

by Carrie Montalto

CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION AND CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS

THE GREAT VIGIL of EASTER

March 30, 2024

CONCERNING THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

The Great Vigil, when observed, is the first liturgy of Easter Day. It is celebrated at a convenient time between sunset on Holy Saturday and sunrise on Easter morning. It is appropriate that the service begin in darkness. The liturgy normally consists of four parts:

The Service of Light: a new fire is kindled, and from it the Paschal Candle is lit, symbolizing Christ, the light of the world. The Exsultet, an ancient song of praise, is sung or said as the climax of this part of the liturgy.

The Service of Lessons: key passages from Scripture recount the history of God's mighty acts and promises. These readings are accompanied by psalms, canticles, and prayers.

Holy Baptism is the Sacrament through which candidates are united to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (ROMANS 6:3-4), which the Church celebrates on this most holy night. When the Bishop is present, confirmation may also be administered. If there are no candidates for Baptism or confirmation, the Congregation joins in a Renewal of Baptismal Vows.

The Holy Eucharist is the proper culmination of the Easter Liturgy. As we keep this holy feast, we share the joy of our Savior's triumph and are strengthened by his grace to walk in newness of life.

THE GREAT VIGIL of EASTER

Congregational responses are indicated in **boldface**.

THE LIGHTING OF THE PASCHAL CANDLE

In the darkness, fire is kindled; after which the Celebrant says

Dear friends in Christ: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death.

The Celebrant may say the following prayer

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: sanctify this new fire, we pray, and so set us aflame with the fire of your love, that with pure hearts and kindled affections we may attain to the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Celebrant lights the Paschal Candle from the newly kindled fire, and says

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The Celebrant, bearing the Candle, leads the procession to the chancel, pausing three times and singing or saying

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.** *The Paschal Candle is placed in its stand.*

THE EXSULTET

Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King.

Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor, for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.

Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let your holy courts, in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people. All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame, pray with me to God the Almighty for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this great light;

through Jesus Christ his Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**.

The Celebrant sings and the people respond in singing • Celebrant The Lord be with you. • People And with your spi - rit. Celebrant Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. People ••••••• Celebrant Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. •••••••••••• People It is right to give him thanks and praise.

The Cantor continues

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; who paid for us the debt of Adam's sin, and by his blood delivered your faithful people; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, the very Lamb of God, whose blood marks the doorposts of believers and makes us holy.

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

This is the night when with a pillar of fire you banished the darkness of our iniquity.

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.

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

Our birth would have been no gain, had we not been redeemed.

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.

O wonderful providence of Adam's sin destroyed completely by the death of Christ. O happy fault, which gained for us so great and glorious a Redeemer.

This is the night of which it is written: the night shall be as bright as the day.

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.

How blessed is this night when earth and heaven are joined, and Man is reconciled to God.

Therefore, O holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor, the work of bees and of your servants' hands, the gift of your most holy Church. May it mingle with the lights of heaven, and 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.

The People then sing

A-men.

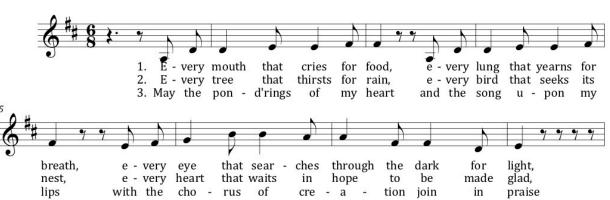
THE LESSONS

The Celebrant may introduce the Scripture readings in these or similar words

Let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, remembering how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer; and let us pray that God may bring to completion in each of us the saving work he has begun.

THE CREATION GENESIS 1:1–2:3 After the Lesson the Reader says The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



Rejoice in All Your Works (Psalm 104)

Words and Music: © 2014 Wendell Kimbrough, CCLI Song #7064725



The Celebrant prays

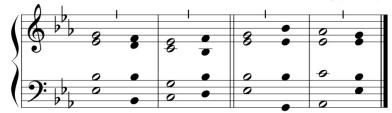
Let us pray.

O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE FALL GENESIS 3 *After the Lesson the Reader says* The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 32

Robert Knox Kennedy (b. 1945)



- Blessed is the one whose unrighteousness is for ' given, |
 and whose sin is ' covered. ■
- 2 Blessed is the one to whom the Lord imputes no 'sin, | and in whose spirit there is no 'guile. II
- 3 For while I held my tongue, my bones wasted a 'way; | I ceased not from groaning all the day 'long. II
- 4 For your hand was heavy upon me day and ¹ night, | and I was dried up and withered, as in the drought of ¹ summer. ■
- 5 Then I acknowledged my sin unto ¹ you, | and I did not hide my in ¹ iquity. ||
- 6 I said, "I will confess my sins unto the 'Lord"; | and so you forgave the wickedness of my 'sin. I
- For this reason shall all the godly make their prayers unto you at a time when you may be ' found; | when the great floodwaters rise, they shall not ' reach them. ||
- 8 You are my hiding-place; you shall preserve me from ' trouble; | you shall encompass me with songs of de ' liverance. II

The Celebrant prays

Let us pray.

