

EASTER VIGIL – March 31, 2018

Focus: The empty tomb fills our hearts with faith in the risen Lord.

The Easter Vigil is the holiest night in all of the year. During the Easter Vigil, we receive what is perhaps the greatest gift of all – the forgiveness of sins and the hope of eternal life. Yes, the empty tomb fills our hearts with faith in the risen Lord, and the hope that one day we too, might rise from the dead.

This is also the night when the elect are baptized and candidates are received into full communion with the Church. In addition to being the holiest night of the year, the Easter Vigil is also the longest Mass of the year, and with good reason, as we hear Scriptures that retell Salvation History.

We hear all of these readings because they tell us our story of creation and salvation. In the Book of Genesis, we hear seven times “And God saw that it was good,” reminding us of the glory of God first found in nature.

In the Exodus reading, 600,000 Hebrew men, women and children cross the Red Sea on dry land. One side of the water represents 430 years of slavery, blood, sweat and tears. On the other side is the promise of freedom in the Promised Land.

Twelve hundred years before the baptism of Jesus, God in Sacred Scripture is showing us that in the waters of baptism, we all can be free from slavery to sin, and through water, look to that day when we will know true freedom in the Promised Land of heaven.

In Ezekiel, we return to the prominent theme of water and baptism, and God’s promise to sprinkle clean water upon us, to put a new heart within us, and a new spirit.

The Letter of Paul to the Romans tells us that we who die with Christ in baptism will one day share with him in the newness of life.

In the Gospel, the women of Jerusalem come to the empty tomb and become the first to be made aware of the Resurrection. They are instructed by the angels to go tell the disciples the good news.

This is what we are all called to do when we have encountered the risen Lord – to go tell others that light has conquered darkness, and death becomes new life – in Christ.

On Easter, we also are surprised by the presence of the Risen Jesus. And we too are filled with Joy because CHRIST HAS RISEN! Just as He said He would!

To all my dear parishioners and your families, I wish the Joy and Peace and May the many blessings of this Easter season be with you and your whole family.