Fr Matthew Charlesworth, SJ
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Easter Vigil

Date: Saturday, April 19, 2025 | **Season:** Easter | **Year:** C
First Reading: Genesis 1:1–2
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 104:1–2, 5–6, 10, 12–14, 24, 35 | **Response:** Psalm 104:30
Second Reading: Genesis 22:1–18
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:5, 8–11 | **Response:** Psalm 16:1
Third Reading: Exodus 14:15–15
Responsorial Psalm: Exodus 15:1–6, 17–18 | **Response:** Exodus 15:1b
Fourth Reading: Isaiah 54:5–14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 30:2, 4–6, 11–13 | **Response:** Psalm 30:2a
Fifth Reading: Isaiah 55:1–11
Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12:2–6 | **Response:** Isaiah 12:3
Sixth Reading: Baruch 3:9–15, 32–4:4
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 19:8–11 | **Response:** John 6:68c
Seventh Reading: Ezekiel 36:16–17a, 18–28
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 42:3, 5, 43:3–4 | **Response:** Psalm 42:2
Epistle: Romans 6:3–11
Gospel Acclamation: Psalm 118:1–2, 16–17, 22–23
Gospel Reading: Luke 24:1–12
Preached at: the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House **in the** Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia**.**

Brothers and sisters,

As we gather in the stillness of this holy night, we are surrounded by the sights, sounds, and smells of this ancient liturgy. The Paschal Candle burns brightly tonight, symbolizing Christ, the Light of the World, rising from the darkness of the tomb. We are invited to reflect on the light we now carry into the world, as the *Exultet*—our ancient hymn of joy—reminds us of the magnitude of this night. It is a celebration of new life, of the resurrection, of the darkness that has been pierced by the light of Christ. The incense rises with our prayers, and the darkness of the world is forever undone by the light of the resurrection.

We have journeyed through the darkness of the Triduum—feeling the weight of suffering and death. But now, in the light of the risen Christ, we see the victory of life over death, of hope over despair, of God's faithfulness to a broken world. And in this light, we come to understand who we truly are.

The story of our lives mirrors the journey of God's covenant with His people. The Scriptures we hear tonight are not just ancient history—they are a reflection of our own journey. God has never abandoned His people, and He has never

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abandoned you or me.

Think back over what we heard tonight. We began with Genesis: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” But the story doesn’t end there. Tonight, as we stand in the light of the Resurrection, we see that creation itself is renewed in Christ. The new creation has dawned. This is the work of a loving God who continues to bring light into the darkness of our lives. This truth stands at the foundation of our lives: we are made for life, made for love, and called to be light for others.

Yet humanity turned away from that light. In the story of Abraham and Isaac, we see trust, sacrifice, and God’s unwavering love. Like Abraham, we are called to trust even in moments of uncertainty. God does not ask of us what He has not already given—His own Son, the true Lamb.

In the story of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, we recall our own baptism. We, too, have passed through the waters from death to life. Tonight, as we celebrate Christ’s resurrection, we too are called to step out of the tombs we have built and into the fullness of life that He offers us. How often in our lives do we feel surrounded by the waters of struggle and fear? But like Israel, we are called to walk through, knowing that God is with us. The waters may rise, but we will not drown.

Isaiah reminds us of God’s promise: “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you.” These words speak to our own experience. How many times have we felt abandoned? Yet, in the resurrection, God’s love is fully realized. In Christ, God gathers us, heals us, and restores us. His love will not fail.

Tonight, the waters of grace are offered to all, freely given. As Isaiah calls us, “Come, all you who are thirsty.” We are invited to drink deeply from these waters of life, received, not earned, in the grace of the resurrection. And we are called to live this new life—not just for ourselves, but to share it with others.

In the Gospel, when the women arrive at the tomb, they find the stone rolled away, the tomb empty. They are met not with the death they expected, but with the promise of new life. The angel’s question—“Why do you seek the living among the dead?”—is not just for them, but for us. Where are we still clinging to

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the past, to the death and darkness that Christ has overcome? Where have we allowed darkness to remain, when the light of Christ is waiting to shine? Tonight, He calls us out of the tombs we have built and into the fullness of life.

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, let us remember: the hope we celebrate is not just for us to hold onto, but to share. We are witnesses of this new life, called to live it and bring it to a world in need.

As we leave this night, let us ask ourselves:

- Where in our lives are we still holding on to the shadows of death, when Christ is offering us His light?
- Where have we allowed despair to reign, when the power of resurrection is ours to embrace?
  This night is not just a memory of a past event; it is the living reality that God is at work in us today, transforming our lives.

Let us go forth tonight with hearts filled with hope and conviction. The resurrection is not just a past event—it is the power of God at work in us today. Let us live as those who have been raised with Christ, bringing His light into the darkest corners of the world.

For Christ is risen—truly risen. Alleluia!

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In preparing this homily, I consulted various resources to deepen my understanding of today's readings, including using Magisterium AI for assistance. The final content remains the responsibility of the author.