

now removed from all crosses and images. Those who take part in the Easter Vigil recite Vespers of Holy Saturday, but Compline for Holy Saturday and the Office of Readings for Easter Day are recited only by those who do not participate in the Vigil.

When he had seen the sun's rays hidden and the temple veil torn asunder while the Savior died, Joseph went to Pilate and cried:

Give me that Stranger,
who had wandered since his youth as a stranger.
Give me that Stranger,
by hatred slain, as a stranger.
Give me that Stranger,
whom I behold with wonder, seeing him a guest of death.
Give me that Stranger,
cut off from this world by envious men.
Give me that Stranger,
that I might lay him in a tomb,
who, being a stranger, has no place to rest his head.
Give me that Stranger,
to whom his Mother cried when she saw him dead:
"My Son, wounded are my senses and my heart burns
as I behold you dead!
Yet I praise you, for I trust in your Resurrection!"

— Byzantine Troparion of the Burial of Christ

9.

The Easter Vigil

This is the high point of the Christian year, the celebration of the Paschal Mystery in the great Easter Eucharist, summit and source of the liturgical action and life of God's People. This "holy night" is the "mother of all holy vigils" that begins the "queen of feasts". The full meaning of the Easter Vigil is a waiting for the Lord.¹ He who took our human flesh, who suffered and died for us in that flesh, now rises in that same human body, glorified and immortal, as befits the new life of Resurrection. With the joyous "alleluias" of her new Passover, Mother Church celebrates a unique event, at once historical and cosmic. At the broken tomb, the Incarnation reaches its fulfillment, and the ultimate purpose of our Redemption is revealed in the frailty of human flesh—nothing less than a literal sharing in the glory of his bodily Resurrection. For this we were washed by the waters of Baptism; for this we were sealed with the Spirit's fragrant Chrism; for this we feast on the Body and Blood of the One who leads us on into eternal life.

The solemn Vigil and first Mass of Easter are celebrated only once in the same church.² The Easter Vigil takes place at night, never beginning before nightfall and always ending before daybreak on Sunday. "This rule is to be taken

¹CE CLE, no. 80.

²It could be divisive to provide a second separate celebration in the *same* church for any special group.

according to its strictest sense."³ The sacraments of Christian Initiation should be celebrated where possible, at least in the form of the Baptism of Infants. The greatest exterior solemnity should be lavished on the Vigil Mass. The music should be carefully prepared to express joy, festivity and the triumph of the risen Lord.

257. The celebration of the Easter Vigil moves through four distinctive stages: (1) the Solemn Beginning of the Vigil: the Service of Light; (2) Liturgy of the Word; (3) Liturgy of Baptism; and (4) Liturgy of the Eucharist. "This liturgical order must not be changed by anyone on his own initiative."⁴

258. The *Easter candle* or *Paschal candle* is the central symbolic object in the celebration of the Vigil liturgy because it represents the risen Lord in his glory. This candle should be made of fine quality wax, preferably pure beeswax. Only one candle is prepared. It should be a new candle made for each year, not last year's candle recycled, and never part of a candle mounted on a false candle or an artificial candle (a canister of fuel concealed in a plastic "candle").⁵ It should be large, but not to the extent of being too heavy for one person to carry. The decoration of the candle varies according to the local culture, but the finest Easter candles are adorned with colored wax or hand painted. However, the decoration should not obscure or detract from the principal symbols: (1) space for a cross to be incised in the wax, (2) five points

³ CLE, no. 78. This circular letter on Easter condemns making the time of the vigil coincide with the time of the normal Saturday evening Mass for Sunday, that is, when this begins before sunset. In timing the Vigil, daylight saving time should also be taken into account.

⁴ CLE, no. 81, and see Peter J. Elliott, *Liturgical Question Box*, "Rearranging the Easter Vigil", (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), pp. 178-79.

⁵ See CLE, no. 82.

where the "grains of incense" are inserted, (3) space for the date, preferably set within the four quarters of the cross, and (4) above the cross, the Greek capital Alpha (Α) and, below it, the Greek capital Omega (Ω).⁶ The "grains of incense" should be significant objects, made of any suitable material, equipped with a sharp pin to ensure they hold fast in the wax.⁷

59. The candlestick for the Easter candle should be a truly noble object. It may be adorned with flowers, foliage or rich fabric. This candlestick is placed near the ambo or the altar or, at least during the Vigil rites, even at the center of the sanctuary. If it is very high, a secure set of wooden steps should be provided so that the candle can easily be placed in it and later removed for the baptismal rites.⁸ A low stand seems inappropriate at the Vigil, although outside the Easter Season, it may be found more practical to set the Easter candle in a lower candlestick or bracket near the font.

60. The "new fire" of Easter at the gathering place should be a large bonfire, "whose flames should be such that they genuinely dispel the darkness and light up the night".⁹ Depending on local circumstances, and taking safety into account, ushers or other laity prepare, maintain and supervise the fire. After the procession with the Easter candle has entered the church, and the faithful have lit their candles,

⁶ The modern rite leaves open the option to dispense with some of these signs, but this would rob the candle of a richer symbolism and accessible meaning.

⁷ If literal "grains of incense" are preferred to brass ones, these can be made by gently warming some incense and molding it into a ball around the head of a large pin. Each grain may then be painted or, better still, gilded. Before the Vigil, the sacristan should ensure that five holes are prepared in the wax for the grains.

