



## **The Easter Vigil**

**“In accord with ancient tradition this night is one of vigil for the Lord.”**

## CHECK LIST FOR THE EASTER VIGIL

ORDER OF SERVICE	PERSONS TO ASSIST	REQUIREMENTS
		All Ground arrangements, Chairs, Spot Lights, Fans, etc..
		Back Drop
		Altar Decoration: Flowers & Plants, ambo or lectern, Credence table etc..
Introduction	Commentator	Lector
THE SOLEMN BEGINNING OF THE VIGIL OR LUCERNARIUM	Commentator	Commentary Sheet, appoint a person to switch the lights off & on at the correct time
		Stand for fire, coal, prepare the fire, candles, matchbox, torch to be available, a decorated candle stand, new Roman Missal, the Paschal Candle
The Blessing of the Fire & Preparation of the Candle	Commentator	Commentary Sheet, Cordless mike, Processional Cross, a Stylus, 5 grains of incense
Incense		Thurifer / Incense Boat
Procession		
The Easter Proclamation (Exultet)		
LITURGY OF THE WORD		
Introduction	Commentator	Commentary Sheet
First Reading	Lector	Appropriate Lectionary in the correct language
Responsorial Psalm	Cantor	
Prayer	Celebrant	New Roman Missal
Second Reading	Lector	Lectionary in correct language
Responsorial Psalm	Cantor	
Prayer	Celebrant	New Roman Missal
Third Reading	Lector	Lectionary in correct language
Responsorial Psalm	Cantor	
Prayer	Celebrant	New Roman Missal
Fourth Reading	Lector	Lectionary in correct language
Responsorial Psalm	Cantor	
Prayer	Celebrant	New Roman Missal
Fifth Reading	Lector	Lectionary in correct language

Responsorial Psalm	Cantor	
Prayer	Celebrant	New Roman Missal
Sixth Reading	Lector	Lectionary in correct language
Responsorial Psalm	Cantor	
Prayer	Celebrant	New Roman Missal
Seventh Reading	Lector	Lectionary in correct language
Responsorial Psalm	Cantor	
Prayer	Celebrant	New Roman Missal
Gloria		
Candles are lit on the altar during the Gloria & Bells are rung		Altar Candles Bells
Let us pray	Celebrant	
First Reading Epistle	Lector	Lectionary in correct language
Acclamation		
Incense	Altar Servers	Incense
Gospel	Celebrant	Lectionary/Book of the Gospels
Homily	Celebrant	
LITURGY OF BAPTISM		
		Baptismal font or Decorated Trough & Water
Introduction	Commentator	Commentary Sheet
Baptism	Celebrant	
Litany of Saints	Celebrant	
Blessing of Water	Celebrant	
Baptism - Candidates	RCIA (Rite of Christian initiation of Adults)	RCIA Rite, Baptismal Font, Holy Oils
Renewal of Baptismal Promises	Commentator	Invites people to light their candles
Sprinkling of Holy Water	Celebrant	Sprinklers, Water jugs
LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST		
Offertory Procession	Newly Baptised	Bread & wine
Offertory	Choir	
Holy, Holy, Holy	Choir	
Communion Hymns	Choir	
Recessional Hymn	Choir	
Announce Mass timings for Morning masses etc.	Lector	Commentary Sheet

### ***Instructions***

- 1. The entire celebration of the Easter Vigil must take place during the night, so that it begins after nightfall and ends before daybreak on the Sunday.*
- 2. The Mass of the Vigil, even if it is celebrated before midnight, is a paschal Mass of the Sunday of the Resurrection.*
- 3. The lights of the Church or wherever the service is conducted are extinguished.*
- 4. A blazing fire is prepared in a suitable place outside the Church. The priest approaches with the ministers one of whom carries the paschal candle. The processional cross and candles are not carried.*

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## Introduction

Today is a day of watching and praying. Vigil means a joyful waiting. Easter vigil is the mother of all vigils. There are many reasons. There is no day in our liturgical year with so many liturgical symbols than today. The liturgical symbols of fire, light, candle, water etc. are meant to point out Christ, the light, and the changes or the passing over that has taken place in and through him.

