

## THE VIGIL OF EASTER

**Speaker: Spiritual Director**

**Time: Saturday 11:15 p.m.**

**Length: 5 minutes maximum**

### Purpose:

To prepare TECites for the symbolism in the Vigil of Easter service. Lead straight from this 5-minute talk into the service.

### Outline: [Begin Your Talk Here](#)

### Introduction:

In a few minutes we will celebrate the Vigil of Easter, a service long celebrated by Christians. The service originally began Holy Saturday night, remembering Christ in the tomb and the sins of people which caused that death. We have made confession of those sins and remembered the new Passover of our Lord in which we are the children who are not destroyed but forgiven.

The original service, at midnight, celebrated Christ's death, recalling both the Passover of the Old Testament as well as the passing of the children of Israel through the Red Sea as a symbol of their death to their old life.

At dawn, the original service celebrated the resurrection of our Lord and our being accepted into His family through Baptism. In the early days of Christianity, many people waited to be baptized until Easter and this service. Following the baptisms, the ancient service progressed to a celebration of Holy Communion—which we will postpone until tomorrow.

The service makes use of two primary symbolic items: fire and water, both of which remind us of God's judgment and God's grace.

### I. Fire

Fire showed God's judgment: God's fiery sword at the exit to the Garden of Eden; the pillar of fire that kept the Egyptians out of the camp of God's people; and the fires of hell.

But fire is also an example of God's grace. The fire that served as a judgment on the Egyptians also gave saving protection to God's people. Fire serves as a sign of God's presence among us—as in the burning bush for Moses, and as in candles in church. Fire is also a sign of rebirth and eternity.

### II. Water

God used water to judge both at the time of the Flood and in the drowning of the Egyptians.

But water was also an example of His grace. The water was the saving of Noah; and the water was the saving of the Israelites from the Egyptians. As an agent of salvation, God chose water to cleanse us from sin through Baptism (our prime focus tonight).

Water—the source of spiritual life when connected to God’s Word and the Holy Spirit. (Tonight is not a new baptism, but a remembrance of our one-time baptism through which the Holy Spirit brought us to faith in Jesus.)

### Conclusion:

Tonight, we reaffirm our Baptism and our commitment to live in the Spirit—to strive to live the ideal of Christ by the power of God.

*NOTE: Be sure to cover the symbolism in only 5 minutes as preparation for the Easter Vigil Service.*

No discussion question follows this talk.