst us—  
—Scott and Katherine—  
will reaffirm their baptismal vows  
with us for the first time, Pledging themselves to be one  
with us in the Catholic way of life.

Then, the four of them  
—strengthened by anointing with the Spirit, —  
will be conformed to Christ by the SEAL of the Spirit  
and share Christ's mission of prophet, priest, and king.

This night ends with our most solemn act: the Eucharist.

The Eucharist, we know is more than communion.

The Eucharist is that act of thanksgiving  
that we do  
following the command of Jesus to  
take, bless, break, and eat.

The Eucharist is our ongoing sacrament of initiation.  
Our communal opportunity—Sunday by Sunday—  
to acknowledge with thanksgiving God's gracious activity  
amongst us, to reunite our innermost selves with  
Him who loved us to his death.  
And to say AMEN—our pledge to be faithful to the love which  
called us and united us.

Doing the Eucharist gives us an opportunity  
to share in Christ's sacrifice:  
that is:  
to share in God's act of gift-giving.

We receive God's love and we in turn pour out our love—  
our love for God and our love for all God's people,  
that is why Mass ends –not with a song, but with a MISSION.

**Ite, missa est.** The Mass is ended; go in peace, live in love.

We go forth, nourished and strengthened for holy living;  
We go forth on that mission of bringing God's life and love to  
all we meet...Not unlike the women who today  
were sent to announce the Risen Christ to the  
other disciples.

This night, this solemn feast  
lays before us God's abundant love.

This feast invites us into a deeper walk  
with the God of our salvation.

This feast reminds us that we are one in the Spirit,  
we are one in the Lord.

May this Easter-tide  
bring you, like the women in the story,  
to hear the message,  
to let go of the fears that hold you back  
and to run—yes run—to share that joy with those others who  
may be drooping in their faith.

May the Risen Lord  
who stands ever among us  
heal and fortify,  
touch and bless you  
in your innermost need.  
And may we all let the Risen Christ shine forth  
in our world so torn by sin and strife.  
—both by our deeds, as well as by our words.

**To Christ the Risen One,  
who loves us and  
pours out his life-blood for us:  
To Christ the true light who leads us out of darkness;  
To Christ who missions us to go in peace  
and to live in love.**

**To Him be glory for ever and ever!  
AMEN!**

Homily by Fr. Gerald T. Chinchar, SM, DMIN  
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON CHAPEL OF THE IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION, April 11, 2009—The Great Paschal Vigil