

## Homily of Holy Saturday, Year A, 2026

Epistle Romans 6:3-11; Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Matthew 28:1-10

Holy Saturday Easter Vigil concludes the Triduum, the Sacred Paschal Mystery celebration, which began on Holy Thursday.

Before the advent of electricity, gas lights, kerosene lights, flashlights, and so on, people who kept vigil made fire with dry branches of trees, sat around it, and told stories. Grandparents, parents, and seniors told wisdom, stories, and history to the children and the young ones. Tonight reminds grandparents, parents, and seniors this important tradition. The Catholic Church maintains the tradition with the Holy Saturday ceremony as we keep the vigil for the Lord's resurrection.

We started with the liturgy of the Holy Fire. The Holy Fire commemorates God's creation of light on the earth. The Bible tells us that at that time, the earth was without form or shape and enveloped in darkness. "Then God said: 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good. God then separated light from darkness" (Genesis 1:2-5). We pray that the Holy Fire purifies our hearts and makes us new. May the Holy Fire shine its holy light on our dark world and dispel all forces of darkness. May the holy fire separate us from darkness as God separated light from darkness. We cast our afflictions into the Holy Fire. May they be consumed as it was in the days of Elijah, when "The Lord's fire came down and devoured the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust, and lapped up the water in the trench" (1 Kings 18:38). May the Lord who answers by fire answer our prayers and consume our 'woods,' 'stones,' and 'water.' Amen.

Moments ago, we processed into the church building behind the Paschal Candle with lighted candles. The Paschal Candle is an image of the Risen Christ's triumph over death. It is a symbol of hope and new life. The procession behind the Paschal Candle into the church building is a powerful symbol that we are followers of the Risen Lord who assures us, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). May the light of Christ light our way to triumph over sin and sorrow. Amen.

Let us recall a few lines in the Exultet (the Easter proclamation hymn that summons us to rejoice):

- "This is the night that with a pillar of fire banished the darkness of sin."
- "This is the night that even now, throughout the world, sets Christian believers apart from worldly vices and from the gloom of sin, leading them to grace and joining them to his holy ones."
- "This is the night, when Christ broke the prison-bars of death and rose victorious from the underworld."
- "This is the night of which it is written: The night shall be as bright as day ..."

- “The sanctifying power of this night dispels wickedness, washes faults away, restores innocence to the fallen, and joy to mourners, drives out hatred, fosters concord, and brings down the mighty.”
- It is the night the sin of Adam and Eve became a “happy fault” since the world is blessed with the event of the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Old and New Testament readings tonight remind us of our salvation history which goes back to the creation of the world, the fall of Adam and Eve, the journey of God’s Chosen people, the prophecies about Jesus, his coming, his passion, his death, and this night, his resurrection. As Jesus says, “Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21).

Soon, in this celebration, we will renew our baptismal promises in which we will renounce Satan and all his works. All these make us partakers in the Sacred Paschal Mystery. These deep and profound spiritual expressions are for our transformation. May our Lenten journey, the Triduum, and the Easter celebrations bring profound transformations to our lives. Amen.

Our world is enveloped in darkness of corruption, wars, violence, death, refugee crises, bad governments, insecurity, fear, poverty, sickness, suffering, godlessness, human made and natural disasters, and so on. 1 John 5:19 expresses the world's situation, “We know that we belong to God, [but] the whole world is under the power of the evil one.” However, Jesus assures us, “But take courage; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). He says, “because I live and you will live” (John 14:19). St. Paul beckons on us, “Rejoice in the Lord always. I shall say it again: rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4). And joyfully we exclaim, “Thanks be to God! He gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Our celebration continues in the morning when we gather again to celebrate the Easter Sunday Mass.

Happy Easter!

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