



Easter Vigil

Please Gather in Silence

This liturgy is a continuation of the service begun last night.

Service of Light

*The Candles are lighted and thanks is offered
that God did not leave the world in darkness.*

The Exultet

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

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

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

*All you who stand near this marvelous and holy flame, pray with me
to God the Almighty for the grace to sing the worthy praise of this
great light;
**through Jesus Christ his Son our Lord, who lives and reigns
with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God...***

*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 when you brought our ancestors, the children of
Israel, out of bondage in Egypt and led them through the Red Sea
on dry land.*

**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 when Christ broke the bonds of death and hell and
rose victorious from the grave.*

**How wonderful and beyond our knowing, O God, is your
mercy and loving-kindness to us, that to redeem a slave, you
gave a Son.**

How holy is this night, when wickedness is put to flight and sin is washed away.

It restores innocence to the fallen and joy to those who mourn. It casts out pride and hatred and brings peace and concord.

How blessed is this night, when earth and heaven are joined and we are reconciled to God.

Holy God, 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 with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Service of Readings

The Readings lead us to the affirmation of baptism

First Reading

Genesis

Jacob left Beer-Sheba and went toward Haran and encountered a certain place. He had to stay there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed;

Here, a stairway was set up on the earth, its top reaching to heaven; and here; the angels of God/Elohim were ascending and descending on it.

And here, Yahweh was standing over against him.

He said, "I am Yahweh, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you will burst forth, to the Sea, to the east and to the north and to the Negev; and all the families of the earth will find blessing in you and in through your offspring. Here, I am with you, I will watch over you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; indeed, I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely Yahweh is in this place--and I did not know it!"

And he was awestruck, and said, "How awe-inspiring is this place! This is none other than the house of God/Elohim, and that is the gate of heaven."

So Jacob rose early in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called that place Beth-El/House of God; but the name of the city

was Luz at the first.

Then Jacob vowed a vow, saying,

"If God will be with me, and will watch over me on this way that I go, and will give me food to eat and a garment to wear,

and if I come again to my father's house in peace, -

Yahweh shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall become a house of God; and of all that you give me I will tithe, tithe it to you."

P: *O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,*
C: **for his steadfast love endures forever.**

O give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who alone does great wonders,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who by understanding made the heavens,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who spread out the earth on the waters,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who made the great lights,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

the sun to rule over the day,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Second Reading

Genesis

After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.

Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?"

So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please

forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father."

Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves."

But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones."

In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

So Joseph remained in Egypt, he and his father's household; and Joseph lived one hundred ten years. Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation; the children of Machir son of Manasseh were also born on Joseph's knees.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die; but God will surely come to you, and bring you up out of this land to the land that he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

P: Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

**C: I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you."**

*As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble,
in whom is all my delight.*

**Those who choose another god multiply
their sorrows;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.**

*The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.*

**The boundary lines have fallen for me
in pleasant places;
I have a goodly heritage.**

*I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.*

**I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.**

*Therefore, my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.*

**For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit.**

You show me the path of life.

**In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

Third Reading

Exodus

Now Joseph died, and all his brothers, and that whole generation. Yet, the Children of Israel bore fruit, they swarmed, they became many, they grew mighty in number - exceedingly, yes, exceedingly; the land filled up with them. Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. Come, let us use our wits against it, lest they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land."

Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh.

But as they afflicted it, so did it become many, so did it burst forth. And they felt dread before the children of Israel.

So they, Egypt, made the Children of Israel subservient with crushing labor; and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor - all their service in which they made the subservient with crushing labor.

Now the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, "When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live."

But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live.

So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?"

The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them."

So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families.

Now Pharaoh commanded all his people, "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live."

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a little-ark of papyrus for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. Now his sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to

him.

Now Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe at the Nile, and her attendants walked along the Nile. She saw the little-ark among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. She opened it and saw him, the child - here, a boy crying!

She pitied him, and said "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?"

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go!"

So the girl went and called the child's mother.

Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages."

So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, [he-who-pulls-out]" because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

P: O give thanks to the God of gods,
C: for his steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who struck down great kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

and killed famous kings,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

and Og, king of Bashan,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

and gave their land as a heritage,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

a heritage to his servant Israel,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

It is he who remembered us in our low estate,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

and rescued us from our foes,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the minds of Pharaoh and his officials were changed toward the people, and they said, "What have we done, letting Israel leave our service?" So he had his chariot made ready, and took his army with him; he took six hundred picked chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them.

