

Sermon for Easter Vigil

Grace, mercy, and
peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Just a little while
ago, we gathered in the darkness by the light of the new fire and prayed,

“Almighty and most merciful God,

pour out on US Your *abundant*
blessing... that all who in true faith SHARE this night in joyful celebration
of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead may be FILLED with
Your *heavenly benediction*.

Once we were in darkness, but now we are in the light,

even Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.” (Collect for Service of Light)

Yes - “Amen” - as
in, “let it be unto US as You have said.”

Pour out on US Your *abundant*
blessing, set US apart -

set us apart, O Lord, as your redeemed, as your Holy and Righteous
people, as your own dear children,

that WE may share this night -

that WE may take our places in this blessed Communion, this community with
all who have been “set apart” as saints to celebrate the resurrection of our
Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

Let us rejoice as James
and Emily and Joshua and Racheal now take their places with us,

for through their Baptism into Christ crucified and risen, they, too, are now delivered with us from bondage to sin and restored to life and immortality.

In the fruits of Christ crucified and risen, the seal of the grave has been broken for them as well as for us, and the morning of the new creation now breaks forth out of night.

In Christ crucified and risen, we are ALL cleansed of our sins and set free from sin and death by the shedding of His precious blood (Proper Preface).

And how do we know these things?

What gives us such confidence in these promises?

The Lord Himself gives us this confidence.

For we have God's promise of a Savior who would deliver us from bondage and restore us to life and immortality -

we have the evidence of God's work throughout the history of the world to keep His promise, to deliver His Savior, and to pour out His salvation for all who now hear and believe.

The ark, the Red Sea,

the promise of cleansing, of new hearts, of resurrection and eternal victory -

It is finished. It is fulfilled.

And tonight, it is yours in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

How holy is this night when we return to our Baptism - when all wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away.

How holy is this night when we receive Christ's Absolution - when innocence is restored to the fallen and *joy* is given to those downcast.

How blessed is this night when we take our places in the Holy Communion

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reconciled to God in Christ and with one another for life everlasting.

The Word, the Water,
the Bread and the Wine -

the hymns, the incense, the prayers and the praise...

THIS is your joyful communion in the death and resurrection of our Lord
Jesus Christ -

your participation even now in the new life and salvation which is
yours forevermore.

So let us praise the
Lord, for He truly keeps His Word.

The sun of righteousness has dawned upon us who have sat in darkness
and in the shadow of death.

Once we were in darkness, but now we are in
the light.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.

Preached by Pastor Holowach

*Sermon texts: Genesis 1:1-2:3, Genesis
7:1-9:13, Genesis 22:1-8, Exodus 14:10-15:1, Isaiah 55:1-11, Ezekiel 36:24-28,
Daniel 3:1-29, Luke 24:28-43.*