

# HOLY SATURDAY-THE EASTER VIGIL

## THE SOLEMN BEGINNING OF THE VIGIL OR LUCERNARIUM THE BLESSING OF THE FIRE AND PREPARATION OF THE CANDLE

*A blazing fire is prepared in a suitable place outside the church. When the people are gathered there, the Priest approaches with the ministers, one of whom carries the paschal candle.*

*The Priest and faithful make the sign of the cross while the Priest says: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and then he greets the assembled people in the usual way and briefly instructs them about the night vigil in these or similar words:*

Dear brethren (brothers and sisters),  
on this most sacred night,  
in which our Lord Jesus Christ  
passed over from death to life,  
the Church calls upon her sons and daughters,  
scattered throughout the world,  
to come together to watch and pray.  
If we keep the memorial  
of the Lord's paschal solemnity in this way,  
listening to his word and celebrating his mysteries,  
then we shall have the sure hope  
of sharing his triumph over death  
and living with him in God.

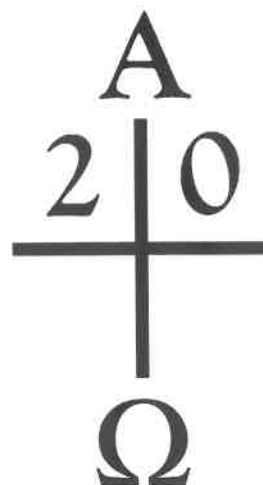
*Then the Priest blesses the fire, saying with hands extended:*

Let us pray.  
O God, who through your Son  
bestowed upon the faithful the fire of your glory,  
sanctify ✠ this new fire, we pray,  
and grant that,  
by these paschal celebrations,  
we may be so inflamed with heavenly desires,  
that with minds made pure  
we may attain festivities of unending splendor.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**R. Amen.**

*The Priest cuts a cross into the candle with a stylus. Then he makes the Greek letter Alpha above the cross, the letter Omega below, and the four numerals of the current year between the arms of the cross, saying meanwhile:*

1. Christ yesterday and today
2. the Beginning and the End
3. the Alpha
4. and the Omega
5. All time belongs to him
6. and all the ages
7. To him be glory and power
8. through every age and for ever. Amen.



## EASTER VIGIL

*When the cutting of the cross and of the other signs has been completed, the Priest may insert five grains of incense into the candle in the form of a cross, meanwhile saying:*

- |                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| 1. By his holy           | 1     |
| 2. and glorious wounds,  |       |
| 3. may Christ the Lord   | 4 2 5 |
| 4. guard us              |       |
| 5. and protect us. Amen. | 3     |

### PROCESSION

*When the candle has been lit, one of the ministers takes burning coals from the fire and places them in the thurible, and the Priest puts incense into it in the usual way. The Deacon or, if there is no Deacon, another suitable minister, takes the paschal candle and a procession forms. The thurifer with the smoking thurible precedes the Deacon or other minister who carries the paschal candle. After them follows the Priest with the ministers and the people, all holding in their hands unlit candles.*

*At the door of the Church the Deacon sings (and the people respond):*

V. Lu - men Chri - sti. R. De - o gra - ti - as.

Or:

V. The Light of Christ. R. Thanks be to God.

*The Priest lights his candle from the flame of the paschal candle. Then the Deacon moves forward to the middle of the church and, standing and raising up the candle, sings a second time:*

V. The Light of Christ. R. **Thanks be to God.**

*All light their candles from the flame of the paschal candle and continue in procession. When the Deacon arrives before the altar, he stands facing the people, raises up the candle and sings a third time:*

V. The Light of Christ. R. **Thanks be to God**

*Then the Deacon places the paschal candle on a large candlestand prepared next to the ambo or in the middle of the sanctuary, and lights are lit throughout the church, except for the altar candles.*

## EASTER VIGIL

### THE EASTER PROCLAMATION

#### (EXSULTET)

*The Deacon, after incensing the book and the candle, proclaims the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) at the ambo or at a lectern, with all standing and holding lighted candles in their hands. The Easter Proclamation may be made, in the absence of a Deacon, by the Priest himself or by another concelebrating Priest. If, however, because of necessity, a lay cantor sings the Proclamation, the words Therefore, dearest friends up to the end of the invitation are omitted, along with the greeting The Lord be with you.*

**E**xult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven,  
Exult, let Angel ministers of God exult,  
let the trumpet of salvation  
sound aloud our mighty King's triumph!  
Be glad, let earth be glad, as glory floods her,  
ablaze with light from her eternal King,  
let all corners of the earth be glad,  
knowing an end to gloom and darkness.  
Rejoice, let Mother Church also rejoice,  
arrayed with the lightning of his glory,  
let this holy building shake with joy,  
filled with the mighty voices of the peoples.

