

SEGMENT TWENTY

(NOTE: For Archbishop Edwin O'Brien's Lenten and Easter streaming video messages please check the AMS Website in the weeks before and during Lent)

THEME: LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR THE EASTER VIGIL

OPENING PRAYER / SCRIPTURE READING:

Romans 6: 1 - 4

Psalm 33: 1 - 9

Psalm 118: 1 - 8

INSTRUCTORS' SUMMARY STATEMENTS:

The RCIA journey of faith begun several months earlier culminates in the great Vigil of Easter when the *elect* receive the sacraments of initiation and are incorporated into the Christian community.

Through this final step of sacramental initiation the *elect* receive pardon for their sins, and welcomed into the People of God. They are “graced with adoption as children of God and are led by the Holy Spirit into the promised fullness of time begun in Christ, and as they share in the Eucharistic sacrifice and meal, even to a foretaste of the kingdom of God.” (RCIA, 206)

The *elect* who have spent many months preparing for initiation hear the Word of God in the Liturgy of the Word immediately before they receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

The Liturgy of the Word for the Easter Vigil leads those who now stand on the threshold of the sacraments of initiation to open their hearts and minds to God's renewing power and love. As a preparation for their full, conscious and active participation in the Easter Vigil the readings of the Liturgy of the Word may be read individually and as a group, and reflected on and discussed.

- ❖ “*Easter* is not simply one feast among others, but the “Feast of Feasts,” the “Solemnities of Solemnities.” Just as the Eucharist is the “Sacrament of sacraments,” Saint Athanasius calls Easter the “Great Sunday.” The mystery of the Resurrection, in which Christ crushed death, permeates with its powerful energy our old time, until all is subjected to him.” (CCC, 1169)
- ❖ “In the liturgy of the Easter Vigil, during the *blessing of the baptismal water*, the Church solemnly commemorates the great events in salvation history that already prefigured the mystery of baptism.
- ❖ In the Liturgy of the Word for the Easter Vigil, the readings invite the *elect* to reflect on God’s powerful words and deeds throughout the history of salvation, from the creation of the world to the liberation of Israel in the event of the Exodus to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. These readings trace the past and present saving actions of God that the *elect* will personally experience as they are baptized into the life, death and resurrection of the Lord.
- ❖ Reflecting on the Easter Vigil readings from the Old Testament, the epistle and the Gospel prepares the community and the *elect* to enter more fully into the sacramental mysteries of Easter.

LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR THE EASTER VIGIL:

Saturday, April 10, 2004 (Liturgical Year C, Cycle II)

1. First Reading: Genesis 1:1--2:2 or 1:1, 26-31

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 104:1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35, or Psalms 33:4-5, 6-7, 12-13, 20-22

2. Second Reading: Genesis 22:1-18 or 22:1-2, 9, 10-13, 15-18

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 16:5, 8, 9-10, 11

3. Third Reading: Exodus 14:15--15:1

Responsorial Psalm: Exodus 15:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18

4. Fourth Reading: Isaiah 54:5-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

5. Fifth Reading: Isaiah 55:1-11

Responsorial Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6

6. Sixth Reading: Baruch 3:9-15, 32--4:4

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 19:8, 9, 10, 11

7. Seventh Reading: Ezekiel 36:16-28

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 42:3, 5; 43:3, 4, or Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6, or
Psalms 51:12-13, 14-15, 18-19

8. Epistle: Romans 6:3-11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 118:1-2, 16, 17, 22-23

9. Gospel: Luke 24:1-12

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The following questions may be used by the RCIA team to guide large or small group discussions during weekly RCIA meetings. They may also be given to the participants as a basis for personal reflection during the week.

- 1. What is the connection between the saving works of God begun in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus Christ AND the sacraments of initiation?**
- 2. How do the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist continue the saving words and deeds of God in the Old Testament and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus?**
- 3. Share your reflections on one of the readings of the Easter Vigil.**

CLOSING PRAYER

Our Father