

Easter Vigil in the Holy Night A2026

I want to start this homily with the words of St Peter to his compatriots in the Acts of the Apostles: “This man (Jesus), delivered by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But, God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it” (Acts 2: 23-24).

These words define the whole meaning of the event we are celebrating tonight. They bring to light the truth that our Lord is risen; he is alive. God, indeed, raised him from the dead. He gave him life back. Those who killed him were convinced that everything was over with him. They thought that his name and his teaching were buried with him forever. But, they were wrong to consider him as an impostor and blasphemer. God exonerated him by raising him from the dead.

That is the motive of our joy and our celebration tonight. The resurrection of our Lord is the central event of our faith that has transformed the world and human history. If Jesus did rise from the dead, says St Paul, our faith would have been in vain. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, perhaps, people would have been talking about him as they do with important personalities that have marked world history, like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln or Eisenhower, etc. But, that would be just a chapter in history books.

It is because Jesus is alive that we are gathered here tonight to celebrate and throughout the world people keep vigil for this wonderful event of our faith. The resurrection of Jesus gives us an assurance that we have a future. We might pass in this world through many difficulties, conflicts, crises, and suffering but these do not define the whole meaning of our life. They do not give the whole picture of our life.

The resurrection of our Lord reminds us that we are destined to a bright future in God's house. As Jesus became a man to share our life, so will we share in his resurrection. His resurrection from dead is the guarantee of our own resurrection and the pledge of our eternal life. As St Paul says, “If we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection” (Rm 6: 4).

The resurrection of Our Lord can be approached only in faith because only faith allows us to see beyond the eyes of human body and to understand beyond the human mind. So is the witness we find the Gospel of tonight. When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb that Sabbath, they were taken by surprise: “the stone was removed from the tomb”. The angel reassured them: the crucified you are looking for has been raised just as he said. When Jesus appeared to them later on, it was in order to confirm what they already knew: He is Risen.

In the joy of the resurrection we receive some among us to different sacraments of the Church. Pray for them as we all pray for one another. Let us bring them to the light of Christ that dispels the darkness of sin so that they become in him new creatures. Amen.

Ezekiel 36: 16-17a, 18-28; Romans 6: 3-11; Matthew 28: 1-10



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