

Exult, let them exult, the hosts of heaven,
exult, let Angel ministers of God exult,
let the trumpet of salvation
sound aloud our mighty King's triumph!

This is the night when Christ rose from the underworld.

Words from the Easter Proclamation or Exsultet; They are very ancient words, dating back to the fourth and fifth centuries, and are sung once a year at the Easter Vigil. The words proclaim the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So we have journeyed through Lent, through the events of Holy Week, the Last Supper, the Garden, the Betrayal, arrest, trial, and crucifixion of the Lord. And now we have come to the most sacred and holy hours of the entire Christian year. We proclaim in singing, in ritual and in praise the Resurrection of Jesus.

The great vigil of Easter which we celebrated last night - and now this celebration this morning - there are so many different themes - so many different signs which point us to the truth of what has happened

The paschal candle or the Easter candle - reminds us that the risen Jesus is the Light of the World, the only true light who shows us the way, who shows us how to live - and who guides us in our lives with his teaching

Water - the water of baptism which washes away our sins - Jesus' own gift to the Church - it brings us new life - it is the beginning of our Christian lives - through it we are joined to him and made members of his Church.

We have many other signs of new life in our Church this morning - our Church always looks its best on Easter morning - this is a really special time; people have been working very hard to get everything ready for this great celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. All the flowers speak to us of new life; and the chocolate Easter eggs we look forward to eating today. All these different signs help us to celebrate Easter.

What we are celebrating not just a historical event, but a living reality. Nor is the Church's liturgy simply an event in itself. It is a celebration of the living presence of Jesus who is risen. What we are doing is recalling with joy the cause of our present hope. The living and loving presence

of our Saviour is at the same time a reassurance that death does not have the last word, and that love and life triumph have triumphed over sin and death.

The disciples were strengthened by the astounding fact of Jesus' resurrection. It took time for them to accept and believe and finally to rejoice in it.

Sometimes our hearts seem to shrink through the pain and frustration that life sometimes brings us. When we feel like that, we are invited to embrace the Easter message of hope, and so revive our hope at this source, to draw water, as the psalm says, from the wellsprings of salvation.

Last night at the Easter Vigil, the church was in darkness, as we brought in the paschal candle, our Easter symbol of the light of the risen Lord Jesus; with him, we are brought out of emptiness and darkness into the light of the eternal life and love of Christ. He is no longer bound to time or place, as he was before his death. Now he is for all times, all places, all people.

We, as followers of the risen Lord, share in his new life. We must be messengers showing the reality of our faith

in all that Christ has done for us by lives of hope and love. We are witnesses of the resurrection.

Because Easter and Baptism are so closely related to each other, because the risen Jesus gives us baptism so that we can share his risen life, so on this day every year we remind ourselves of the new life we received in our baptism, by making again the promises we made then, or were made for us - and we are sprinkled with the Easter baptismal water that we blessed at the vigil last night - this we will now do once more in a few moments.