Now Yahweh hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt so that he pursued the Israelites, who were going out boldly. The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, his chariot drivers and his army; they overtook them camped by the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baalzephon.

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites lifted up their eyes: Here, Egypt marching after them! They were exceedingly afraid.

The Israelites cried out to Yahweh they said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone, that we may serve Egypt.'? For it would have been better for us serving Egypt than dying in the wilderness!"

But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid! Stand firm and see the deliverance which he will accomplish for you today; for as you see Egypt today, you will never see it again for the ages! Yahweh will fight for you, and you - be still! . . ."

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and Yahweh caused the sea to go back with a fierce east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; thus the waters were divided. The Israelites came through the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. But the Egyptians pursued and came in after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers, into the midst of the sea. . .

Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, and the waters will return upon Egypt-upon their chariots and chariot drivers." So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth.

As the Egyptians were fleeing toward it, Yahweh tossed the Egyptians into the sea.

The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

So Yahweh delivered Israel that day from the hand of Egypt; Israel saw Egypt dead on the seashore, and Israel saw the great hand that Yahweh brought against the Egypt, the people held Yahweh in awe, they trusted in Yahweh and in his servant Moses.

P: *○ give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,*
C: **for his steadfast love endures forever.**

○ give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

○ give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who struck Egypt through their firstborn,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

and brought Israel out from among them,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who divided the Red Sea in two,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

and made Israel pass through the midst of it,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
for his steadfast love endures forever;

who led his people through the wilderness,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

○ give thanks to the God of heaven,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

Fifth Reading

Joshua

When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the

priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan. . .

The Lord said to Joshua, "Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, to come up out of the Jordan."

Joshua therefore commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan." When the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before. The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. Those twelve stones, which they had taken out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal, saying to the Israelites, "When your children ask their parents in time to come, 'What do these stones mean?' then you shall let your children know, 'Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.' For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we crossed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, and so that you may fear the Lord your God forever."

*P: Hear my prayer, O Lord;
let my cry come to you.*

**C: Do not hide your face from me
in the day of my distress.**

*Incline your ear to me;
answer me speedily in the day when I call.*

**For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.**

*My heart is stricken and withered like grass;
I am too wasted to eat my bread.*

**Because of my loud groaning
my bones cling to my skin.**

*I am like an owl of the wilderness,
like a little owl of the waste places.*

*I lie awake;
I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.*

**All day long my enemies taunt me;
those who deride me use my name for a curse.**

For I eat ashes like bread,

*and mingle tears with my drink,
because of your indignation and anger;
for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside.*

**My days are like an evening shadow;
I wither away like grass.**

*But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever;
your name endures to all generations.*

**You will rise up and have compassion on Zion,
for it is time to favor it;
the appointed time has come.**

Sixth Reading

Joshua

"Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Then the people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore, we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve the Lord, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, and consume you, after having done you good."

And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve the Lord!"

Then Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen the Lord, to serve him."

And they said, "We are witnesses."

He said, "Then put away the foreign gods that are among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord, the God of Israel."

The people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and him we will obey."

P: *I love you, O Lord, my strength.*

C: **The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation,**

my stronghold.

*I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,
so I shall be saved from my enemies.*

**The cords of death encompassed me;
the torrents of perdition assailed me;
the cords of Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.**

*In my distress I called upon the Lord;
to my God I cried for help.*

**From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry to him reached his ears.**

Seventh Reading

2 Kings

And in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came with all his army against Jerusalem, and laid siege to it; they built siegeworks against it all around. So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine became so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. Then a breach was made in the city wall; the king with all the soldiers fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, by the king's garden, though the Chaldeans were all around the city. They went in the direction of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; all his army was scattered, deserting him. Then they captured the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, who passed sentence on him. They slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, then put out the eyes of Zedekiah; they bound him in fetters and took him to Babylon.

In the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month--which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon--Nebuzaradan, the captain of the bodyguard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. He burned the house of the Lord, the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem; every great house he burned down. All the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem. Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried into exile the rest of the people who were left in the city and the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon--all the rest of the population. But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest people of the land to be vinedressers and tillers of the soil. . . So Judah went into exile out of its land.