We celebrate the truly Blessed Night on which earth was wedded to heaven, and all men and women to God. On that Night of Nights, through His Resurrection, Jesus passed from this world to his Father. In memory of that great day, we gather in waiting. We also remember the passing of each one of us from the death of sin to a new life of grace in Him. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

The Paschal Vigil Service has four parts:

### PART I

#### THE LITURGY OF THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

*(Blessing of the fire, Preparation of the Candle, Procession, Easter Proclamation)*

### PART II

#### THE LITURGY OF THE WORD OF GOD

*(Seven readings from the Old Testament and prayers, Gloria, First Reading, Responsorial Psalm and Alleluia, Gospel reading, Homily)*

### PART III

#### THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM

*(Presentation of the candidates, invitation to prayer, litany, blessing of the water, renunciation, anointing with the oil of catechumens, profession of faith, rite of baptism, explanatory rites, anointing with chrism, clothing with white garment, presentation of the lighted candle, celebration of confirmation)*

### PART IV

#### THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

*(Mass continues as usual)*

#### THE LITURGY OF THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

*All lights are switched off. People gather outside. Ministers with candles (unlit) meet them at the fire.*

- **Light Fire**
- **Extend Greeting**
- **Bless Fire**
- **Prepare the candle (engrave and insert grains of incense)**
- **Light Easter Candle**

Tonight's solemn liturgy begins with the Blessing of the Fire outside the Church. We are standing in an unlit ground / premise to remind us of the dark despair of the tomb. But as we shall see, even that, cannot destroy our hope of New Life because Christ himself came into the world to bring us out of darkness into the light. The fire outside, tells us that the Cross did not destroy Jesus' divine life.

**The celebrant will now bless the new fire.**

*[Sign of the Cross; Introductory words by the celebrant; Prayer Blessing the Fire: Missal]*

**The Paschal Candle will now be blessed.**

The Celebrant traces a Cross on the Easter Candle. Then he traces the Greek Letter ( $\alpha$ ) above the Cross, the Letter ( $\Omega$ ) below and the numerals of the Current Year between the arms of the Cross. The Celebrant then inserts five grains of incense into the Candle. He does this in the form of a Cross.

*[Celebrant's words while tracing the Letters & Digits on the Candle & inserting the Incense Grains: Missal]*

The Paschal Candle represents the Risen Christ. He, who is Son of God, became alive again in body and soul, to share His risen life with us in baptism and to make us children of God. The Christ Candle will receive its light from the blessed fire. From this flame, we light up our small candles, that we may be awakened to the gentle light of Christ who is truly the light of the world. Just as the children of Israel were guided at night by a pillar of fire, so Christians will follow the Risen Christ. At the priest's invitation, we respond, joyfully acclaiming and venerating the Risen Jesus.

**Procession to the Altar**

*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.”**

**Procession Sequence**

*Thurible with burning coals, priest puts incense, altar server holding thurible leads the procession*

*Deacon or one of the ministers with paschal candle*

*Priest with ministers*

*people at their places holding in their hands unlit candles.*

**1. Celebrant:** *“The Light of Christ.”*

Narrator: All: “Thanks be to God.” *(Priest lights his candle from the flame of the paschal candle.)*

**2. Celebrant:** *“The Light of Christ.”*

Narrator: All: “Thanks be to God.” *(While all ministers & congregation light their candles)*

**3. Celebrant:** *“The Light of Christ.” (All light of the Church are switched on, only Altar Candles not lit)*

Narrator: All: “Thanks be to God.”

*The Paschal candle is placed near the Ambo. Deacon incenses the book of the Gospels and Paschal candle. The Priest, Deacon or cantor proclaims the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) from the Ambo.*

*All remain standing with lighted candles.*

**Narrator:**

The Easter Proclamation or the *Exsultet* is the most ancient hymn sung in honour of the Paschal Candle which represents Christ. It speaks of the liberation of Israel in the Exodus, of the liberation of Jesus in his resurrection and of the baptismal liberation that every Christian experiences.

