

## **Easter**

We, like Saint Peter and the women, cannot discover life by being sad, without hope. Let us not stay imprisoned within ourselves, but let us break open our sealed tombs to the Lord – each of us knows what they are – so that he may enter and grant us life. Let us give him the stones of our resentment and the stones of our past, those heavy burdens of our weaknesses and falls.

Christ wants to come and take us by the hand to bring us out of our anguish. This is the first stone to be moved aside this night: the lack of hope which imprisons us within ourselves. May the Lord free us from this trap, from being Christians without hope, who live as if the Lord were not risen, as if our problems were the center of our lives.

On this night we no longer hold up the figure of suffering and death, but we raise the enduring light of the Easter candle. It is the light of the risen Christ who, still bearing the wounds of his suffering, comes to us in glory. And this light, passed in faith from hand to hand, has the power to overcome all darkness, all sin.

The light we raise this night, then, is the light of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, given to us, placed in our hands and seeking its place in our hearts and minds. This Easter candle brings us the power of God, that enduring love, seen in the crucified Jesus, now offered to us all. It is something we can never achieve for ourselves or find within our own resources.

The language and truth of our Easter Vigil is that of rebirth, new birth, a birth which comes from above. People in cathedrals and parish churches all over the world will be baptized during this Easter. What does this baptism mean? This is the new life in which we all seek to be renewed on this night. This new life is to shape and frame our daily living, our every action, transforming us from within.

This is what it means. In the power of the Holy Spirit our life has a new horizon, a horizon of eternity against which we set every decision and aspiration. Now our life gains new criteria by which we judge what to do, what to seek, what to avoid, what to oppose. Now we can recognize sin for what it is, the rejection of the wish of God in favor of what we want for ourselves.

From this new life we gain a new life-force. Shaped by this new life in Christ hopefully we might form different habits of life, those of daily prayer, of routines of kindness, of determined forgiveness and of self-sacrifice. From the light of this candle, from the waters of baptism with which we shall be blessed, we are reshaped, reborn into God's people, seeking his holiness and his joy.

This is why this light is so attractive. This is why holding candles in the darkness of our world is such a deep instinct, repeated all over the world, especially in the face of evil. We are born for this light, born to live in this light, born to enter into this light even though at times we prefer the darkness.

This light is Jesus, who is both the one who died and rose again, and the Word through whom each one of us has been created. In coming to us in the light of his risen life, he is completing the work he started at the moment of our conception. Here is our greatest gift: the invitation to embrace the light of Christ rising in glory and to let it dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Christ is Risen, Alleluia! And we have the possibility of opening our hearts and receiving his gift of hope. Let us open our hearts to hope this Easter. May the memory of his works and his words be the light which directs our steps in the ways of faith, towards that Easter that will have no end. Happy Easter to you all!