O God, you sent your blessed Son, the seed of the woman, that he might crush the serpent's head and make all creation new: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE AT THE RED SEA

EXODUS 14:10-15:1

After the Lesson the Reader says

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah, O My Soul Words: Psalm 146, The Psalter, 1912, mod.; Tune: Gregorian chant, arr. by Lowell Mason, 1839 1. Hal - le lu - jah, praise Je - ho - vah, 0 my soul, Je - ho - vah praise; 2. Hap- py is the man that choos - es Is - rael's God to be his aid; dai - ly gives the hun - gry, sets the mourn-ing pris-'ner free. 3. Food he soul, Je - ho - vah 4. Hal - le lu - jah, praise Je - ho - vah, O my praise; T of my God through all my days. I will sing the glo-rious prais - es Lord his God is he is blessed whose hope of bless - ing on the stayed. rais- es those bowed down with an-guish, makes the sight-less eye to see. will sing the glo-rious prais - es of my God through all my days. L con - fi- dence in princ - es, nor for help Put on man de - pend; no the Lord cre - at - ed, seas and all that they con - tain; Heav'n and earth ho - vah loves the righ - teous, and the strang - er he be - friends, Well Je -0 ver all God reigns for - ev - er, through all a ges he is King: and his pur - pos - es shall he shall die, to dust re - turn - ing, end. liv - ers from op - pres - sion, righ-teous - ness he will main tain. he de helps the fa - ther - less and wid - ow, judg-ment on the wick - ed sends. joy - ful hal - le - lu - jahs him, your God, O Zi - on, sing. un - to

The Celebrant prays

Let us pray.

O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, by the power of your mighty arm you once delivered your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation offered to all nations by the water of Baptism: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

JONAH AND THE FISH JONAH 1:1-2:10 *After the Lesson the Reader says*

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



The Celebrant prays

Let us pray.

Almighty God, by the resurrection of your Son you have brought us out of sin into righteousness and out of death into life: Grant to those who are sealed by your Holy Spirit the will and the power to proclaim you to all the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GATHERING OF GOD'S PEOPLE

ZEPHANIAH 3:12-20

After the Lesson the Reader says

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken Words: John Newton, 1779, alt., (Psalm 87) P.D.; Music: Franz Joseph Haydn, 1797, P.D. Glo-rious things of thee are spo-ken, 1 Zi - on. cit - y See, the streams of liv-ing wa-ters, springing from e-2 3 Round each hab - i - ta-tion hovering, see the cloud and 4 Sav - ior, since of Zi-on's cit - y I through grace a of our God. He, whose word can - not bro - ken be ter - nal love, well sup - ply thy sons and daugh-ters glo - ry fire ap - pear for and cov - ering, а а mem-ber am, let the world de - ride - y, or pit formed thee for his own a bode. On the Rock of all fear of want re move. Who can faint while and show - ing that the Lord is near. Thus de - riv ing Ι will glo - ry in your name. Fad-ing are the Α ges found-ed, what can shake thy sure re - pose? _ such а riv - er ev - er flows their thirst to as suage? from their ban - ner light by night and shade by day, world's best plea-sures, all its boast - ed pomp and show; D With sal va tion's walls sur - round - ed, which like the Grace. Lord, the giv er. safe feed they - up on the man na \mathbf{sol} id joys and last_ ing trea - sures thou may'st smile \mathbf{at} all thy foes. fails ne ver from age to age. which God gives them on their way. but Zi on's chil dren none know.

The Celebrant prays

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you called your Church to bear witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: Give us boldness to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be drawn to you; through him who was lifted high upon the Cross, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL VOWS

The people stand. The Celebrant addresses the Congregation in these or similar words

Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life. I call upon you, therefore, now that our Lenten observance is ended, to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced the Devil and all his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

Do you, here in the presence of God and the Church, renew the solemn promises and vows made at your Baptism and commit yourself to keep them?

I do.

Do you renounce the Devil and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the empty promises and deadly deceits of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

I renounce them.

Do you renounce the sinful desires of the flesh that draw you from the love of God?

I renounce them.

Do you turn to Jesus Christ and confess him as your Lord and Savior?

I do.

Do you joyfully receive the Christian Faith, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?

I do.

Will you obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in them all the days of your life?

I will, the Lord being my helper.