*The bracketed text below is only to be sung by a Deacon or Priest.*

(Therefore, dearest friends,  
standing in the awesome glory of this holy light,  
invoke with me, I ask you,  
the mercy of God almighty,  
that he, who has been pleased to number me,  
though unworthy, among the Levites,  
may pour into me his light unshadowed,  
that I may sing this candle's perfect praises).

∿ 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 and just.**

It is truly right and just,  
with ardent love of mind and heart  
and with devoted service of our voice,  
to acclaim our God invisible, the almighty Father,  
and Jesus Christ, our Lord, his Son, his Only Begotten.  
Who for our sake paid Adam's debt to the eternal Father,  
and, pouring out his own dear Blood,  
wiped clean the record of our ancient sinfulness.  
These, then, are the feasts of Passover,  
in which is slain the Lamb, the one true Lamb,  
whose Blood anoints the doorposts of believers.  
This is the night,  
when once you led our forebears, Israel's children,  
from slavery in Egypt  
and made them pass dry-shod through the Red Sea.  
This is the night

## EASTER VIGIL

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.  
Our birth would have been no gain,  
had we not been redeemed.  
O wonder of your humble care for us!  
O love, O charity beyond all telling,  
to ransom a slave you gave away your Son!  
O truly necessary sin of Adam,  
destroyed completely by the Death of Christ!  
O happy fault  
that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!  
O truly blessed night,  
worthy alone to know the time and hour  
when Christ rose from the underworld!  
This is the night  
of which it is written:  
The night shall be as bright as day,  
dazzling is the night for me,  
and full of gladness.  
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.  
On this, your night of grace, O holy Father,  
accept this candle, a solemn offering,  
the work of bees and of your servants' hands,  
an evening sacrifice of praise,  
this gift from your most holy Church.  
But now we know the praises of this pillar,  
which glowing fire ignites for God's honor,  
a fire into many flames divided,  
yet never dimmed by sharing of its light,  
for it is fed by melting wax,  
drawn out by mother bees  
to build a torch so precious.  
O truly blessed night,  
when things of heaven are wed to those of earth,  
and divine to the human.

### *Short form only:*

---

On this, your night of grace, O holy Father,  
accept this candle, a solemn offering,  
the work of bees and of your servants' hands,  
an evening sacrifice of praise,

## EASTER VIGIL

this gift from your most holy Church.

---

Therefore, O Lord,  
we pray you that this candle,  
hallowed to the honor of your name,  
may persevere undimmed,  
to overcome the darkness of this night.  
Receive it as a pleasing fragrance,  
and let it mingle with the lights of heaven.  
May this flame be found still burning  
by the Morning Star:  
the one Morning Star who never sets,  
Christ your Son,  
who, coming back from death's domain,  
has shed his peaceful light on humanity,  
and lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
R. Amen.

Candles are extinguished.

### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

*In the Easter Vigil, nine readings are provided: seven from the Old Testament and two from the New (the Epistle and Gospel). All of these should be read whenever possible. In case of more serious pastoral circumstances, however, the number of readings from the Old Testament may be reduced. At least three readings should be read from the Old Testament and their respective responsorial psalms should be sung. The reading of chapter 14 of Exodus with its canticle may never be omitted.*

*The structure of this part of the Liturgy is as follows: A reader goes to the ambo and proclaims the reading. Afterwards, a psalmist or a cantor sings or says the Psalm with the people making the response. Then all rise, the Priest says, Let us pray and, after all have prayed for a while in silence, he says the prayer corresponding to the reading. In place of the responsorial psalm a period of sacred silence may be observed, in which case the pause after Let us pray is omitted.*