⁸ Before the ceremonies, the sacristan must ensure that the candle fits easily and securely into the socket.

⁹ CLE, no. 82.

those in charge of the new fire should remain at the gathering place and carefully extinguish the fire before entering the church themselves.

261. Everything is prepared for a Solemn Mass, with deacon(s), concelebrants and M.C., and the full complement of servers: cross and candle bearers, thurifer(s), book bearer, two, four or six torch bearers. This is an occasion when a second M.C. is useful, especially to supervise the concelebrants, lectors and candidates and sponsors for Baptism. Where the Mass takes a less solemn form, without a deacon, an M.C. should direct the ceremonies, and at least four servers should assist as thurifer, candle bearers and book bearer. The exact duties of all the servers, sacristans and ushers must be clearly assigned to them by the M.C. before the ceremonies. For convenience, the main duties have been assigned below to the first and second candle bearers ("acolytes"). Other duties may be given to those who will later act as torch bearers during the Mass. If the deacon and the celebrant do not have adequate vocal skills, a lay cantor vested in an alb may sing the Exsultet. Well-prepared lectors read the Old Testament prophecies and the Epistle of the Mass.

262. If the sacraments of Christian Initiation are to be celebrated, candidates and sponsors, or parents and godparents, must be instructed and prepared beforehand so that they can participate without hesitation or confusion. It would be best if they were accompanied by a well-trained guide or even another M.C.

Immediate Preparations

263. *Altar*: Six or four unlit candles, in the best candlesticks; (the best white or cloth of gold/silver antependium); flowers according to local custom; the (unveiled) processional crucifix near the altar, or in another convenient place if it is not the

altar crucifix, the Book of the Gospels in its noblest cover, closed, on the altar.

264. *Ambo*: the candlestick for the Easter candle to one side, unless it is placed at the center of the sanctuary; the book of the Exsultet, open, and, nearby, the Lectionary, marked for the prophecies and other readings, lector's text of the General Intercessions (the best white or cloth of gold/silver antependium).
265. *Baptistery or at a convenient place in or near the sanctuary*: the font filled with water or a large vessel of water, perhaps adorned with flowers, or covered with fine fabric if it is not a noble vessel in itself, an empty holy water bucket and sprinkler, convenient jug(s) for transferring water. If Baptism is to be administered: the vessel for pouring water, Sacred Chrism, lemon and/or soap, and a jug or ewer of warm water, basin and towel, other towels as required, white robes for infants or adults, baptismal candle(s). If an immersion font is to be blessed, this is filled with water, and flowers and/or sweet-smelling herbs may be arranged around it.
266. *Credence table*: the finest eucharistic vessels, Missal and stand, ewer, bowl and towel, bell and any other bells to be rung at the Gloria, the two processional candlesticks with unlit candles, several tapers. If the sacraments of Christian Initiation are to be celebrated: the volume of the Roman Ritual for the RCIA or Baptism of Infants and a list of the candidates. If Confirmation will be given in the sanctuary: Sacred Chrism, gremial veil or amice (if the celebrant sits to confirm), lemon and/or soap and a ewer of warm water, basin and towel.
267. *Table of gifts*: bread, wine and water for the procession of the gifts.

268. *Tabernacle*: empty, open, the key, the best white or cloth of gold/silver veil nearby, the lamp(s) prepared, but unlit.
269. *In the church*: If the sacraments of Christian Initiation are to be celebrated, places are reserved for the catechumens and their sponsors or for the infants and their families. A faldstool or suitable chair is prepared at one side, if the celebrant sits to confirm. In a dedicated church, unlit candles are placed at the twelve or four consecration crosses. According to custom, not only the sanctuary but side altars and shrines are adorned with flowers and unlit candles and lamps, and supplies of votive lights are available. The holy water stoups at the doors are clean and empty.
270. *Sacristy*: the finest white or cloth of gold/silver eucharistic vestments for the celebrant and deacon(s) and all other requirements for a Solemn Mass; hand candles for concelebrants, clergy and servers who do not carry another object to the gathering place, (tray with the objects required for preparing the candle), a torch, Missal or order of Holy Week.
271. *Gathering place*: The new fire is kindled and carefully supervised so as to be blazing at the beginning of the rite. Unless brought on a tray by a server, the following are arranged on a small table: the stylus for marking the wax, the five "grains of incense", a taper or thin candle (preferably attached to a long metal tube), some charcoal pellets for incense and tongs. Hand candles and books or booklets for the liturgy are distributed to all the faithful as they gather.
272. If it is not possible to light the new fire outside the church, a small brazier may be prepared in the porch or narthex or some other suitable area.¹⁰ The people gather in the church,

¹⁰ Every effort should be made to avoid using a portable barbeque.

and hand candles are distributed. Because the initial rites take place at the back of the church, the faithful turn to face that area until the procession goes to the sanctuary.