**The Easter Proclamation:**

**Liturgy of the Word**

**[The Celebrant's prayer: Dear brothers and sisters ..... fullness of redemption]**

**Narrator:**

By the glow of the Paschal Candle, we turn to the scriptural story of our salvation. In the readings, we look back to the dawn of creation ... we agonize and then rejoice with Abraham over his son Isaac ... we pass through the Red Sea with the Israelites .... and are then led through the saving waters of our Baptism. As we listen to these great foundational stories each year, we are amazed as to what God has done and continues to do for us from the very beginning of time. Truly, God moves in the most mysterious ways to prove his profound love for us, his children. The covenants of Eden, of Noah, Abraham, and Moses will never be forgotten.

**Liturgy of the Word**

*The people extinguish their candles and sit.*

- **Seven Old Testament readings, each followed by a psalm and a response prayer**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Reading Gen: 1:1-2 : 2, Psalm 32, Prayer**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Gen. 22: 1-18, Psalm 15. Prayer**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Reading Ex. 14:15-15:1, Cantic Ex.15, Prayer**
- **4<sup>th</sup> Reading Is. 54: 5-14, Psalm 29, Prayer**
- **5<sup>th</sup> Reading Is. 55: 1-11, Cantic Is. 12, Prayer**
- **6<sup>th</sup> Reading Bar. 3: 9-15, 31-4:4, Psalm 18, Prayer**
- **7<sup>th</sup> Reading Ez. 36: 16-28, Psalm 41-42, Prayer**

*(The altar candles are lit, and the Priest intones the hymn Gloria in Excelsis Deo)  
Gloria (Church bells ring during the hymn)*

- **Let us pray**
- **Epistle Rom. 6: 3-11**
- **Gospel acclamation Psalm 117 (*may use incense, but no candles are carried*)**

- **Gospel A (Mt. 28: 1-10) B (Mk. 16: 1-8) C (Lk. 24: 1-12)**

- **Homily**

**Initiation Rites** *(If there are adult Baptisms the detailed rite is given on page no. 112)*

*If there is no one to be baptized and the font is not to be blessed, the Litany is omitted, and the blessing of the water takes place at once. (Roman Missal 360)*

Dearly beloved, let us humbly beseech the Lord our God to bless this water he has created, which will be sprinkled upon us as a memorial of our Baptism. May he graciously renew us, that we may remain faithful to the Spirit whom we have received.

*(After a brief pause in silence he proclaims the following prayer with hands extended.)*

Dear brothers and sisters,....355

*Lowering the paschal candle into the water either once or thrice the water is blessed with a prayer that recalls biblical events in the history of our salvation. The priest will lower the Easter Candle into the water. Blessed with the Light of the Risen Christ, this water is now empowered to chase away the darkness of sin.*

## **RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES**

At Baptism, we too rose to new life with Christ. Let us now light our candles from the Paschal Candle and then renew our Baptismal promises. Kindly stand holding the lit candle and respond accordingly.  
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**Rite of Sprinkling:** As the celebrant sprinkles the holy water on us all, let us sing joyfully to express our union with the Risen Lord.

*(After sprinkling the congregation with the Blessed Water the Priest returns to his chair, omitting the Creed)*

## **GENERAL INTERCESSIONS**

**CELEBRANT:** Dear brothers and sisters, filled with paschal joy, let us pray more earnestly to God that he, who graciously listened to the prayers and supplications of his beloved Son, may now be pleased to look upon us in our lowliness.

