

Sermon Easter Vigil 2023

sylvia.miller.mutia@gmail.com

https://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Easter/AEasVigil_RCL.html

This is the water of baptism.

This is the dangerous water of the Flood; the water that once washed over the whole earth for cleansing, to make way for a new beginning.

This is the Water of the Well; the water that filled the buckets and quenched the thirst of countless generations of people and their flocks, from Hagar, to Rebecca, to the Woman of Samaria and beyond.

This is the Water of the Red Sea; the water that parted before Moses and the people of God, so that they could pass over from slavery to freedom.

This is the Water of the Jordan River; the water that flowed over the body of Jesus at his Baptism, the water out of which Jesus emerged to hear God's voice say "You are my Child, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased."

This is the Water of the Mother Mary's Body, the water that cushioned Jesus as he grew in her Womb, the water that broke forth when the time of his birth drew near.

This is the Water of Jesus' body; the Living Water bubbling up to eternal life; the water that flowed with blood from his pierced side as he hung from the Cross.

This is the Water of the River of life, once glimpsed in a vision, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God through the middle of the street of the city; the river that waters the tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

This is the Water of Baptism. The Water that you were, or you will be, baptized in.

In Baptism we all become part of all these stories; in the water of baptism, all of history and all of Creation, touches us and becomes part of us.

In Baptism the Flood Waters wash away our gravest sins and the Well Waters quench our deepest thirst.

In Baptism we are led through the waters from bondage to freedom and from the water we hear God's unmistakable voice call us "Beloved".

The Baptismal Waters hold and carry us through our seasons of gestation, as we await the birth of new life; and the waters flow out from us, mixed with blood, whenever we're pierced, whenever we suffer, whenever we die.

The Baptismal Waters are the river that leads us from God, through the world, and then back home to God.

But long before any and all of our stories; long before our earthly waters began to flow... in the rain and the rivers, the wells and the wombs, the seas and our veins: There was this:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.

This is the Water of Creation. The Water of the Very Beginning. The Water that reminds us who—and whose—we truly are.

In the very first chapter of the very first book of the Bible we read:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness"...So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them...and God blessed them...And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

We all make mistakes, not one of us is without sin. The Flood waters remind us.

We all thirst, we are vulnerable and dependent on one another and on the Earth. The Well waters remind us.

We all fall into slavery, we find ourselves bound by systems and substances beyond our control. The Exodus Waters remind us.

We all forget who we are and what we're here for. The Waters of the Jordan River remind us.

We all know frailty and dependence, we are born, and we suffer and we die. The Waters of the Body remind us.

We all come from God and we all return to God. The Waters of Revelation remind us, and they show us the way.

But first and foremost, these Waters remind us:

We have all been created in the Image of God.

From the very beginning God blessed us and called us Good.

While this truth might sometimes be hidden, or shadowed, or obscured.

It can never be erased or extinguished or undone.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light!" and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overwhelm it.
(Genesis 1, John 1)

