

“Alleluia He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!”
Easter Vigil 2009

There was no rejoicing that first Easter morning. The Morning Star had risen but fear had overcome joy. Fear can overcome our joy when we leave our doors each day. When the “rock is rolled away” and change suddenly comes upon us our faith is weakened and we imagine the worst. The first disciples to come to the empty tomb felt fear and misgivings. Fear allows the darkness to creep into our lives as well, when we believe the lies that our minds hear or create. Fear can make us falter and have its way with us when we forget the promise God has made. Fear can dim the light that our eyes have seen; the light that shows us the way.

This is the night when we leave the death of the cross to enter the empty tomb! Our wait for the promise of new life is born this day. The life of Jesus that we once knew in the flesh, we know now as the life transformed by the power of His resurrection.

The story of God's salvation in history is now complete in Jesus Christ. God's love for His creation and especially for humanity is traced this night to remind us of God's longsuffering. God has pursued His people relentlessly. His offer of abundant life should be accepted and received as His eternal gift. This gift is His Son who has brought us into the light.

On this Holy Night we come through the darkness into the light. The new fire formed from the emptiness of Jesus' tomb has lit the way for our worship. As Christians we celebrate with Jesus His victory of life over death.

We heard the Exsultet; that ancient hymn rejoicing in our mighty King and praising the holy flame that lights this night. This fire of Christ remains with us now in the offering of the Easter candle. This light will continue to shine in the darkness to vanquish it and drive it away. Christ our Morning Star is our light. May His radiance shine brightly within our hearts.

In Christ, His chosen people go beyond one nation to a multitude of nations. Christ's life is not limited to this body but expands to a form where death has lost its grip. In Christ, all penalties required for sin and death have ended in the risen Lord. Life is changed for us now! By faith we no longer live for ourselves but for Him who loved us and gave His life for us. This is our story this is our song – praising our Savior all the day long!

I leave you to ponder the gospel. The disciples must go out on faith on the words of the angel to spread the light, just as we did in sharing the candle's light. They must believe the good news that He is risen. So it is with us who have not seen but believe. We go out from this place to proclaim Alleluia! The Lord is Risen Indeed. Alleluia! Amen.