

Easter Vigil

Saturday, April 4, 2026

Every year we begin our Easter Vigil in the dark. There's a reason for that, of course, because in that darkness we tap into something primal and instinctive, wrapped into the DNA of all of creation, that "something" in us that longs for daylight, longs for new life, longs for a new beginning, longs for love.

This year's darkness might seem a little more than normal. Our world, our country, maybe even our own families are divided. War has been waged against immigrants, against other countries, against each other. It seems as though every day there are new headlines of violence in our communities, schools and churches, more stress in our workplaces and more challenges as we try to make ends meet. So, it might be a challenge to believe that "The Light of Christ surrounds us" and it might take more imagination to capture the energy of the Easter "Alleluia." So, yes, while Easter begins in darkness, we remember that darkness is where every resurrection story must begin.

A root or seed lies buried in the ground until the warmth of sun resurrects what seemed lifeless. And Easter begins.

Easter begins in the darkness of loss, when you know the suffocating blanket of grief or the betrayal of a loved one. But then, after what seems forever, you find yourself appreciating a sunrise and you hear yourself laugh and you begin saying "yes" to life once more.

If you have ever been cast into the despair of depression or swallowed up by an addiction, if you've ever known what it is to feel completely alone in the midst of a crowd, you've known darkness. But then a voice inside you or from someone who loves you reminds you that you are precious and valuable, worthy of love and life, Easter begins.

When your faith seems lifeless and you wonder if God really exists, or if God does exist, does God really care about my tears and hear my cries? If you have ever felt the void of the Divine or the absence of the Holy - only to be struck by a simple whisper of hope from somewhere beneath the surface of your soul, from somewhere you can't begin to explain, Easter begins.

That's why the Resurrection story touches such a deep place in our souls. It's why we keep coming back to it year after year. We know that darkness. None of us, none of us are immune from that grave. So, we come here tonight to remember what God does with darkness.

God creates life from the chaos of darkness, brings freedom from the entrapment of slavery, enlivens promise from simple longing – all recalled in the proclamation of Scripture and sacred song. We come here tonight and wait for the flicker of a fire to break the darkness, the smell of the flowers that defy the long winter of Lent; we wait for the sound of water that echoes new life; we look for the Risen One who defies death itself.

In a moment I'm going to bless the waters of the baptismal font and baptize five precious men and women, welcoming them into our Church and the promise of resurrection. They and fifteen others will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom and understanding, judgement and courage, knowledge and reverence, wonder and awe of God's presence. All of us will renew our Baptismal promises and feel the grace of that Easter water upon our own bodies.

May all of us be reborn in those sacred waters of baptism and become Easter people, people who live every day with reason and hope and freedom and redemption. / May we be Easter

people who share joys and laughter that scares away the grim and violent mantle that so insists on hanging over our world. / May we be Easter people who touch the world with our words of compassion and love for life. / May we be Easter people who wake up tomorrow with gratitude in our souls and courage in our hearts. / May we be Easter people that find a way to proclaim what it is we believe so that our friends and neighbors that are struggling in these days may also have hope. / May the world know that Easter has come! May the world know that we are Easter!