

Homily for the Easter Vigil
by Bishop Felipe J. Estévez
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St Augustine once said, “We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song.” Let us sing Alleluia here and now in this life, even though we are oppressed by various worries, so that we may sing it one day in the world to come, when we are set free from all anxiety.

Dear listener, may the Light of Christ rising in glory dispel the present darkness of our hearts and minds. This Easter Day, the liturgy of the church urges us to exult on account of Jesus Christ’s triumph over death, for in his victory we find the ultimate end to gloom and darkness. Let us then let our joy resound because Christ is the light of the world, let this light overcome our anxiety and fear.

On this day, we are called to celebrate our baptism, renewing the promises we made or were made in our name. For it is in our baptism where the passage – the Passover – from our state of sin to the new life of Christ has happened.

More than any other day, Easter is the day to return to our baptism, to renew our promises to live as children of the light because by our own baptism we are truly connected to the death and resurrection of Christ, as St. Paul taught it so well. Oh, blessed waters of our baptism that made us a child of God, a temple of the Holy Spirit!

As the prophet Ezekiel said: “I saw water flowing from the temple and all to whom this water came were saved. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.”

Today, we are afflicted with a devastating health crisis of global proportions, yet the good news of Jesus Christ is still the best news in the world.

Mary Magdalene’s story rings true. She is rightly called the apostle of the apostles because she is an eyewitness of the event. She is an eyewitness of the empty tomb, but more than that, she heard the voice for the first time of her beloved Master – He is alive! And that is enough for her. She is from this moment on the witness, the one to tell Peter and John that He is Risen!

Like Mary Magdalene, you and me, disciples of Jesus Christ also have a mission to tell the Easter story first by our joy and hope and if necessary, by words. Yes, we know that Jesus Christ is our hope and the worst tragic death ever occurred turned into the best outcome. Darkness is no longer darkness for His light shines, dispelling our darkness and despair touched by hope and the old creature is no longer old but a new creature in Christ.

I leave you with a word: Alleluia. Let this Easter song resound in your heart with a glimmer of hope. Say it to your dear neighbor, say it simply to those you love.

Join me as a hymn comes to my heart: “Be Not Afraid.”

You shall cross the barren desert, but you shall not die of thirst,
|You shall wander far in safety, though you do not know the way
If you pass through raging waters; in the sea, you shall not drown.

If you walk amidst the burning flames, you shall not be harmed
If you stand before the power of hell, and death is at your side,
Know that I am with you through it all
Be not afraid, I go before you always, come follow me.