



The Easter Vigil liturgy is the most beautiful liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. This walks through the Easter Vigil, and includes the words to the *Exsultet*.

Although celebrated Holy Saturday evening, it is the dramatic Easter vigil liturgy that marks the beginning of Easter. We are awaiting our master's return with our lamps full and burning, so that he will find us awake and seat us at his table (cf. Luke 12:35ff). All Catholics should try to attend this beautiful service. The vigil is divided into four parts: 1) service of light, 2) liturgy of the Word, 3) liturgy of Baptism, and 4) liturgy of the Eucharist.



1) Service of Light The atmosphere in the church is different: the holy water fonts are drained, all the lights are out, the tabernacle is empty. The service begins outside the church. A new fire is lit and blessed.

A Paschal Candle is prepared with these words while the priest marks the candle:

Christ yesterday and today (*vertical arm of the cross*) the Beginning and the end (*horizontal arm of the cross*) Alpha (*alpha above the cross*) and Omega (*omega below the cross*) all time belongs to him (*numeral 2 in upper left corner of cross*) and all the ages (*numeral 0 in upper right corner of cross*) to him be glory and power (*numeral 0 in lower left corner*) through every age for ever. Amen (*numeral 0 in lower right corner*)

The priest lights the candle from the new fire, saying:

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

The candle is then processed through the church, with the deacon lifting the candle at three different times, singing: Christ our light (*Lumen Christi*) and the congregation sings in reply: Thanks be to God (*Deo gratias*). Everyone lights their candle from the Easter candle and continue in procession until the whole church is alight. The Paschal candle symbolizes Christ, the Light of the World.

Next follows the glorious Easter song of the Catholic Church: the *Exsultet* (Easter proclamation). "This magnificent hymn, which is remarkable for its lyric beauty and profound symbolism, announces the dignity and meaning of the mystery of Easter; it tells of man's sin, of God's mercy, and of the great love of the Redeemer for mankind, admonishing us in turn to thank the Trinity for all the graces that have been lavished upon us" (©1947 With Christ Through the Year, by Bernard Strasser). This is usually sung by the deacon.

Exsultet (excerpts) Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing choirs of angels! Exult, all creation around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King is risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory! The risen Savior shines upon you! Let this place resound with joy, echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

For Christ has ransomed us with his blood, and paid for us the price of Adam's sin to our eternal Father!

This is night, when Christians everywhere, washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement, are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

This is the night, when Jesus broke the chains of death and rose triumphant from the grave.

What good would life have been to us, had Christ not come as our Redeemer?

Father, how wonderful your care for us! How boundless your merciful love! To ransom a slave you gave away your Son.

The power of this holy night dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy; it casts out hatred, brings us peace, and humbles earthly pride.

Accept this Easter candle, a flame divided but undimmed, a pillar of fire that glows to the honor of God.

Let it mingle with the lights of heaven and continue bravely burning to dispel the darkness of this night!

May the Morning Star which never sets find this flame still burning: Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead, and shed his peaceful light on all mankind, your Son, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. R. Amen.

2) Liturgy of the Word



During the Easter vigil, nine readings, seven Old Testament and two New Testament, are provided. Not all are required to be read due to time constraints, but at least three Old Testament readings must be read, including Exodus 14. These readings help us meditate on the wonderful works of God for his people since the beginning of time. The readings are 1) the story of creation, Gen 1:1-2; 2) Abraham and Isaac, Gen 22:1-18; 3) Crossing of the Red Sea, Exodus 14:15–15:1; 4) Isaiah 54:5-14; 5) Isaiah 55:1-11; 6) Baruch 3:9-15.32–4:4; 7) Ezekiel 36:16-17.18-28; 8) Romans 6:3-11; and 9) Gospel reading Mark 16:1-7. The Gloria is sung before the reading of the Epistle of the Romans, and the Alleluia is sung before the Gospel.

3) Liturgy of Baptism



During this time the Easter water is blessed, new members are brought into the Church through baptism, and the faithful are blessed with water and renew their baptismal promises.

4) Liturgy of Eucharist



So resumes the Mass, with the special prayers inserted during the Eucharist Prayer. The whole church is called to join at the sacrificial table that Christ prepared for us through his death and resurrection. The Mass ends with the glorious

V. The Mass is ended, go in peace, alleluia, alleluia. R. Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia.

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