*Response: Lord, hear our prayer.*

1. For ..... our Pope, ..... our Bishop, the priests and the religious that in their pastoral care of souls they may be assisted by the Holy Spirit, for this we pray to the Lord.
2. For the leaders of the world who are the chosen representatives of the people, that they may govern so as to bring about wholesome development of the people under their care, for this we pray to the Lord.
3. For All those who are Newly Baptized that they will offer their hearts to Jesus in friendship and find in the Catholic faith the meaning and happiness for which their hearts are prepared, for this we pray to the Lord.



4. For all Christians that they may recommit themselves to the faith that they have received at baptism and show willingness to live the faith with earnestness, for this we pray to the Lord.
5. For all of us present in this Eucharistic assembly that the celebration of Easter may motivate us to proclaim the message of Easter with boldness and courage as the apostles did, for this we pray to the Lord.

**CELEBRANT:** God, our Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus whose glorious resurrection we celebrate today. His glorification is the reward for the work of redemption that he carried out in obedience to your will. Give us the grace that we may live our lives according to his teaching until we too rise with him one day. We make our prayer through Him, who is Our Lord, now and forever. Amen

#### **PART IV: THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

- Offertory: some of the neophytes take part in the procession of the gifts.
- Eucharistic Prayer I

### **Catechesis**

#### **1. Easter or Pass-over**

Easter means Pasch or Pass-over. The passing over from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of a nation. Pasch refers to the paschal lamb that was slain before the Jews left Egypt. After passing over the Red Sea, the Pascal lamb was sacrificed every year to commemorate this pass-over. In Jesus, the Paschal Lamb, sacrificed on the altar of the cross we pass-over from Old Testament to New Testament, from death to life, from darkness to light.

#### **2. Blessing of Fire**

The fire and light symbolize Jesus the Sun of Justice, who came, died and has risen to shed his light on the whole world. The dark night of satan's reign is now over. A new era has begun. It is the reign of God. The new fire that is blessed today symbolizes Christ who is raised. It is the fire of His redeeming love, which led to the cross.

#### **3. Paschal Candle**

The Paschal Candle stands for Christ who said, "I am the light of the world." We follow it "as the Lord went in front of them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, so that they might travel by day and night." (Ex. 13:21)

The five grains of incense, which are put on the Paschal Candle, represent the five wounds of Jesus: nails on the hands, feet and the piercing on the chest. We all carry a lighted candle. This is a symbol that reminds us of our baptism, especially the ceremony of light in which the priest handed over the lighted candle to us saying, "receive the light of Christ", as a symbol of becoming the child of God, the child of light.



#### 4. Easter Candle Procession

Easter candle procession suggests the Old Testament journey of the Israelites through the wilderness following the pillar of fire and in the New Testament the following of Jesus who said, “I am the light of the world he who follows me will not walk in darkness.” (Jn. 8: 12)

#### 5. Easter Proclamation (*Paschal Exsultet*)

*Paschal Exsultet* is a beautiful hymn in praise of the Paschal Candle. Paschal Candle represents the Risen Christ. It is the central figure in the liturgy of the Easter Vigil. The whole history of salvation is summarized in this Easter Proclamation.

#### 6. Easter Octave

The feast of Easter called 'feast of feasts' or 'solemnity of solemnities' is the oldest feast in the Church. In the Old Testament it was called Pasch or Passover. It was celebrated for eight days. The Church also celebrates the mystery of Easter for Eight days. These days are called 'Easter Octave.'

#### 7. Regina Caeli (Queen of Heaven)

From today till Trinity Sunday we recite Regina Caeli instead of Angelus. It is done standing. Through this Easter hymn we unite ourselves with Mary, the Mother of the Risen Lord, who was present at every step of the work of redemption.

#### 8. Alleluia

'Hallel' in Hebrew means praise. 'Jah' is the short form of Jayweh (*Yahweh*), God's name. 'Hallel' combined with 'Jah' makes up the word Halleluiah or Alleluia, which means 'praise the Lord' *Alleluia* (the experience of joy) was buried during lent; now it rises out of the tomb at Easter Sunday. *Alleluia* is a song sung in heaven (Rev. 19:1-16). Singing of alleluia demonstrates that our souls are no longer the same.