1. *Solemn Beginning of the Vigil: The Service of Light*

273. The lights in the church are extinguished by the usher designated to supervise lighting. Except for those physically unable to take part in the procession, people already in the church should be encouraged to go to the gathering place.¹¹ Ushers ensure that the people take positions on each side of the fire, while allowing ample space for the procession to come from the church. By now, everyone at the gathering place should have an unlit hand candle and a booklet for the rites. At the chosen hour, the sacred ministers and servers leave the sacristy or vesting room and go in silence to the gathering place in this order: thurifer with an empty thurible and boat, robed choir,¹² the first candle bearer carrying the unlit Easter candle, other servers, book bearer, clergy in choir dress, concelebrants, M.C., deacon(s) and celebrant. Clergy and servers not carrying an object bring an unlit hand candle. The book bearer brings the Missal or the order of Holy Week; another server brings a flashlight.

BLESSING OF THE FIRE AND LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

274. Directed by the M.C., the clergy and servers take positions so that the fire is between them and the church. The celebrant stands facing the fire, the deacon stands on the

¹¹ However, if Christian Initiation will be celebrated, it would seem best for catechumens and their sponsors to remain in the dark church. Moreover, the catechumens ought not to carry hand candles at this stage, because they will later receive the "light of Christ" at their Baptism.

¹² A choir without robes would already be with the faithful at the gathering place.

celebrant's right, the book bearer assists on his left. To the celebrant's right (where the table may be set up), the M.C. supervises the thurifer and other servers who stand in a line behind the celebrant. Concelebrants and clergy in choir dress stand in two lines on each side of the fire. The choir takes a convenient place so as to be able to join the faithful in the procession. Everyone at the gathering place keeps a reasonable distance from the fire.

275. Attended by the book bearer and the server directing the light of the flashlight onto the text, the celebrant makes the sign of the cross and greets the assembly, using one of the formulas at the beginning of Mass. Then the celebrant (or a deacon or concelebrant) introduces the rite, using the text provided or similar words. The celebrant sings or says, "Let us pray", and, after a pause for silent prayer, he sings or says the prayer of blessing, hands joined. He makes the sign of the cross over the fire at "make this new fire holy." Now, while the candle is being prepared, a server (or the boat bearer) carefully lights a taper from the fire and goes around behind the celebrant and deacon to prepare the thurible. Another server takes each of the charcoal pellets in the tongs and holds it over the taper. When each pellet is properly kindled, he places it in the thurible, which is held open by the thurifer.

276. *Preparation of the Easter candle:* The first candle bearer brings the Easter candle to the celebrant, standing directly in front of him and holding it securely at a convenient angle, assisted if necessary by the M.C. or another server. A server brings the tray with the stylus and incense grains and stands in front of the celebrant, on his right, or the second candle bearer brings these objects from the table as they are needed. He first presents the stylus to the celebrant, who marks the candle, saying "Christ yesterday and today" as he traces the

vertical arm of the cross, "the beginning and the end", as he traces the horizontal arm of the cross, then "Alpha" above the cross, "Omega" below the cross, and "all time belongs to him", inserting the first numeral of the year in the upper left corner of the cross, "and all the ages", inserting the second numeral of the year in the upper right corner, "to him be glory and power", inserting the third numeral in the lower left corner, and "through every age for ever. Amen", inserting the last numeral in the lower right corner.¹³ The server receives the stylus from the celebrant. Then he gives the celebrant the five "grains of incense", one at a time. The celebrant takes the first grain and inserts it firmly at the top of the vertical arm, saying "By his holy"; he inserts the second at the center, saying "and glorious wounds", the third at the base of the vertical arm, saying "may Christ our Lord", the fourth at the left end of the horizontal arm, saying, "guard us" and the fifth at the right end of the horizontal arm, saying "and keep us. Amen."¹⁴

277. The Easter candle bearer holds the candle upright. The deacon or M.C. takes the taper (attached to the tube) and carefully lights it from the fire. He hands it to the celebrant who carefully lights the Easter candle, saying clearly "May the light of Christ . . . hearts and minds". The book bearer steps aside and closes the Missal or order of Holy Week. The thurifer approaches, and, assisted by the deacon, the celebrant prepares incense for the procession. Then the deacon or, lacking a deacon, the celebrant takes the Easter candle; directed by the M.C., he moves to a position where he will lead the procession into the church. If the deacon assists, the M.C. gives a hand candle to the celebrant.

¹³ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 11; CB, no. 314.

¹⁴ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 12. The episcopal conference may introduce other rites that may be better adapted to the local culture; see also CB, no. 341.

THE PROCESSION

278. The order of the procession is as follows: the thurifer precedes the deacon or celebrant who carries the Easter candle, then follow the celebrant (and second deacon), the M.C., concelebrants, other clergy, candle bearers without candles, other servers, book bearer, the choir and the faithful. At the church door, the procession pauses, and, facing the door, the deacon/celebrant raises the candle high and sings "Lumen Christi" (Christ our light). Led by the choir or cantors, all respond "Deo gratias" (Thanks be to God).¹⁵ Care should be taken to protect the Easter candle from drafts of air at the church door. The deacon lowers the candle, and the celebrant lights his candle from it. Then the deacon/celebrant leads the procession as far as the center of the church, where he stops, raises the candle high and sings "Lumen Christi" (Christ our light) a second time. All respond "Deo gratias" (Thanks be to God). Servers take light from the Easter candle, using tapers or their own hand candles, and light the candles of those in the procession. The light is passed back so that all the hand candles are gradually lit. The procession continues to the sanctuary. The deacon/celebrant enters the sanctuary, turns to face the people, raises the candle high and sings "Lumen Christi" (Christ our light) a third time. All respond "Deo gratias" (Thanks be to God).

