

Our Lady of Lourdes

Easter Vigil

April 3, 2010

Readings:

Genesis 1:1-2:2

Genesis 22:1-18

Exodus 14:15-15:1

Isaiah 54:5-14

Isaiah 55:1-11

Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4

Ezekiel 36:16-28

Romans 6:3-11

Luke 24:1-1

Deacon Bob

On this holy night, Easter Saturday 2010 we gather to celebrate this magnificent Liturgy. We are privileged and blessed to be here, to experience with our catechumen, Cameron her joy at her baptism and coming with us for the first time to the table of the Lord and to renew our own baptismal promises and to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus, which is the foundation of our faith. It has been said that liturgy collapses past, present and future into a single moment pregnant with meaning.

Artists often express for us in their work what we may not be able to fully express ourselves. David Hass has composed a refrain that is appropriate for our celebration tonight, "We come to share our story, we come to break the bread, we come to know our rising from the dead."

Any time family gets together there is always the telling of stories. It makes our gatherings special. As the family of God whenever we come together for liturgy we tell the story of our faith in Sacred Scripture and in the Eucharist. The Easter Vigil is perhaps the most beautiful telling of our faith story.

As we listened to the readings from the Old Testament we hear the story of our past. We begin with the very beginning, the beautiful story of creation from Genesis. The following readings give us the events of history and we conclude with a reading from the Prophet Ezekiel where the prophet tells us about what God says he will do for us. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you to cleanse you. I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my spirit within you. . . . you shall be my people and I will be your God." This is the story of our past our history.

We began in darkness. This darkness reminds us of the darkness of the world and the darkness that can sometimes be in our hearts. Darkness can make us uncomfortable and we may wait impatiently for the light. Knowing darkness and experiencing it can help us to better appreciate the light.

When the Easter candle was lit from the newly blessed fire and we proclaimed that Christ is our light we experienced that light being spread throughout the church. We give thanks for the light of Christ which breaks the darkness. We are reminded that we just as we did tonight with the candles are to spread the light of Christ in our world.

In just a few minutes we will have the privilege of experiencing Cameron's baptism. She will very soon step up to the font and will be immersed in those cleansing waters that were spoken of in Ezekiel. As she goes into the water she dies with Christ and as she comes out she rises with Him to new life. Cameron and each of us are forever changed; we are given a new spirit, natural hearts.

As we processed to the font we sang the Litany of the Saints. We turn to the community of saints to ask their help. As we do that we recall how these women and men in situations just like ours allowed God to transform their lives.

All that we do at this celebration leads us to the table. As the altar is prepared for the Liturgy of the Eucharist water is mixed with the wine and these words are said quietly, "by the mystery of this water and wine may we come to share in Christ's divinity, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." As Cameron receives the Body and Blood of Christ for the first time we rejoice with her and may all of us never cease to be grateful for God's presence in our lives especially in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

On this holy night some 2000 years ago the world waited and held its breath. Tonight we gather to remember the moment when God's love for us was most clearly revealed in the suffering, death and the Resurrection of his beloved son, Jesus Christ. This is Liturgy at its best; it is past, present and future.

The promises of the ages have been fulfilled by our God. The grand story of salvation has been revealed, from creation, through the flood and the wanderings in the desert, through moments of unfaithfulness as well as moments of holiness, through Crucifixion, through Resurrection to this very moment in our lives.

Marty Haugen another artist presents the wonder of Easter in his moving song "We Remember". "We remember how you loved us to your death, and still we celebrate, for you are with us here." He concludes with "And we believe that we will see you when you come in your glory, Lord."

We remember with great sorrow the Passion of our Lord that we have experienced in Holy Week. We believe that Jesus is still with us even though he suffered a mortal blow. We believe that the story is not over. Jesus is not finished with the world or with us. More good news is on the way.

We remember. We celebrate. We believe. In this Liturgy we recall what God has done for us in the past, what he does for us this moment and what he will do for us in the future. Our story in Christ is one of hope, joy and redemption. We truly have much to celebrate.