

Easter Vigil 2013
Father Frank Matera
Christ our Light

On this most sacred night, the climax of our Easter Triduum, we keep vigil as we wait for the resurrection of the Lord, and his return at the end of the ages. On this most sacred night we wait in joyful anticipation for of own resurrection. For, if we have grown into union with Christ in a death like his we shall be united with Christ in his resurrection.

At the beginning of this Vigil, we lit the Paschal Candle, the symbol of the risen Christ. Deacon Art brought that candle into the darkness of the church, and each one of us lit our candle from the Paschal Candle. In doing so, we proclaimed that the light of the risen Christ overcomes the darkness of sin and death.

Next, we heard the glorious melody of the *Exsultet*, sung in the light of the Paschal Candle, the risen Christ. In that song, we heard the words, “This is the night when Christ broke the prison bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld.” Then, in the light of that candle, the risen Christ, we read the story of salvation as told in the Old Testament.

In the reading from the Book of Genesis, we heard how God created the world by the power of his Word, Jesus Christ. Everything God created was good; it was very good. But Sin entered into world; and with Sin came the power of death.

In the reading from the Book of Exodus, we heard the story of how God redeemed his people by delivering Israel from Egypt through the waters of the Red Sea. At that moment Israel experienced the powerful salvation of God, who was gloriously triumphant.

But Israel failed to obey God’s commandments, and centuries later was led into Exile. But instead of abandoning his people, God saved them once more by returning them from exile. And so, in the reading from the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, God promises his people, “You shall live in the land I gave your fathers; you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

And tonight, at this Easter Vigil, we experience the fullness of God’s saving power in Christ. By raising Christ from the dead, God has broken Sin’s power and Death’s reign over our lives, once and for all. To be sure, there are moments when we continue to sin. To be sure, each one of us will die one day. But Death will not have the final say, and Sin no longer rules over our lives because we live in Christ.

In a few moments, those who have been preparing for baptism, confirmation, and communion will enter into the fullness of our Christian life. As they make their baptismal promises, we will renew our own baptismal promises: We will renounce Satan and all his works; we will profess our faith in God the Father, in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. We will witness to each other that the risen Lord is center of our life. We will proclaim, this is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.