

## Easter Vigil

April 11

We gather in vigil in the darkness of night to proclaim boldly and confidently the light of Christ, who is the Light of the World! We gather as a community of faith in the risen Lord even though we are physically separated because of the terrible coronavirus.

In our lives we have been surrounded by an ever-deepening darkness -- like the darkness covering the abyss before creation. Into the darkness God spoke: "Let there be light! And there was light!" God is with us today and always -- bringing order where there is turmoil, light where there is darkness, life where there is dying, love where there is hatred or neglect. The Light of Christ can overcome the disintegration of cherished values. Under the inspiration and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, disciples of the risen Lord are called and sent to bring about reconciliation, trust, the truth, and commitment to the values of the gospel.

Tonight, we gather as a community of faith. We proclaim that Jesus has been raised from the dead. The light of the gospel pierces the darkness. The light of our Easter candle fills this sacred space and lifts our spirits to sing again: Glory to God in the highest!

We have listened to wonderful readings from Scripture that remind us about God's fidelity to his covenant with his people -- with us! They call to mind the history of his love for us. Everything -- everything! -- is ultimately in God's good, caring hands. Each of us is utterly dependent on God who is as active in our world as in the days of Jesus crucified and risen!

This is a feast of hope! Pope Francis has said: our hope "is not mere optimism or a psychological attitude or a desire to be courageous. Christian hope is a gift that God gives us if we come out of ourselves and open our hearts to him. This hope does not disappoint us because the Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts (cf. Rm 5:5)."

We firmly believe that God is merciful, forgiving, all-powerful, all-loving. God does not give up on us. He invites us to renew our covenant, our baptismal promises. Whether we are reciting them for the first time this evening or the 99th time, we are given a new lease on life, a chance to begin over again in our love affair with God, an opportunity to walk again in God's ways, not those of the world. Christ is risen! Glory be to God!