THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER
April 11, 2020, 7:30pm

The Great Vigil of Easter is one of the oldest liturgies of the church and is intended to be the first and primary service of the Easter Celebration. It is an active, rich, and dramatic liturgy, encompassing darkness and light, solemnity and joy as participants move through the passing of Christ from death into life. Stories are told of God’s saving acts in history, beginning with Creation and moving through stories such as Noah and the Flood, the Passover, the Exodus, and the Valley of the Dry Bones. Then comes the gospel story of the Resurrection of Jesus. Finally, the sanctuary is illumined and the Easter celebration begins with the words:

“Alleluia. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed.”

To prepare for this service, please reset your sacred space with all its decoration and art, grab a few candles to light from the new fire that symbolizes the light of Christ in the world. Please dim the lights in your home to bring in the new light of Christ. You may even want to go outside and light a fire in a fire pit or in some other controlled way to begin the service of light. Then light a candle from the new fire, bring it into your home, and use it to light your altar candles. As always please practice fire safety and have something to extinguish your fire when you move into your home for the service. Later in the service you will need some sort of noise-maker, i.e. bells, car keys, or chimes, to use for the Easter Proclamation.

The Liturgy for the Great Vigil of Easter can be found on page 385 in the Book of Common Prayer

The Service of Light

Priest Dear friends in Christ: On this most holy night, in which our Lord Jesus passed over from death to life, the Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which, by hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments, we share in his victory over death. Let us pray.

O God, through your Son you have bestowed upon your people the brightness of your light: Sanctify this new fire, and grant that in this Paschal feast we may so burn with heavenly desires, that with pure minds we may attain to the festival of everlasting light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Paschal Candle is then lighted from the newly kindled fire.

Sung three times in procession

Priest The light of Christ.

People Thanks be to God.

The Exsultet, sung by a cantor

Cantor Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels, and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King. Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious splendor, for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King. Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church, and let your holy courts, in radiant light, resound with the praises of your people. All who you stand near this marvelous and holy flame....for ever and ever.

Amen.

Cantor The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

Cantor Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give God thanks and praise.

The Cantor continues

It is truly right and good, ... May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find it ever burning—he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Priest Let us hear the record of God’s saving deeds in history, how he saved his people in ages past; and let us pray that our God will bring each of us to the fullness of redemption.

The Liturgy of the Word

During this portion of the service, lessons should be read aloud. A recorded psalm will be in a link following the lesson.

First Lesson Genesis 1:1-2:4a Read aloud

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "Day", and
the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, “Let there be a
dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.” So God made the dome and separated the
waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And
there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together
into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered
together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding
seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.” And it was so. The earth brought forth
vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was
good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, “Let there be lights in the dome of
the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be
lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.” And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to
rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the
earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was
good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, “Let the waters bring forth swarms of
living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.” So God created the great sea monsters and
every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God
saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply
on the earth.” And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, “Let the earth bring forth living
creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.” And it was so. God made the
wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every
kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and
let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild
animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in
the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful
and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and
over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon
the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth,
and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given
every green plant for food.” And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there
was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And
on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had
done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in
creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Lector The Word of the Lord
People Thanks be to God.

Click here for Psalm 136: 1-9, 23-26 and following collect
Psalm 136: 1-9, 23-26
1. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, *for his mercy endures for ever.
2. Give thanks to the God of gods,* for his mercy endures for ever.
3. Give thanks to the Lord of lords,* for his mercy endures forever;
4. Who only does great wonders,* for his mercy endures forever;
5. Who by wisdom made the heavens,* for his mercy endures forever;
6. Who spread out the earth upon the waters,* for his mercy endures forever;
7. Who created great lights,* for his mercy endures forever;
8. The sun to rule the day,* for his mercy endures forever;
9. The moon and stars to govern the night,* for his mercy endures forever;
23 Who remembered us in our low estate,* for his mercy endures forever;
24 And delivered us from our enemies,* for his mercy endures forever;
25 Who gives food to all creatures,* for his mercy endures forever.
26 Give thanks to the God of heaven,* for his mercy endures forever.

Collect
One Let us pray.
O God, who wonderfully created, and yet more wonderfully restored, the dignity of human nature: Grant that we
may share the divine life of him who humbled himself to share our humanity, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.
Second Lesson Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21 Read aloud

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers." The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt." Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore.

