

Sermon
Great Vigil of Easter Vigil 2021
April 3, 2021
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Albuquerque, NM
The Rev. Sylvia Miller-Mutia, Associate Rector

This is the night when New Life begins. This is the night when we prepare ourselves for the Great Vigil of Easter in the same way the Church has prepared for more than 1500 years, by chanting these words:

This is the night, when you brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.

This is the night, when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life.

This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave.

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This is the night when we remember who we are.
This is the night when we remember whose we are.
This is the night we remember who we are called to be.

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This is the night when we hear the story of the Exodus, and we remember God's call to be good descendants to our Jewish Ancestors, to be good neighbors to our Jewish Siblings who share this story with us.

This is the night when we hear the story of the Great Flood, and we remember God's call to be good friends to our Muslim siblings, with who we share this story.

This is the night when we hear the Story of the Creation, and we remember God's call to be good siblings and caretakers of every plant and every animal, and every element with which we share this earthly home.

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This is the night when we present a child of God to receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

This is the night when we, with that child, hear the voice of God that spoke to Jesus at his own baptism echoing through the ages, speaking to her...speaking to us: "You are my child, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."

This is the night when we trace the sign of a cross in holy oil upon a baby's forehead, and we remember the indelible cross marked on our own heads, sealing the promise that binds us to Christ and to one another for all eternity: "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism, and marked as Christ's own forever.

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This is the night when we remember and affirm that we are each an integral and inextricable part of something bigger than ourselves.

This is the night when we remember and affirm our place in an ancient community of faith, an ancient community of truth-seekers who sometimes doubt and sometimes believe, an ancient community of God-seekers that stretches over the whole earth and back in time through the millennia and forward in time to eternity.

This is the night when we remember and affirm our identity as individual members of the Body of Christ, a Body that has suffered and died and has been raised to new life forever.

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*How blessed is this night, when earth and heaven are joined
and we are reconciled to God.*

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Now, as Johanna leads us in praying the ancient Greek Easter Troparion
Let us celebrate the mystery of our own Passover with Christ
through death into new life
and let us prepare to
welcome Almerine Wright into New Life
through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

The candidate for Holy Baptism and her family may now come forward.