*P: Who has believed what we have heard?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*

**C: For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;**
*he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire
him.*
He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
*and as one from whom others hide their faces he was
despised,*
and we held him of no account.

Eighth Reading

Ezra

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom, and also in a written edict declared:

"Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of those among you who are of his people--may their God be with them! --are now permitted to go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel-- he is the God who is in Jerusalem; and let all survivors, in whatever place they reside, be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods and with animals, besides freewill offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem."

The heads of the families of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites--everyone whose spirit God had stirred--got ready to go up and rebuild the house of the Lord in Jerusalem. All their neighbors aided them with silver vessels, with gold, with goods, with animals, and with valuable gifts, besides all that was freely offered. King Cyrus himself brought out the vessels of the house of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods. King Cyrus of Persia had them released into the charge of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. And this was the inventory: gold basins, thirty; silver basins, one thousand; knives, twenty-nine; gold bowls, thirty; other silver bowls, four hundred ten; other vessels, one thousand; the total of the gold and silver vessels was five thousand four hundred. All these Sheshbazzar brought up, when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem.

When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments were stationed to praise the Lord with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, according to the

directions of King David of Israel; and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord,
"For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel."
And all the people responded with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

P: Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases;

C: yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed.

Ninth Reading

1 Maccabees

And after Alexander had reigned twelve years, he died. Then his officers began to rule, each in his own place. They all put on crowns after his death, and so did their sons after them for many years; and they caused many evils on the earth. From them came forth a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of Antiochus the king; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred and thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.

In those days, lawless men came forth from Israel, and misled many, saying, "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles round about us, for since we separated from them many evils have come upon us."

This proposal pleased them, and some of the people eagerly went to the king. He authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil. . . . After subduing Egypt, Antiochus returned in the one hundred and forty-third year. He went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force. He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. He took the silver and the gold, and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures which he found. Taking them all, he departed to his own land. He committed deeds of murder, and spoke with great arrogance. . .

Two years later the king sent to the cities of Judah a chief collector of tribute, and he came to Jerusalem with a large force. Deceitfully he

spoke peaceable words to them, and they believed him; but he suddenly fell upon the city, dealt it a severe blow, and destroyed many people of Israel. He plundered the city, burned it with fire, and tore down its houses and its surrounding walls. And they took captive the women and children, and seized the cattle. Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. . .

Now on the fifteenth day of Chislew, in the one hundred and forty-fifth year, they erected a desolating sacrilege upon the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding cities of Judah, and burned incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. The books of the law which they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. Where the book of the covenant was found in the possession of any one, or if any one adhered to the law, the decree of the king condemned him to death. They kept using violence against Israel, against those found month after month in the cities. And on the twenty-fifth day of the month they offered sacrifice on the altar which was upon the altar of burnt offering. According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised, and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers' necks. But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. And very great wrath came upon Israel.

*P: All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,*

C: and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;*

**like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.**

Tenth Reading

1 Maccabees

Now Gorgias (the Greek warrior) took five thousand infantries and a thousand picked cavalry, and this division moved out by night to fall upon the camp of the Jews and attack them suddenly. Men from the citadel were his guides. But Judas (the Jewish military leader) heard of it, and he and his mighty men moved out to attack the king's force in Emmaus while the division was still absent from the camp.

When Gorgias entered the camp of Judas by night, he found no one there, so he looked for them in the hills, because he said, "These men are fleeing from us."

At daybreak Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men, but they did not have armor and swords such as they desired. And they saw the camp of the Gentiles, strong and fortified, with cavalry round about it; and these men were trained in war.

But Judas said to the men who were with him, "Do not fear their numbers or be afraid when they charge. Remember how our fathers were saved at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh with his forces pursued them. And now let us cry to Heaven, to see whether he will favor us and remember his covenant with our fathers and crush this army before us today. Then all the Gentiles will know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel. . ."

. . . Then said Judas and his brothers, "Behold, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it. . ."

At that time, they fortified Mount Zion with high walls and strong towers round about, to keep the Gentiles from coming and trampling them down as they had done before.

P: By a perversion of justice, he was taken away.

C: Who could have imagined his future?

