



The Easter Vigil

THE NIGHT OF NIGHTS

Late at night, in the darkness
we gather—for this is the night
of our passover,
the night that darkness is overcome!
THE NIGHT OF ENDLESS WONDER!
Where else could we be on such a night,
if not together?

The only place we can begin is in the **dark**, the dark of Holy Saturday night.
The Church tells us that we begin our watch well after night-fall, for it is the darkness of the world
that the new fire of Christ's light and hope pierces and overcomes!

So we begin our vigil in the outside darkness Holy Saturday Night at 9:00 p.m.

It is late because it must be dark!

To be present is a sacrifice; it requires an effort and some inconvenience!

Yes, it is late, but this is **the night of nights—the night** the Church all over the world gathers in the darkness; **the night** when Christ overcomes death and the great bonfire of faith and light pierces through every dark place, every hidden fear; **the night** when God's creating Spirit stirs again and redeems the world from hatred, sin and strife; **the night** during which we tell the great stories of our faith by the new light of Christ; **the night** we bring those chosen to the font—the tomb of Christ—that they might enter his death and so rise with him; **the night** we anoint the baptized with the grace of Christ himself—the sacred Chrism, the gift of the Spirit; **the night** we renew our own baptismal promise to believe, to belong and to serve; **this is the night** we ordinarily bring the newly baptized and the newly confirmed to the Lord's Table with us for the first time. **This is the night** we are sent forth newly alive!

Where else could we be if not TOGETHER?

In the darkness of Holy Saturday Night, the Light blazes forth and Life appears!
We tell the story, we enter the tomb, often we baptize and confirm, we touch the new waters of life and proclaim that we will believe and belong—baptism is renewed and we are cleansed!
And once again we find ourselves at the Table of the Lord. Worth the sacrifice of time and presence.

Our parish communities gather together for one great celebration of Christ's life, death and resurrection. We gather TOGETHER as a testimony to our universal faith, our common heritage, and our shared mission.

We gather TOGETHER because

“this night's vigil is the greatest and most noble of all solemnities.”

All of our best efforts must be shared and poured into this “night of nights.”

*“O night that gave us back what we had lost!
O night that made our sin a happy fault!
Beyond our deepest dreams this night, O God,
your hand reached out to raise us up in Christ.
O night of endless wonder, night of bliss,
when every living creature held its breath
as Christ robbed death and harrowed hopeless hell,
restoring life to all those in the tomb!”*