The Celebrant continues

Let us now reaffirm our faith in the words of the ancient baptismal confession, the Apostles' Creed.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

I do. I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in Jesus Christ?

I do. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in Holy Spirit?

I do. 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.

The Celebrant concludes the Renewal of Vows as follows

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the head cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

THE EASTER ACCLAMATION

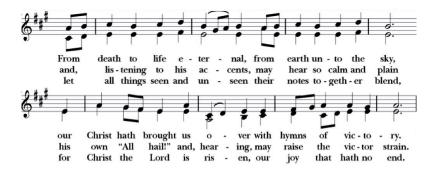
Alleluia. Christ is risen. **The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

A joyful fanfare may be played, and bells may be rung. The church is lighted, and the candles at the Altar may now be lighted from the Paschal Candle.

The Day of Resurrection

Words: John of Damascus (8th cent.); tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866), alt.; Music: Ellacombe; © Oxford University Press





Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain

Words: John of Damascus (ca. 675-749); tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866), alt., P.D.; Music: Arthur S. Sullivan, 1872, P.D.



THE COLLECT

The Celebrant says to the People

The Lord be with you. And with your spirit. Let us pray.

O God, you made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord's resurrection: Stir up in your Church that Spirit of adoption which is given to us in Baptism, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE EPISTLE LESSON

ROMANS 6:3-11 After the Lesson the Reader says The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



THE GOSPEL

MATTHEW 28:1-10

All stand for the Gospel as the Priest reads, first saying

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. Glory to you, Lord Christ.

After the Gospel, the Priest says

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

THE SERMON

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the Church and for the world saying, "hear our prayer."

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

The leader will invite us to pray silently and then to pray aloud.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

THE PEACE

The Peace of the Lord be always with you. And with your spirit.

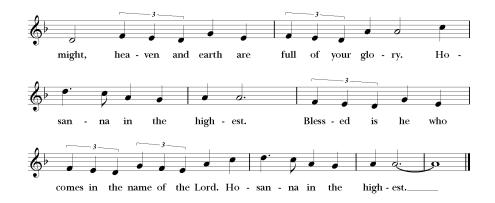
THE SURSUM CORDA

The Celebrant says to the People

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.** Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

THE SANCTUS





The Celebrant and the People say together

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE FRACTION

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

THE MINISTRATION OF COMMUNION

To receive communion, come forward as directed by the usher. "Cross" the palms of your hands to receive bread from the priest. Gluten-free bread is available upon request.

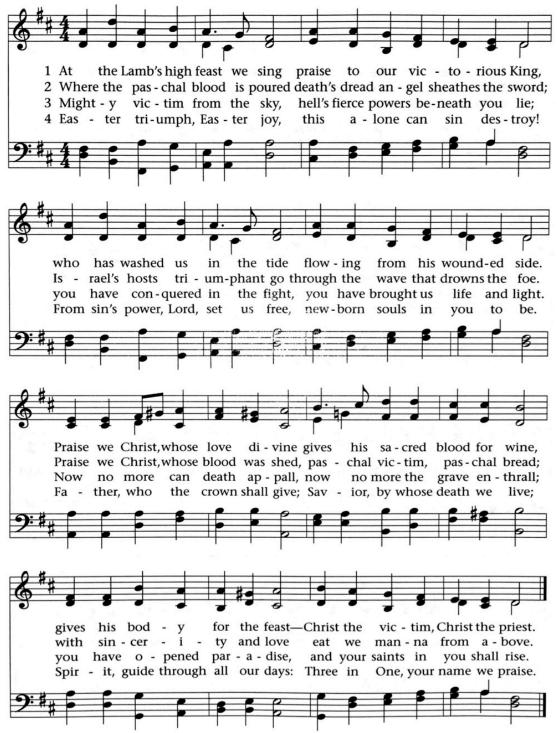
If you desire to receive wine, you may drink from the common cup or dip your wafer into the common cup.

If you do not desire to commune, but would like to receive prayer, cross your arms over your chest as you come forward, and the pastor will pray for you.

All baptized Christians who trust in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, seek to lead a new life by God's mercies, and strive to walk in love and charity with their neighbors are welcome at this table.

At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Words: Latin Hymn, 17th c., trans. Robert Campbell (1814-1868), alt., P.D.; Music: Jacob Hintze (1622-1702); harm. after Johann S. Bach (1685-1750), P.D.



THE POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ: and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the body of your Son, and heirs of your eternal Kingdom.

And now Father, send us out into the world to do the work you have given us to do, to love and serve you as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord. To him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and forever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Text: Christopher Wordsworth, 1807-1885, alt.; Music: Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770-1827; adapt. and harm. by Edward Hodges, 1796-1867



THE DISMISSAL

Alleluia. Alleluia. Let us go forth in the Name of Christ. **Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.**