

## **Easter Vigil + April 23, 2011**

“What makes this night different from all the rest?” The youngest child in a traditional Jewish family asks this question each year when the family celebrates Passover. This ancient question is an excellent question for us to consider as Christians as we gather here on this night. For this is our Passover celebration and what is it that makes this night so special, so different, so distinct? “What makes this night different from all the rest?”

When the question is asked by the youngest child at the Passover celebration the way the question is answered is to proceed into the very celebration of Passover itself. It is to tell the story and to tell the story not merely as something that happened long ago but to relive the story and for the family to immerse themselves into the story once again. The same is true for us. Tonight we tell the story and hear the story, but much more, we place ourselves in the story. It is God’s story and tonight God’s story becomes our story. The saving acts of God are not merely rooted in a distant past but become alive for us once again.

For as we heard in the Easter Proclamation earlier, this is the night when our ancestors, the children of Israel were led out of slavery and led through the Red Sea on dry land. This is the night when all creation comes together in one cosmic act of praise. For this is the night Christ broke the bonds of sin and death, crushed hell underfoot and rose victorious. All sin is washed away and put to flight and tonight heaven and earth are joined together as one!

Tonight Madison, Carter and Gracie will come to the waters of Baptism. They have found a home in this place. Tonight Phyllis, Suzie, Erin, Heather, Jennifer and Laura return to these baptismal waters for they, too, have found a home and now renew their commitment to Christ. With them, all of us, tonight will have crossed the Red Sea and will arrive again to this Table and this meal, a land flowing with milk and honey to feast with all the saints on the Risen Christ.

This new candle burning here tonight and through these next fifty days is a good reminder. Do you see the date? 2011. the resurrection isn’t merely something that took place a long time ago. Christ is risen now. This is the night! Amen.