279. The deacon/celebrant places the Easter candle in its candlestick, either at the center of the sanctuary or next to the ambo or altar. The celebrant bows to the altar and goes

¹⁵ In some places the more melodious Latin original is used because the vernacular text is not particularly suitable for singing. However, the episcopal conference may provide another richer acclamation; cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 14. CLE, no. 83, allows "some acclamation in honor of Christ" to be added to "Thanks be to God."

directly to the chair, with the M.C. The deacon joins him there. Concelebrants, clergy, servers and choir bow to the altar and go to their places. Ushers guide the faithful to their places in the church. There is no music during or after the procession. The lights of the church are supposed to be switched on at this point, but in practice it seems much better to defer this until after the Exsultet and, where possible, to increase the light gradually until the church is fully illuminated at the Gloria.

THE EASTER PROCLAMATION (EXSULTET)

280. The thurifer goes to the chair, where, assisted by the deacon, the celebrant prepares and blesses incense as usual. The thurifer waits to one side, facing the celebrant. The deacon asks for the celebrant's blessing and is blessed with an adapted form of the blessing before the Gospel.¹⁶ Preceded by the thurifer, the deacon goes to the ambo. He takes the thurible and first incenses the book of the Exsultet with three double swings, as if it were the Book of the Gospels. Then he walks around the Easter candle, while incensing it with three double swings.¹⁷ He gives the thurible back to the thurifer and returns to the ambo to sing the Exsultet.¹⁸ A server with the flashlight may assist him if the light is inadequate. All present remain standing for the Exsultet, holding their hand candles.¹⁹ The thurifer remains near the

¹⁶ See MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 18. If the Missal or order of Holy Week is used for the Exsultet, the book bearer hands this volume to the deacon as soon as he has been blessed by the celebrant, and the deacon takes it to the ambo. After the Exsultet, the book bearer retrieves it from the ambo.

¹⁷ Cf. CB, no. 92 and custom.

¹⁸ Singing the Exsultet requires not only skill but a sense of the rhythm of the music and words. It is not meant to be slow or heavy, but rather sustained by a subtle light and joyous style.

¹⁹ The people may sing acclamations at various points during the Exsultet if

ambo, swinging the thurible moderately at full length until the end of the Exsultet.

281. If there is no deacon and the celebrant sings the Exsultet, he prepares incense and follows the same procedure as the deacon. If a lay cantor sings the Exsultet, the celebrant does not impart his blessing. Moreover, the cantor does not incense the book or the candle, and the words in brackets "My dearest friends . . ." and "The Lord be with you" are omitted.²⁰ The "Amen" at the end of the Exsultet should be sung solemnly by all present.²¹

282. At the end of the Exsultet, the deacon closes the book and returns to the chair. The thurifer returns to the sacristy. Incense will not be required again until the Gospel. All hand candles are now extinguished and set aside. A server takes the celebrant's candle to the credence table. If it is not already there, a server brings the Lectionary to the ambo and takes the book of the Exsultet to the credence table. All sit.

2. Liturgy of the Word

283. The celebrant stands, and, attended by the book bearer, he introduces the readings, using or adapting the text provided or using his own words. There are seven Old Testament readings provided in the Lectionary, so that, together with the Epistle and Gospel, there are nine Scripture readings for the Vigil: "Wherever this is possible, all the readings should be read in order that the character of the Easter Vigil, which

these have been approved by the episcopal conference; cf. CLE, no. 84. But "alleluia" is not sung until the great Easter Alleluia before the Gospel.

²⁰ In this case the celebrant may incense the Easter candle immediately after he places it in the candlestick, just before the cantor goes to the ambo.

²¹ In some places it is customary for the people to raise their hand candles while they sing this festive "Amen".

demands that it be somewhat prolonged, be respected at all costs."²² However, for pastoral reasons, the seven Old Testament readings may be reduced to three. For the obvious reason of its paschal baptismal typology, the reading from Exodus 14 is never to be omitted.²³ The celebrant or a deacon may *briefly* introduce each reading.²⁴

84. A designated responsorial psalm is sung by the choir, cantors and/or people after each reading.²⁵ The melodies chosen should promote the people's participation and devotion, but "[g]reat care is to be taken that trivial songs do not take the place of the psalms."²⁶ After the psalm, all stand as the celebrant sings or says the prayer, attended by the book bearer. He should pause for silent prayer after "let us pray". In some situations, the psalm may be replaced by a period of silent reflection, in which case there is no pause after "let us pray".²⁷ The lectors may be escorted to and from the ambo by the second M.C. or a server.

85. After the final reading and its prayer, the celebrant intones the Gloria. While the Gloria is being sung, the church bells and/or other bells are rung joyously.²⁸ Just before the Gloria begins, servers bring tapers from the credence table, light

²² CLE, no. 85.

²³ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil, Liturgy of the Word*, no. 21; CLE, no. 85.

²⁴ Cf. CLE, no. 86.

²⁵ It is useful to vary the style of music or the voices for each of the settings of these psalms or to use different instruments to accompany them, so as to avoid monotony.

²⁶ CLE, no. 86.

²⁷ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil, Liturgy of the Word*, no. 23, a provision that would obviously apply where no choir or cantors were available.

