

**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.

There are so many different themes and signs in this great Liturgy that it is difficult for us to take them all in.

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. Sometimes we receive new members at this great Liturgy, but sadly not this year. This Easter Vigil so needs a baptism to complete it, I always feel it is a shame when we don't have any baptisms. But we still celebrate the gift of baptism, and pray that we will have some catechumens next year.

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.

As we began our 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.

AS I said, it's a shame we don't have any baptisms, but we will still have the Liturgy of Baptism now. We will bless the water in the font, we renew our baptismal profession, then we are sprinkled with the baptismal water, Jesus give us baptism so that we can share his risen life, so it is that on this night every year we remind ourselves of the new life we received in our baptism, and recommit ourselves to live this new life of Christ as members of his Catholic Church.