

HOLY SATURDAY VIGIL MASS

Easter is the centerpiece of the Church's year.

"If Christ has not risen, vain is your faith." (1Cor 15:17)

So to celebrate it as such the Church calls us to come together to watch and pray; to keep vigil for the Lord.

On this Sacred Night the Church has called us to the service of light, Easter proclamation, meditation on the wonders the Lord has done for his people, reborn in Baptism of new members and to the table the Lord has prepared for us; the memorial of his death and resurrection until he comes again.

The feast of Easter leads us to three rivers of Grace, namely; the sacrament of Baptism, the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist—the Holy Communion.

Tonight I would like to talk about the sacrament of Baptism.

The sacrament of Baptism is the first great source of divine life. It is God's greatest Easter gift to us.

St Paul writes, **"We were dead through our sins. Through Baptism, however we are arisen to divine life with Christ."** (Eph. 2:5)

A passage in the Epistle to the Romans for this night says; **"For we were buried with him by means of baptism unto death in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life."** (Romans 6, 4)

From the earliest times Baptism has been administered on the night before Easter for this very reason.

The readings from the Old Testament which are read at this celebration bring before our minds the events of the Old Law which prefigured the reality of the New-- The crossing of the Red Sea, pouring of clean water over the people. They

preach to us of the merciful love of God, of the glories of his risen Son. They encourage us to have fidelity to the law.

The blessing of the water for Baptism calls the Holy Spirit down on the pure and life-giving waters that through his power children may be borne out of them for God.

The seed of divine life is planted in us at Baptism.

Once, baptism has made us children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ and once, God has shown his merciful love to us by making us his children, like women in tonight's gospel, we need to embrace the feet of Jesus our brother always by being faithful to our baptismal promises.

As we renew our baptismal promises tonight let pray for the grace of God to help us to renounce sin so as to live in the freedom of the children of the resurrection.

Happy Easter to you all!!!