²⁸ The bells may be pealed loudly only for a few moments before the Gloria is intoned, or they may be rung during the Gloria in a way that does not interfere with the singing, or, with due musical skill, they may even be rung as part of the setting of the Gloria.

them from the Easter candle, go to the main altar and light the six or four candles on or near it.²⁹ Then they light the candles at the twelve or four consecration crosses (if the church has been dedicated), the two processional candles on or near the credence table, and any other candles and lamps that have been prepared in the sanctuary or at side altars or shrines, but, at this stage, they do not light the lamp(s) before the tabernacle. The servers bring the tapers back to the credence table, extinguish them and then go to their places. This carefully planned procedure should be completed by the end of the Gloria.

286. Attended by the book bearer, the celebrant sings or says the Opening Prayer. Then all sit for the Epistle, Romans 6:3-11. After this reading, all stand, and, attended by the book bearer with the musical text, the celebrant intones the solemn Alleluia three times, raising the note a little higher each time.³⁰ Alternatively, the solemn Alleluia may be intoned by a cantor standing at a lectern or from the choir. The psalm is sung by cantor(s) or the choir, and all respond with "alleluia". Meanwhile, the thurifer approaches the chair, where, assisted by the deacon, the celebrant prepares incense as usual. The thurifer goes to a position so as to be able to lead the deacon to the ambo for the reading of the Gospel. The deacon seeks the celebrant's blessing. He goes to the altar, bows and takes up the Book of the Gospels. Only the thurifer leads the deacon (or a concelebrant or the celebrant) and the M.C. in the procession to the ambo, because, on this night, the Easter candle suffices to honor the risen Lord in his Gospel.³¹ A homily is to be

²⁹ For the customary procedure, see CMRR, no. 859.

³⁰ Cf. CB, no. 352; CLE, no. 87.

³¹ Cf. CB, no. 353. The two candle bearers, without candles, may escort the deacon in this procession, but this seems unnecessary.

given, no matter how brief,³² and the content should take into account whether Baptism and Confirmation are about to be celebrated.

3. *Liturgy of Baptism*

287. There are three options for the Liturgy of Baptism: (a) Christian Initiation and the Blessing of the Font; (b) Blessing of the Font without Christian Initiation; (c) Blessing of Water. However, each option ends with the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.

OPTION (A): CHRISTIAN INITIATION AND THE BLESSING OF THE FONT

288. When possible the paschal sacraments of Christian Initiation should be celebrated during the Easter Vigil with the singing of the Litany and the solemn blessing of the font. This is the culmination of the Rite of Christian Initiation and thus should be regarded as the ideal form of celebrating the Vigil.
289. (i) When the sacraments are to be celebrated in a baptistery, the candidates for Baptism are first called forward. Attended by the book bearer carrying the Missal or order of Holy Week, the deacon or celebrant calls those to be baptized. With their sponsors, or brought by parents and godparents, and guided by the second M.C. or a server, they come forward and stand in front of the sanctuary, facing the altar. The celebrant asks the people for their prayers, using the instruction provided or his own words. The deacon (or, lacking a deacon, the first candle bearer) carefully takes the Easter candle from its stand. Together with the Missal or order of Holy Week, the book bearer takes up the

³² Cf. CLE, no. 87.

appropriate volume of the Roman Ritual (unless this is already prepared on the table in the baptistery). Two cantor(s) begin to sing the Litany of the Saints, to which may be added the titular of the church, local patrons and the saints' names to be taken by those who will be baptized.

290. The procession goes to the baptistery in this order: the deacon (or first candle bearer) carrying the Easter candle, candidates and sponsors or infants with parents and godparents, second candle bearer and book bearer with the Missal (and Roman Ritual), the M.C., concelebrants, (a second deacon), the celebrant. The procession should move slowly, to keep pace with the singing of the Litany, and thus could take a longer route to the baptistery. The congregation should turn towards the baptistery for the celebration of the sacraments. On arrival at the baptistery, the M.C. ensures that the candidates and their sponsors, or the parents and godparents, are arranged so that they do not impede the view of the faithful.³³ The deacon may set the candle in a stand or bracket near the font or hand it to the first candle bearer. The second candle bearer stands near the table where the baptismal candles and white garments have been prepared.

291. (ii) However when the sacraments are celebrated at a font in or near the sanctuary, the deacon (or, lacking a deacon, the first candle bearer) carefully takes the Easter candle and leads the book bearer, second candle bearer, M.C., concelebrants and celebrant to the font or vessel of water. The candidates are called forward, the celebrant asks the people for their prayers, using the instruction provided or his own words, and *then* the Litany of the Saints is sung, all standing as is customary in the Easter Season.

³³ Cf. RCIA, no. 213.

292. (iii) At the conclusion of the Litany, attended by the book bearer with the Missal or order of Holy Week, the celebrant sings or says the Blessing of Water, hands joined. Just before "We ask you, Father . . .", the deacon or server may hand the celebrant the Easter candle, and, at these words, he may lower it once or three times into the water, holding the lower part of the candle immersed in the water until the end of the prayer.³⁴ As the choir and/or people sing the acclamation "Springs of water" or a similar baptismal acclamation, the celebrant slowly raises the candle from the baptismal water and gives it back to the deacon or server.³⁵

293. (iv) The book bearer lays aside the Missal or order of Holy Week and takes up the Roman Ritual. He attends the celebrant as adult candidates for Baptism individually renounce the devil, profess their faith and are baptized by effusion or immersion. After Baptism, the second candle bearer gives the white garments to the sponsors. The celebrant says "N. and N., you have become . . ."; the sponsors put the white garments on the neophytes at the words "Take this white garment"; and the neophytes reply "Amen" at the end of the formula. The second candle bearer then gives each sponsor a baptismal candle. The celebrant touches the Easter candle, held by the deacon or server, and calls the sponsors forward. They light the baptismal candles from the Easter candle and give them to the neophytes. Then the celebrant says, "You have been enlightened . . . heavenly kingdom" and the neophytes reply "Amen".

