

# **PRAYER AND PONDERING POINTS**

THE SACRED TRIDUUM 2020

PASCHAL VIGIL, April 11, 2020

Rdg 1: Gen 1:1-2:2

“In the beginning...” Where it all starts: “a mighty wind (breath, spirit) swept over the waters” like Jesus and “the Spirit” and the voice “This is my beloved Son” at the Baptism of the Lord (Jan 12, 2020). And then light and earth and all manner of living creatures and then “God created man in his image...male and female he created them” and then he gave dominion over all and saw that “everything he had made” was “very good.” Our God, a community of Father, Son and Spirit, called all things into a living communion, a communion to echo the loving communion of the Trinity. And so...

Resp: Ps 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 14-14, 24, 35

We cry out “Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.” This song of praise celebrates with joy the God of creation, but the refrain or response itself hints at what we also know: that this delight and life of creation needs to be “renewed.” And so...

Rdg 2: Ex 14:15-15:1

We focus on how God showed so dramatically his commitment to that “renewal” after the tragedy of sin and after the tragedy of the enslavement of the people in Egypt. It is the Exodus, the going-out from slavery, through the waters of the Red Sea, into the promise of freedom and life. Through water to life – like Baptism. Through water comes the destruction of forces opposed to life – like Baptism. And so...

Resp: Ex 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18

“Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant.” This great shout, this glorious hymn celebrates the triumph of the God of life over all destructive forces. Water is seen to destroy evil, but also water is seen...

Rdg 3: Is 55:1-11

...to give life. This magnificent exultation by Isaiah reveals the ever present, ever unfolding, ever fertile life-giving covenant that God makes with us, promises to us and remains faithful to. This poem brackets within images of water (“All you who are thirsty, come to the water!” and “For just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down and do not return there till they have watered the earth...so shall my word be...”) the marvelous gifts of the covenant. So, “seek the LORD while he may be found, ...the LORD who is generous in forgiving.” And so...

Resp: Is 12:2-3, 4, 5-6

We respond by “draw(ing) water joyfully from the springs of salvation.” For not only do we recognize God at work in our lives, but, by God’s working through our baptismal lives and witness, we will “let this be known throughout all the earth.” Just to make abundantly clear the fundamental baptismal significance of this celebration...

Epistle: Rom 6:3-11

We must know that we were baptized into Christ’s Death AND Resurrection. We are therefore “dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.” And so...

Resp: Ps 118:1-2, 16-17,22-23

We must sing the Easter word “Alleluia!” the word unheard throughout Lent now proclaiming, “I shall not die, but live!” And the reason for this is...

Gospel” Mt 28:1-10

What the women discovered: the stone rolled away, the tomb empty, the mission to tell the good news, the Gospel, “He has been raised from the dead!” This is their mission. This is ours.

#### **After-Word:**

This has been an attempt to show the carefully constructed unity of the readings for the Paschal Vigil in order to understand the significance of this celebration in the Church’s year and in each “church-person’s” life.

Although this year there is no blessing of the new fire and procession into the church with candles. Although this year there is no Litany of the Saints, no Baptisms, no white garments, no procession to the baptismal font, there is still the blessing of water – water that features so strongly in the readings – and the renewal of baptismal promises.

Yet, for this year, there remain these things, which, perhaps, we need to know more deeply than ever:

The Light – the Paschal Candle, the Exsultet (Easter Proclamation), darkness overcome

The Word – proclaimed, living, present from of old and present now, especially

The Gospel – the empty tomb, death overcome, new life

The Water – destruction of sin, fountain of life

The Baptism – renewed in each of us and in Catholics throughout the world

The Eucharist – thanksgiving, worship of God, renewal of life

**WE ARE AN EASTER PEOPLE AND ALLELUIA IS OUR SONG**