

The Easter Vigil ... AT HOME!

A VIGIL is a time spent in anticipation and excitement for something that will happen the next day. The Vigil of Easter has three elements: fire, stories, and water. Tonight, you can keep the vigil simply and powerfully in your home.

You will need:

A candle or a firepit

Other candles and electric window candles as available

A large bowl of water

A bible or a computer/tablet

Wait until sundown. If you have a firepit that you can safely use outside, great. If not, a candle in your house will do just fine. If you're inside, dim the lights.

The Fire

Spend some time sitting in the darkness and quiet. Notice what it feels like, and remember the disciples huddled in fear in a room; they are sure that Jesus is dead and they are left alone.

Light the fire or the candle, and say this prayer:

O God, through your Son you have bestowed upon your people the brightness of your light: Sanctify this new fire, and grant that in this Paschal feast we may so burn with heavenly desires, that with pure minds we may attain to the festival of everlasting light; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

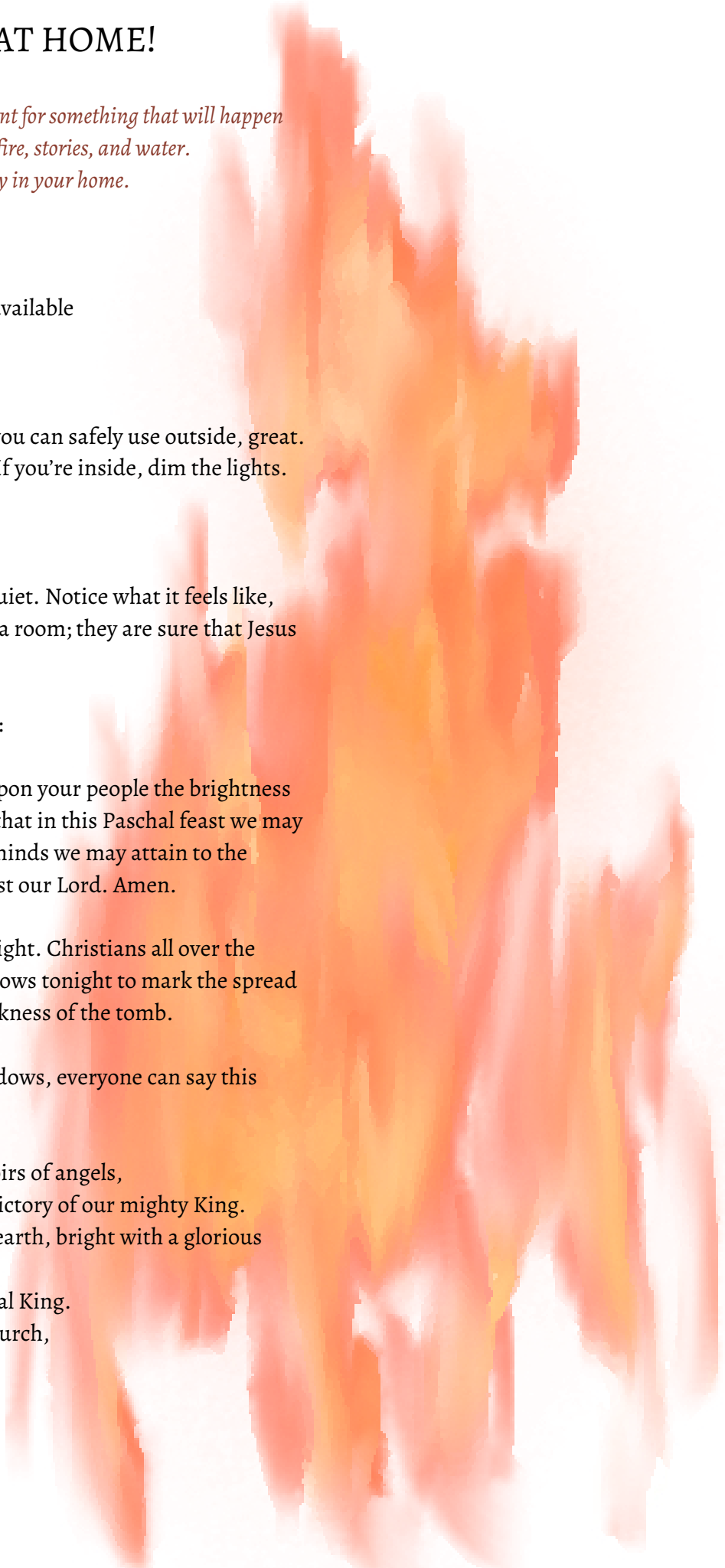
You can now light other candles to spread the light. Christians all over the world are placing electric candles in their windows tonight to mark the spread of the light of Jesus' resurrection out of the darkness of the tomb.

Once all the candles are lit or placed in the windows, everyone can say this ancient song together:

REJOICE! Rejoice now, heavenly hosts and choirs of angels,
and let your trumpets shout Salvation for the victory of our mighty King.

REJOICE! Rejoice and sing now, all the round earth, bright with a glorious
splendor,
for darkness has been vanquished by our eternal King.

REJOICE! Rejoice and be glad now, Mother Church,
and let your holy courts, in radiant light,
resound with the praises of your people.



It is truly right and good, always and everywhere, with our whole heart and mind and voice, to praise you, the invisible, almighty, and eternal God, and your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true Paschal Lamb, who at the feast of the Passover paid for us the debt of Adam's sin, and by his blood delivered your faithful people.

THIS IS THE NIGHT! This is the night, when you brought our fathers, the children of Israel, out of bondage in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea on dry land.

THIS IS THE NIGHT! This is the night, when all who believe in Christ are delivered from the gloom of sin, and are restored to grace and holiness of life.

THIS IS THE NIGHT! This is the night, when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave.

Holy Father, accept our evening sacrifice, the offering of this candle in your honor. May it shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find it ever burning--he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Stories

The Story of Creation

Look up Genesis 1:1 - 2:4 in a bible or online. Read the story, then wonder together:

I wonder what this story tells us about our relationship with God?

What would it be like to be in this story?

What is one thing you'll remember from the story?

The Story of the Exodus

Look up Exodus 14:10-15:1. Read the story, then wonder together:

I wonder what this story tells us about our relationship with God?

What does this story tell us about God?

What does this story tell us about our relationship with God?

The Story of the Valley of Dry Bones

Look up Ezekiel 37:1-14. Read the story, then wonder together:

I wonder what this story tells us about our relationship with God?

What does this story tell us about God?

What does this story tell us about our relationship with God?

The Water

When we are baptized, we make promises to God and to each other. Tonight, we renew those promises. If there are other people at your house, let them take turns asking the questions. Everyone says the answers together.

Q: Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil and renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?

A: I do.

Q: Do you believe in God the Father?

A: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Q: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

A: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Q: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

A: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Q: Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

A: I will, with God's help.

Q: Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

A: I will, with God's help.

Q: Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

A: I will, with God's help.

Q: Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

A: I will, with God's help.

Q: Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

A: I will, with God's help.

Take the bowl of water, and use a branch to sprinkle everyone with water, reminding you of your baptism!

*And now,
we wait for Easter Morning.*

