

**Homily for the Easter Vigil**  
**Given at The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception**  
**On April 11, 2020**

Through the readings chosen by the Church and proclaimed each year during the Vigil Mass we are given a panoramic view of salvation history and prophetic culmination in Christ. Jesus' resurrection reminds us that there is life beyond the grave. We are reminded that there is more to each of us than our flesh, that we have an immortal soul. Although our body will return to dust, the souls of those who have been born again of water and spirit, having died and risen in Christ through baptism, become the children of God, a new creation through whom the glory of God will shine, light of life to the nations in this world and who will live forever with God in next.

In our ancient tradition, this death of the sinful self and rising as a new creation in Christ was made as tangible as possible to those who desired to be disciples of Christ and become united as members of His mystical body, the Church. During the afternoon of Holy Saturday the faithful were called to the Church of St. John Lateran for the final scrutiny of the catechumens. Then, in the evening the vigil began and was concluded at dawn when the neophytes were plunged into the baptismal waters and there buried with Christ, were born to the life of grace at the very time when our Savior came forth triumphant from the tomb at dawn on Easter morning.

Thank God for this new life in Him. You cannot meet the risen Jesus, not know it or remain unchanged. You cannot be God's adopted son or daughter unaware or unaffected. In our New Testament reading tonight we heard Paul tell the Romans that when we were baptized, we left behind our old life. We entered the tomb with Jesus and rose again to new life. (Rom 6:3-4)

Tonight, let's not go so quickly past the tomb that we fail to be able to fully grasp what has happened to us in the passing from darkness to light, from death to life. Enter into the very depths of the mystery of our salvation in order to more fully understand and embrace the new life in Christ. Let's spend some time in the depths of life giving waters in the tomb with Jesus. His body lays there lifeless in the darkness as His soul goes to those who rest in the bosom of Abraham, to the Hades of their purgation... to free them at last and answer the prayers of Judas Maccabeus and others before him.

Imagine then, light begins to brighten the tomb and Jesus comes to you in His glory. Can you feel His love, His mercy... His power. He wants you to rise with him. To leave the life of the flesh behind and to live in the Spirit. Free. New. To live in Him, the primordial light of creation. The light that penetrates the darkness of the tomb, the shadow of death. There He is, "The only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made."

If you haven't yet met the risen Jesus, accept God's invitation tonight. Listen once again to that invitation from God through the prophet Isaiah (Is 55:1-11) in the fifth Old Testament reading tonight: "All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, receive grain and eat; come, without paying and without cost, drink wine and milk! Why spend your money for what is not bread, your wages for what fails to satisfy? Heed me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Come to me heedfully, listen, that you may have life.... Seek the LORD while he may be found, call him while he is near. Let the scoundrel forsake his way, and the wicked man his thoughts; let him turn to the LORD for mercy; to our God, who is generous in forgiving."