294. (v) *Confirmation*. When the bishop baptizes adults, he always confirms them immediately after Baptism. All priests

³⁴ This sign of dying and rising again is optional but should always be included in the rite.

³⁵ Before Baptism by immersion, the M.C. ensures that some water is transferred into a large vessel for use during the Easter Season.

who baptize adults have the faculty to administer Confirmation, so, in normal circumstances, a priest celebrant will confirm those he has baptized at the Vigil.³⁶ Between the celebration of adult Baptism and Confirmation, an appropriate hymn, such as "You have put on Christ", may be sung.³⁷ If the Baptisms took place in the baptistery, Confirmation may be celebrated there, but it would seem preferable to return to the sanctuary for Confirmation. The bishop confirms in the sanctuary.³⁸ Therefore, during the hymn, the procession of the newly baptized, led once more by the deacon or server carrying the Easter candle, goes to the sanctuary for Confirmation. If the celebrant sits to confirm, servers may set up a faldstool or chair at the center of the sanctuary during the hymn. The deacon or server places the Easter candle in its stand, and the rite of Confirmation proceeds, beginning with the celebrant's address to the neophytes.³⁹ The book bearer attends the celebrant with the appropriate volume of the Roman Ritual or Roman Pontifical.

295. The celebrant (rises if seated and) invites all present to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the newly baptized. After a pause for silent prayer he extends his hands over the candidates for the prayer "All powerful God. . . ." If he chooses to confirm while seated, the M.C. or a server spreads a gremial veil (linen amice) over his knees as soon as he sits and ties it to the faldstool or chair. The deacon or, lacking a deacon, a concelebrant or the M.C. brings from the credence table the open vessel of Chrism, which the celebrant takes in his left hand. As each candidate kneels or

³⁶ Cf. CIC, Canon 883 §2. If Confirmation is not to be given to adults immediately after Baptism, the celebrant says the prayer and anoints each neophyte with Chrism in silence, as at the Baptism of Infants; cf. RCIA, no. 224.

³⁷ Cf. RCIA, no. 227; CB, no. 366.

³⁸ Cf. CB, no. 367.

³⁹ See RCIA, no. 229.

stands before him, the celebrant makes the sign of the cross with Chrism with his right thumb on the forehead while saying the sacramental form, "N. be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." The newly confirmed responds "Amen." Then the celebrant says "Peace be with you", and the newly confirmed responds, "And also with you."⁴⁰

396. Just before the anointing with Chrism, each sponsor should take the baptismal candle from the candidate and hold it in the left hand while placing the right hand on the neophyte's shoulder. The candidate or sponsor may quietly advise the celebrant of the candidate's Confirmation name, or the sponsor may hand a card bearing the name to the deacon, a concelebrant or the M.C., who stands next to the celebrant and advises him of the name just before the anointing. After the anointing, the sponsor gives the baptismal candle back to the newly confirmed, and, guided by the second M.C. or a server, they both return to their places in the baptistery, or at the front of the sanctuary, where they stand facing the altar. Then the Renewal of Baptismal Promises follows, as described below.

397. (vi) *Baptism of Infants*. After the blessing of baptismal water, the parents and godparents renounce the devil and profess the faith for them as usual. Baptism follows as set out in the rite for baptizing infants.⁴¹ The newly baptized are anointed with Chrism, a white garment is put on each child, and then the second candle bearer gives the sponsors a baptismal candle which they light from the Easter candle. However the prayers of blessing the parents are omitted. The parents and godparents remain standing before the font or at the front

⁴⁰ Gently striking the left cheek during "Peace be with you" is no longer mentioned in the modern rite but may be maintained as a custom.

⁴¹ See RR, *Rite of Baptism for Several Children*, nos. 55-60.

of the sanctuary, facing the altar, and the Renewal of Baptismal Promises follows, as described below.

OPTION (B): BLESSING OF THE FONT
WITHOUT CHRISTIAN INITIATION

298. In a church where there is a font, but when the sacraments of Christian Initiation are not celebrated during the Easter Vigil, the Litany is sung and baptismal water is blessed for use during the Easter Season, as described above in option (a) iii, but omitting reference to candidates for Baptism in the rites and procession. Just before the Litany, or the blessing of the water, the celebrant uses a different call to prayer, provided in the Missal.⁴² If this rite is celebrated in the baptistery, the procession may return to the sanctuary. Then the Renewal of Baptismal Promises follows, as described below.

