

Easter Vigil 2018

O.T. Readings, Rom 6:3-11; Mk 16:1-7

In the Easter Proclamation sung tonight there was a statement repeated over and over: “This is the night.” This is the night that humanity was taken from slavery, just as the Israelites were led from slavery in Egypt through the waters of the Red Sea. This is the night that the debit of humanity to God was paid - this is the night changed humanity forever. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the proof that all Jesus said was true. The resurrection showed us that he was the one foretold through the prophets to come to save us - the resurrection sets Jesus apart from all others who claimed to be a savior. In fact, Jesus is a savior unlike anyone else.

Jesus is more than anyone *can* claim to be. By his resurrection we know that he was the son of the Eternal Father. ... This is the night that humanity discovered that God had taken the role of the lamb of sacrifice spoken of in the Old Testament. This is the night that this sacrifice was completed and Jesus rose transformed and called us to be joined to him in a new life. In Lent we were called to reflect on our sin and to realize how much we have a debit to pay to God. No one else but Jesus - because of who he is - could take the sin of each person individually to the Father and make a sacrifice to clear that sin. Tonight we will witness four individuals pass through the waters and be joined to the Body of Christ. As they are joined, Jesus will take on their debit to the Father and make them part of his transformed and resurrected body. As we heard in the Epistle reading: *Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him ... so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead ... we too might live in newness of life.*

Jesus was more than a great man. Out of his love for us, Jesus Christ has saved us. He has freed us from the debit we owe to God for our sins, he has freed us from the slavery to a sinful way of life here on earth, he has freed us to live the life he has called us to. This life of Jesus is completed by an eternal life offered to us as members of his resurrected body. If we believe that his resurrection proves who he is, then we should take seriously everything else he has taught us. He has taught that we can fail to remain fully a part of that Body to which we were been joined in Baptism. We can place a barrier up to God like a large and heavy stone and remain in the tomb of our sinfulness rather than walk in the light of Christ. We may ask, like the woman going to the tomb: *Who will roll back the stone for us?* These women discovered what we also can discover: that Jesus' resurrection has the power to roll back the stone that separates us from living fully the life beyond that tomb that Jesus has gained for us. Faith in Jesus causes us to live a life in gratitude for the great thing Jesus out of limitless love has made possible for us. Let us give thanks to God - Alleluia, Alleluia!