

## **Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Apr 19th 2014**

The Easter Vigil is one of the greatest liturgies of the Church year. In the early Church the community kept vigil for much of the night to await the dawn and to bring those joining the Christian community to the Sacraments of new life.

I have always loved the Vigil as a great experience of renewal. With part of my mind on the early Church's tradition we are participating in and part of my heart with those in our midst to be Baptized and joined into full communion, I feel this is the best of what the Vatican II document on the Liturgy describes as the "source and summit" of our faith.

We begin in darkness, and experience it. Then a fire is struck and passed around the room. Then a wonderful Eucharistic Prayer is sung exalting the Light among us. "This is the night ..."

Then comes the Liturgy of the Word. It is best described as a liturgy celebrating the story of our salvation. While we wait there this night, we hear the story again – from Genesis to the Exodus story, from the Prophets to the Letter of Paul to the Romans. Each reading has a joyful Psalm of its own and each set – reading and psalm – conclude with a wonderful prayer which gathers what we just heard and sang into a prayer. All this prepares us for the Gospel story of the Resurrection.

Tonight, we are the people who believe the Good News. Jesus is alive! And, Death has no power over us!

Because we believe, we welcome new believers to join us in this communion of joy. Tonight we bless the water of the font by immersing the Paschal Candle – the very Light of Christ among us – into the font and lifting it out. Just as Jesus died and rose from the dead, so our newly Baptized die with him, and know they will live forever with him. They are clothed in white garments – taking up the mission of Jesus to love and serve. They receive candles – entrusting them with the Light.

And, tonight, they celebrate the Eucharist with us and receive the Body and Blood of Christ with us. For months we have been saying that we long for the day when they could join us at the table of the Lord.

Let us enjoy the celebration of life, as it is occurring around the world, joining us in a faith that is being renewed, celebrated and shared, with such joy.

Andy Alexander, S.J. - Creighton University