OPTION (C): BLESSING OF WATER

299. In a church or chapel where there is no font, and when the sacraments of Christian Initiation are not celebrated during the Easter Vigil, the Litany and blessing of baptismal water are omitted and replaced by a simpler blessing of Easter water. The procession forms as described above and goes to the place where the vessel of water has been prepared, in or near the sanctuary. But the Easter candle is not taken from its stand and carried in procession because it will not be used for this form of the blessing of water. Alternatively, the procession may be omitted; the celebrant remains at the chair, and two servers bring the vessel of water before him. Standing before the vessel of water, attended by the book bearer with the Missal or order of Holy Week, the celebrant introduces the rite with the words provided or his

⁴² Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 40.

own words and then, with hands joined, he blesses the water by singing or saying the alternative prayer provided.⁴³ The Renewal of Baptismal Promises follows, as described in the following paragraph.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

300. The second M.C. or a server ensures that everyone in the sanctuary (except the celebrant and book bearer) has a hand candle. Servers bring tapers from the credence table, light them from the Easter candle and move among the clergy and the faithful to ensure that all the hand candles are lit once more. At the same time, supervised by the M.C., the second candle bearer takes the jug, fills the holy water bucket with Easter water and gives it, with the sprinkler, to the deacon or, lacking a deacon, to the first candle bearer. Attended by the book bearer and standing near the font or large vessel of blessed water, or at the place where he administered Confirmation, the celebrant introduces the Renewal of Baptismal Promises with the words provided in the rite or his own words. After the rejection of Satan and Profession of Faith, he says the prayer, hands joined. Then, accompanied by the deacon(s) or first candle bearer and M.C., he passes through the church and sprinkles all present with Easter water, while the choir and/or people sing "Vidi aquam . . ." (I saw water) or some other appropriate baptismal antiphon or hymn.⁴⁴ All make the sign of the cross, as is customary when sprinkled with blessed water.

⁴³ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 54. It would seem appropriate to make the sign of the cross at "bless this water", even if this is not indicated in the text.

⁴⁴ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 56; CLE, no. 89. The singing should be prolonged, or solemn music may follow, to accompany the procession from the baptistery or the return to the chair from wherever water was blessed.

301. During the sprinkling, the sacristan(s) or server(s) take(s) the jug(s) of blessed water from the font or the large vessel and go(es) to the stoups at the various church doors and fill(s) each of them with water. Any water remaining is poured back into the font or large vessel, and the empty jugs are left there. When the celebrant returns to the sanctuary he lays aside the holy water bucket and sprinkler (which a server takes to the credence table); then he bows to the altar and goes to the chair. Guided by the second M.C. or a server, the neophytes and their sponsors, parents, godparents and newly baptized infants return to their designated places in the church.
302. However, if all these rites were celebrated in the baptistery, once the celebrant returns there, the procession forms as before, led by the deacon or server carrying the Easter candle, and goes to the sanctuary. The deacon or server sets the Easter candle in its stand. The neophytes and their sponsors, parents, godparents and newly baptized infants are guided back to their designated places by the second M.C. or a server. The celebrant and servers bow to the altar, and the celebrant goes to the chair.
303. If the baptismal water was not blessed at the font, the celebrant and servers come to the center of the sanctuary and bow to the altar, and the celebrant goes to the chair. The deacon or server sets the Easter candle in its stand. Directed by the M.C., the deacon and/or servers now take the large vessel of water to the font. However, if water was blessed in a church without a font, the large vessel is taken to some convenient place.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 57. The "convenient place" would be accessible to the faithful who wish to take blessed water home with them after the Vigil.

CONCLUSION OF THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

304. All the hand candles and baptismal candles are extinguished, and a server takes those of the clergy and other servers to the credence table. Having set the Easter candle in its stand, unless he is to read the intentions of the General Intercessions from the ambo, the deacon joins the celebrant at the chair. The book bearer takes the volume of the Ritual to the credence table and takes up the book for the General Intercessions and goes to wait near the chair.
305. At the chair, attended by the book bearer, the celebrant presides over the General Intercessions as usual. Escorted by the second M.C. or a server, the newly baptized adults take part in the Intercessions.⁴⁶ If there have been no baptisms, the deacon or lectors read the intentions. The Creed is omitted because the Profession of Faith has already been made in the Renewal of Baptismal Promises. The celebrant sits while the deacon(s), candle bearers and other servers bring the Missal, corporal and sacred vessels to the altar.
- #### 4. Liturgy of the Eucharist
306. The fourth stage and high point of the Vigil is the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In the fullest sense this is the Easter sacrament, celebrating the Paschal Mystery and completing Christian Initiation. Therefore the Mass should be celebrated, not only with full solemnity and festive ceremonial, but without haste.⁴⁷
307. Newly baptized adults and children, or the families of newly baptized infants, should take part in the procession of gifts.

⁴⁶ Cf. MR, *Easter Vigil*, no. 49.

⁴⁷ Cf. CLE, nos. 90-91.

Therefore, the second M.C. or a server leads them to the table of the gifts, gives them the vessels containing bread and wine. During a hymn, motet or other music, he leads them in procession to the sanctuary, once the altar has been prepared and the celebrant has gone to the center to receive the gifts. It is preferred that the Eucharistic Prayer be sung, that is, not only the Preface but the whole text.⁴⁸ In the First Preface of Easter, reference is made to "this night". When the First Eucharistic Prayer is chosen, the variations at "In union with the whole Church . . ." and "Father, accept this offering . . ." are used. Similar intercessions for the baptized and their godparents are provided for all the Eucharistic Prayers.