Click here for The Song of Moses and following collect

The Song of Moses

I will sing to the Lord, for he is lofty and uplifted; the horse and its rider has he hurled into the sea. The Lord is my strength and my refuge; the Lord has become my Savior. This is my God and I will praise him, the God of my people and I will exalt him. The Lord is a mighty warrior; Yahweh is his Name. The chariots of Pharaoh and his army has he hurled into the sea; the finest of those who bear armor have been drowned in the Red Sea. The fathomless deep has overwhelmed them; they sank into the depths like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in might; your right hand, O Lord, has overthrown the enemy. Who can be compared with you, O Lord, among the gods? who is like you, glorious in holiness, awesome in renown, and worker of wonders? You stretched forth your right hand; the earth swallowed them up. With your constant love you led the people you redeemed; with your might you brought them in safety to your holy dwelling. You will bring them in and plant them on the mount of your possession. The resting-place you have made for yourself, O Lord, the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hand has established. The Lord shall reign for ever and for ever.

Collect

One  Let us pray.

O God, whose wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day, you once delivered by the power of your mighty arm your chosen people from slavery under Pharaoh, to be a sign for us of the salvation of all nations by the water of Baptism: Grant that all the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Third Lesson Zephaniah 3:14-20 Seated

The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He
said to me, “Mortal, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, you know.” Then he said to me, “Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the Lord. “So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. Then he said to me, “Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.’ Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act,” says the Lord.

Lector The Word of the Lord
People Thanks be to God.

Click here for Psalm 30 v.1-6, 12-13 and the remainder of the service
Psalm 30:1-6, 12-13
1 I will exalt you, O Lord,  
   because you have lifted me up *  
   and have not let my enemies triumph over me.
2 O Lord my God, I cried out to you, *  
   and you restored me to health.
3 You brought me up, O Lord, from the dead; *  
   you restored my life as I was going down to the grave.
4 Sing to the Lord, you servants of his; *  
   give thanks for the remembrance of his holiness.
5 For his wrath endures but the twinkling of an eye, *  
   his favor for a lifetime.
6 Weeping may spend the night, *  
   but joy comes in the morning.
12 You have turned my wailing into dancing; *  
   you have put off my sack-cloth and clothed me with joy.
13 Therefore my heart sings to you without ceasing; *  
   O Lord my God, I will give you thanks for ever.

Collect
One Let us pray.
O God of unchangeable power and eternal light: Look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery; by the effectual working of your providence, carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation; let the whole world see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Priest Through the Paschal mystery, dear friends, we are buried with Christ by Baptism into his death, and raised with him to newness of life. I call upon you, therefore, now that our Lenten observance is ended, to renew the solemn promises and vows of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and all his works, and promised to serve God faithfully in his holy Catholic Church.

The service continues with the renewal of baptismal vows.

The Renewal of Baptismal Vows
Priest Do you re-affirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?
People I do.
Priest Do you believe in God the Father?
People I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
Priest Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?
People I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
Priest Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?
People I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Priest Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
People I will, with God's help.
Priest Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
People I will, with God's help.
Priest Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
People I will, with God's help.
Priest Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
People I will, with God's help.
Priest Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
People I will, with God's help.

The Priest concludes the Renewal of Vows as follows

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins, keep us in eternal life by his grace, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

The Easter Proclamation Said three times, ringing bells

Priest Alleluia. Christ is risen.
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Gloria S278, Sung by all

1. Glory to God in the highest, and
   peace to his people on earth.

2. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we
   praise you for your glory.

3. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you
   take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us;

5. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; re-
Collect of the Day

Priest  The Lord be with you.

People  And also with you.

Priest  Let us pray.

O God, who made this most holy night to shine with the glory of the Lord’s resurrection: Stir up in your Church that Spirit of adoption which is given to us in Baptism, that we, being renewed both in body and mind, may worship you in sincerity and truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The Epistle Romans 6:3-11

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Lector  The Word of the Lord

People  Thanks be to God.

The Holy Gospel Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

Lector  The Word of the Lord

People  Thanks be to God
The Prayers of the People Form VI

Leader Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;
People That we all may be one.
Leader Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;
People That your Name may be glorified by all people.
Leader We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;
People That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.
Leader We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nation of the world;
People That there may be justice and peace on the earth.
Leader Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;
People That our works may find favor in your sight.
Leader Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;
People That they may be delivered from their distress.
Leader Give to the departed eternal rest;
People Let light perpetual shine upon them.
Leader We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;
People May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.
Leader Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

The Peace Standing

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

Voluntary Sinfonia from Cantata 29 J.S. Bach trans. Marcel Dupré