

A Homily for the Great Vigil of Easter 2014  
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Alleluia! Christ is risen!

We heard the stories of where we came from and who we are as God's people, and now, at last, we have heard the story of where we are going. Beyond life, beyond death, through water and into light, with Jesus as our guide.

How shall we celebrate our good fortune? How can we describe our joy? On this night, everything is restored – everything is forgiven. Everything lost is found, every broken thing is made new, everything weary is refreshed –

But that's not the whole story. That's not even the half of it.

This is not just the night when the lost coin is found and the blind see and the lame leap for joy –

This is the night when the test you didn't study for is unexpectedly cancelled. This is the night when the school bully moves to another state. This is the night when your neighbor shovels the snow from your driveway, when you drove to DC and found a parking place in front of your destination, and even though you didn't notice the no parking sign, you didn't get a ticket, when you find a bike under the Christmas tree even though you hadn't been very good this year.

This is the night when the person you thought you had unforgivably offended calls up to apologize to you; when your great-grandmother's amethyst ring turns out to have been at the back of your sock drawer all along. This is the night when a long-lost uncle leaves you his entire fortune. This is the night when there is no line at airport security.

I hope you see my point. It's not that miracles happen more at Easter than at other times, but that God's grace, God's forgiveness, God's love are exposed to the whole world this night in all their unexpected, ridiculous generosity. For resurrection comes to us whether we deserve it or not.

This is not the night to remind you that none of you deserve to go to heaven – maybe some of you do, I don't know.

The point is, deserving or no, you're in. The God who brought you out of and over and through the water into the light wants you close by. Whether you've studied for the test or not. Whether you've parked your car in the right place or not. Whether you deserve it or not.

This is the night when God wants us to remember that the water and the light are a gift to us – that living in the light is why we were made – that in rising from water and cold earth to new life in the light, Jesus beckons us to rise with him. To rise like incense. To rise like light. And what can we do but look up to the light? What can we say but

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Amen.