308. Communion under both species is commended at the Vigil Mass.⁴⁹ Newly baptized adults receive the Eucharist under both species. Moreover, if adults have been baptized and confirmed, before he says "This is the Lamb of God . . .", the celebrant may *briefly* address them on the excellence of the Eucharistic Mystery, which completes their initiation into the Body of Christ.⁵⁰ During or after Communion it is appropriate to sing Psalm 117 with the antiphon "Pascha nostrum", or Psalm 33 with the triple alleluia for an antiphon, or some other song of Easter joy.⁵¹ Immediately after Communion, accompanied by a server with a lighted taper, the deacon (or lacking a deacon, the celebrant), or a concelebrant or an extraordinary minister, takes the Blessed Sacrament in a ciborium or ciboria to the tabernacle. Because eucharistic reservation has commenced once more, the veil is arranged over the tabernacle, according to custom,

⁴⁸ Cf. CLE, no. 91.

⁴⁹ Cf. CLE, no. 92, subject to the approval of the diocesan bishop.

⁵⁰ Cf. CB, no. 370.

⁵¹ Cf. CLE, no. 91.

and the server lights the lamp(s) near the tabernacle. They both genuflect and return to their places in the sanctuary.

99. After the solemn Easter blessing,⁵² the deacon (or, lacking a deacon, the celebrant) adds a double "alleluia" when he sings the dismissal, and all respond "Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia." The cross and processional candles are carried by their respective bearers in the final procession to the sacristy or vesting room. This procession should be accompanied by a triumphant hymn or appropriate joyous music.
100. After the Vigil, the Blessed Sacrament is brought from the "other place of reservation" and reposed in the tabernacle. The Easter candle is extinguished, preferably once the faithful have left the church. Servers should bring an adequate supply of baptismal water from the font or large vessel to the sacristy, where the sacristan sets it aside for use during the Easter Season. The large vessel of baptismal water may be left in the baptistery, in the sanctuary or some other place, so that the faithful may take the blessed water home after the Vigil.⁵³ In some places, the faithful also take the new fire home to light their own lamps or a family "Easter candle" for the paschal celebrations in the domestic church.

⁵² The blessing at the conclusion of the *Rite of Baptism for Children* (nos. 70, 247-49) may be used when infants have been baptized at the Vigil; cf. CB, no. 370.

⁵³ It may be prudent to make available the blessed water only during times of worship, to avoid desecration or superstitious use. In some parishes it is put in small bottles and distributed widely throughout the whole community with advice as to its use. The sacramental thus becomes a way of re-evangelizing families.

The Bishop Presides at the Easter Vigil

311. All the variations that apply when a bishop is the celebrant of the Vigil rites are indicated in the *Ceremonial of Bishops*, nos. 332-70. He wears the ornate miter and carries the crozier. In the procession into the church with the Easter candle, the crozier bearer, carrying the crozier turned inwards, precedes the bishop. The bishop holds a lighted candle during the singing of the Exsultet. Then he sits, wearing the miter, and introduces the readings.⁵⁴ It should also be noted that, after the reading of the Epistle, a deacon or lector may, and should, go to the bishop at the cathedra or chair to introduce the solemn Alleluia. He bows to the bishop and says, "Most Reverend Father, I bring you a message of great joy, the message of Alleluia." Then, the miter is removed, all stand and the bishop intones the paschal Alleluia.⁵⁵

On the third day the friends of Christ coming at daybreak to the place found the grave empty and the stone rolled away. In varying ways they realised the new wonder; but even they hardly realised that the world had died in the night. What they were looking at was the first day of a new creation, with a new heaven and a new earth; and in the semblance of the gardener God walked again in the garden, in the cool not of the evening but the dawn.

— G. K. Chesterton, *The Everlasting Man*

⁵⁴ Cf. CB, no. 346, which adds that he may assign the introduction to the readings to a deacon or concelebrant.

⁵⁵ Cf. CB, no. 352. When intoning on the three rising notes he may be assisted by a deacon or concelebrant.

10.

Easter and Pentecost

312. The Christian year reaches its supreme moments in the celebration of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, risen indeed in our human flesh, glorified in that flesh, triumphant over the mortality of that flesh. Again and again, the liturgy resounds with the cry of "alleluia!", as the people reborn through the Paschal Mystery wait in joyful hope for the day when they too will share the glory of their risen Lord. From Easter morning through Pentecost, the Regina Cæli replaces the Angelus. The Liturgy of the Hours contains an abundance of "alleluias" during these weeks.

313. Easter is the "Feast of feasts", the "Solemnity of solemnities" and the "Great Sunday".¹ Festive solemnity should mark all the Masses celebrated on Easter Sunday, the supreme day of the Christian year.² One of the Easter Masses, in addition to the Vigil, should be solemnly sung. In some places it is customary to precede this Mass with a procession, that is, a form of solemn entrance.³ The Easter candle is lit for all Masses; its candlestick is placed to one side of the ambo or near the altar.⁴ A vessel containing blessed Easter

¹ Cf. CCC, no. 1169, citing Saint Athanasius, *Ep. fest.*, 1.

² Cf. CLE, no. 97.

³ A robed choir could take part in this procession, and, according to local custom, banners could be carried by servers or members of lay sodalities.

⁴ In some countries, a figure of the risen Christ is set up in the sanctuary. While such a custom should be respected, the Easter candle remains the liturgical sign of the risen Lord and should predominate.