



## **“ANYTHING BUT NORMAL” EASTER VIGIL AN AT-HOME LITURGY**

**THE BIG IDEA:** When it was still dark, on the first morning, the women showed up. When it was still dark, and there were no answers, only grief, the women showed up. They came to care for the body of Jesus but were surprised by emptiness, by absence. As the light dawns out of the shadows, they begin to see that absence makes way for life, for the God of resurrection to be present to them in ways they could not have imagined.

The Easter Vigil provides a space, a liturgy for us to show up in the dark, holding the absence and grief of these days, so that God might teach us again how new life can be born even here.

The Easter Vigil may be a liturgy with which you are familiar or may be an opportunity to encounter Easter resurrection in a new way. While we now celebrate Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day as three separate worship services, in the earliest days they were celebrated in unity, one single liturgy that began on Saturday evening and continued into Easter morning.

As we celebrate Holy Week and Easter at home this year, this time of worship is for sometime late on Saturday night, in the darkness just as the resurrection is about to spring out into the world. Like the women, you can gather in the darkness of the night, or at the latest, the darkness of Sunday's early morning, whichever works best for you.

This liturgy was known as the Easter Vigil. It was the holiest and most joyful night of the Christian year, where Christians experienced the fullness of Jesus's life, sacrificial death and breath-held waiting of his promised resurrection. In this service, we experience the passage from slavery to freedom, from sin to salvation, from death to life.

When celebrated together, the Easter Vigil typically consists of four parts: The Service of Light; The Service of the Word; The Service of the Baptismal Covenant; The Service of the Table. Because we cannot be together at the Table, this liturgy will only include the light, the word, and remembrance of baptism.

**WHAT YOU WILL NEED:** 1. Candles for each person and a lighter 2. the printed liturgy 3. A bowl with water inside your home

### **PART 1: THE SERVICE OF LIGHT**

**GREETING:** Sisters and brothers in Christ, on this early morning when our Savior Jesus Christ passed from death to life, we gather with the church throughout the world in vigil and in prayer. This is the Passover of Jesus Christ: Through light, the Word and water, we recall Christ's death and resurrection, we share Christ's triumph over sin and death, and with invincible hope, we await Christ's coming again.

**Hear the Word of God:** In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

**FIRST PRAYER:** Eternal God, in Jesus Christ you have given the light of life to all the world. Sanctify this new fire, and inflame us with a desire to shine forth with the brightness of Christ's rising, until we feast at the banquet of eternal light; through Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. Amen.

*(At this time light each candle.)* Say: The light of Christ! **Thanks be to God.**

## **PART 2: SERVICE OF THE WORD**

Read aloud: Friends in Christ, let us listen attentively to the word of God, recalling God's saving deeds throughout history and how, in the fullness of time, God's Word became flesh and dwelt among us: Jesus Christ our Redeemer!

### **Read Genesis 1:1-2:2: The Story of Creation**

**Let us pray:** Almighty and Eternal God, you created all things in wonderful beauty and order. Help us now to perceive how still more wonderful is the new creation, by which in the fullness of time you redeemed your people through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

### **Read Exodus 14:10-31; 15:20-21: Israel's Deliverance at the Red Sea**

**Let us pray:** God of steadfast love, your wonderful deeds of old shine forth even to our own day. Through the waters of the sea, you once delivered your chosen people from slavery, a sign for us of the salvation of all nations through the grace of Baptism. Grant that all of the peoples of the earth may be numbered among the offspring of Abraham, and rejoice in the inheritance of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Read Ezekiel 37:1-14: The Valley of Dry Bones**

**Let us pray:** O God, you have created all things by the breath of your Spirit and the power of your Word. Breathe into us yet again, renewing our bodies and all of your creation that we might rise up from our graves and live for your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Read Romans 6:3-11**

**Let us pray:** Eternal Giver of life and light; this holy morning shines with the radiance of the risen Christ. Renew your church with the Spirit given to us in Baptism, that we may worship you in sincerity and truth, and shine as a light in the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### **Read Gospel of John 20:1-18**

## **PART 3: WE REMEMBER OUR BAPTISM AND GIVE THANKS**

*(With everyone standing as they can, from the bowl of water, splash water on your face and make the sign of the cross on your forehead.)*

**Praying together:** Through the sacrament of baptism God's Spirit has been poured out upon water, water poured over and immersing us, water that flows freely for all who will receive it, water from the streams of God's saving power and justice, water that brings hope to all who thirst for righteousness, water that refreshes life, nurtures growth, and offers new birth. Today, through this water, we renew our commitments to Christ who has raised us, the Spirit who has birthed us, and the Creator who is making all things new. Today, through this water, we renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of our sin. Today, through this water, we accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. Today, through this water, we receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and put our whole trust in God, the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ, his only Son, and in the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

**For your Son, Jesus Christ, who died and rose for us while we were yet sinners, for mercy that flows like a never-ending stream, gracious God, we thank you. Amen!**

**Charge and Blessing:** Go forth into this day upheld by the truth of new life, by the power of resurrection. Go forth to love and serve the Lord. **Christ is risen! Christ is risen! Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia, Alleluia!**