*For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.*

*They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,*

**although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.**

Eleventh Reading

Mark

And then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to cast out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and he would not allow anyone to carry a vessel through the temple.

And he was teaching and saying, "Is it not written that,

'My house will be called

a house of prayer for all the nations'? [Isaiah]

But you have made it a cave for bandits." [Jeremiah]

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to destroy him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was astounded by his teaching.

P: Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.

C: The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

*Therefore, I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;*

**because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;**

*yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.*

Twelfth Reading

Revelation

Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,

"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord
and of his Messiah,
and he will reign forever and ever."

Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, singing,

"We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty,
who are and who were,
for you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

The nations raged,
but your wrath has come,
and the time for judging the dead,
for rewarding your servants, the prophets
and saints and all who fear your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

P: Having heard of God's mighty acts of faithfulness for God's people, we take hope in God's might act of faithfulness and fulfillment for us, that, as Jesus prophesied, he suffered and died to be raised again. The time of entombment is coming to end this night and Easter rises even now on the far horizon that we cannot see. With expectation and anticipation of the Son's rising bringing this dark night to a joyful end, let us return to our barren worship space and reveal our confidence in the hope of our resurrection as well by making ready for the dawn.

Procession to the Nave

The Congregation processes to the front doors of the Nave. The Pastor removes the lock and chain.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: The Psalmist wrote:

*I was glad when they said unto me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord.
Now our feet are standing
within you gates, O Jerusalem."*

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we have come again into our house of the Lord. Let us be glad and rejoice as God's people once rejoiced when they brought the Ark of the Covenant and the utensils of worship into the Temple that Solomon built.

At the Lectern

The Lectern Bible and parament is placed and the following is said:

P: Let us pray. God of truth and promise,

C: Send your Spirit upon this place that when your people gather here they will hear your word spoken boldly, with confidence, understanding and reverence. Open our ears to hear, that our faith and trust in all you declare will continual grow in bear the fruit of faith and good works. In the name of the living Word who dwelt among us and will come again, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

At the Pulpit

The paraments and Pastor are placed and the following is said:

P: Let us pray. God of wisdom and inspiration,

C: Send your Spirit upon this place that your word will always be proclaimed and taught powerfully and faithfully, that our minds and wills will be stirred to conform our perspectives on life to your perspectives, that our souls will be comforted and that, in hearing your Good News, we will take hope in our time that, regardless of the apparent reality that surrounds us, your Kingdom and it liberation from sin, evil and injustice will prevail. In the name of the Great Preacher of the true Gospel, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

At the Altar

The paraments and the Paten and Chalice are placed and the following is said:

P: Let us pray. God of harmony and peace,

C: Send your Spirit upon this place that as we answer your invitation to gather around this table we will know your healing presence of grace in the bread, in the wine and in the fellowship of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Never allow this sacred meal to be served or taken wrongly, but let it nourish us in faith and call you to your own faithful remembrance of the promise of new life you have given us through Christ's sacrifice. As we take his body and blood, draw us more tightly together as your Church, that we will be the living presence of Christ in this community. In the name of the one who invites us to come and take, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

At the Font

The Water is poured and the following is said:

P: Let us pray. God of all creation,

C: Send your Spirit upon this place that this font will continually remind us that we are your baptized people. Empower our evangelism, that we will effectively entice others to faith in you and a place in this congregation. Enliven our commitment to shepherd the newly baptized into the life of faith through participation in worship, education, and service. In the name of the one who received the Spirit in his baptism, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

At the Pulpit

The paraments and Pastor are placed and the following is said:

P: Let us pray. God of wisdom and inspiration,

C: Send your Spirit upon this place that your word will always be proclaimed and taught powerfully and faithfully, that our minds and wills will be stirred to conform our perspectives on life to your perspectives, that our souls will be comforted and that, in hearing your Good News, we will take hope in our time that, regardless of the apparent reality that surrounds us, your Kingdom and its liberation from sin, evil and injustice will prevail. In the name of the Great Preacher of the true Gospel, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

At the Exit

P: Let us go in peace, having made ready for the morning, asking God to give us a quiet night, that we may rise and return to celebrate the fulfillment of God's promise to the faithful One, who in this Great Day of Three Days, was handed over, suffered, died and will now rise again for us and our salvation.

C: Thanks be God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!

