



Homily for 4/20/2019

Easter Vigil

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This is a night filled with light. But what does the light signify? It signifies Christ who destroyed death and restored life. It signifies that we who hold this light no longer fear death. St. Athanasius teaches us: “Of old, before the divine sojourn of the Savior, all used to weep for those dying as if they were perishing. But since the Savior’s raising the body, no longer is death fearsome, but all believers in Christ tread on it as nothing, and would rather choose to die than deny their faith in Christ...And the proof of this is that human beings, before believing in Christ, view death as fearsome and are terrified at it. But when they come to faith in Him and to His teaching, they so despise death that they eagerly rush to it and become witnesses (martyrs) to the resurrection.” (*De Incarnatione* 27)

At our baptism we receive the light of faith by dying and rising with Christ. And the light is still burning brightly in we who believe. “Christ our Light,” we sang as we entered the darkened Church, and little by little as we shared in His light - the ‘night became like day... dazzling is the night for us, full of gladness!’ Tonight, 58 people will be joining the Church and will have received this indwelling by Sacramental Grace. The power of this Light - and the victory won over death - is not going to be outshone or undone by sin any longer. Christ is victorious. The light you hold in your hand for the renewal of your baptism will give witness to this even today. Your ‘yes’ to Christ when asked again for your faith, is to renew the light given at your baptism. You become the proof of its power when you return insults with love, hatred with forgiveness, evil with kindness. You have been enlightened by Christ and have put on His incorruptibility.

A last word is given to St. Athanasius, “If this proof of his resurrection is not sufficient for anyone, then let him believe what is said from what takes place before his eyes. . . The adulterer no longer commits adultery, the murderer no longer murders, the unjust no longer grasps greedily, and the impious is henceforth pious . . . . For where Christ and his faith are named, there all idolatry is purged away, every deceit of demons refuted, and no demon endures the name but fleeing, only hearing it, disappears. This is not the work of one dead, but of one alive!” (*De Incarnatione*, 30). This light then is a testament that He is alive and at work in us.

Jesus Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!