

Your Lourdes Liturgy at Home

Easter Vigil – April 11, 2020

You are invited to time travel through the sweep of salvation history as it is unveiled in this edition of Your Lourdes Liturgy at Home – the Easter Vigil experience.

The first part of the service has a great Latin name, the “Lucernarium.” It is that grand procession into the darkened church with the gigantic Easter candle brought in to the chant, “Jesus is the light of the world and his light must never be extinguished.” The glow of that Paschal candle softly lights the aisle and sanctuary. It’s a visual and choral call for all of us as Jesus’ disciples to bear the light of mercy, forgiveness, restoration, and new life into every place God takes us.

You can approximate this at home by drawing the drapes and shutting the blinds, turning off or dimming the lamps and overheads, and lighting just one candle – and behold what it does. If you have enough candles to share with the group, light each one from the central candle and then sing a verse or two of “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.”

Then turn up the lights and take a spiritual stroll through some of the highlights of salvation history, by proclaiming the curated selection of Easter Vigil readings in this packet, starting at the very beginning of Genesis with the creation story. You might read instead or in combination the brilliant sermonic poem written by James Weldon Johnson, called “The Creation” which is reproduced in this worship at home recipe.

Whatever you do please pray for the wonderful group of candidates who were prepared to enter the Church here at Lourdes on this very night. A presentation of their testimonies is provided in today’s distribution. We long to celebrate their inclusion someday soon.

Here then is a set of prayers, seven of the Vigil readings, and a discussion prompt to help honor this special night in this strange time in which we are praying together yet apart. Be blessed.

Keeping Vigil on the Eve of Easter

Presider:

Lord God,
we share in the brightness of your glory
through your Son, the light of the world.
Through our Easter celebration,
purify our minds and inflame us with new hope,
that we may come one day to the feast
of eternal light.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Let the church say, Amen!

Leader: Let us now listen attentively to the Scriptures.
They tell us how God saved a chosen people
over the course of history and, in the fullness of time,
sent his only begotten Son as our Redeemer.

Let us pray that our God will bring to completion
the saving work of the life, ministry, death and resurrection of our
Precious Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Creation

by James Weldon Johnson (1927)

Bonus Reading

And God stepped out on space,^{[L] [SEP]}
And he looked around and said:^{[L] [SEP]}
I'm lonely—^{[L] [SEP]}I'll make me a world.

And far as the eye of God could see,^{[L] [SEP]}
Darkness covered everything,^{[L] [SEP]}
Blacker than a hundred midnights,^{[L] [SEP]}
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,^{[L] [SEP]}
And the light broke,^{[L] [SEP]}
And the darkness rolled up on one side,^{[L] [SEP]}
And the light stood shining on the other,^{[L] [SEP]}

And God said: That's good!

Then God reached out and took the light in his hands,^[SEP]
And God rolled the light around in his hands,^[SEP]
Until he made the sun,^[SEP]
And he set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.^[SEP]
And the light that was left from making the sun,^[SEP]

God gathered it up in a shining ball,^[SEP]
And flung it against the darkness,^[SEP]
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.^[SEP]
Then down between,^[SEP]
The darkness and the light,^[SEP]
He hurled the world,^[SEP]
And God said: That's good!

Then God himself stepped down—
And the sun was on his right hand,^[SEP]
And the moon was on his left,^[SEP]
The stars were clustered about his head,^[SEP]
And the earth was under his feet.^[SEP]
And God walked, and where he trod,^[SEP]
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out,^[SEP]
And bulged the mountains up.
Then he stopped and looked and saw,^[SEP]
That the earth was hot and barren,^[SEP]
So God stepped over to the edge of the world,^[SEP]
And he spat out the seven seas—^[SEP]
He batted his eyes, and the lightnings flashed—^[SEP]
He clapped his hands, and the thunders rolled—^[SEP]
And the waters above the earth came down,^[SEP]
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,^[SEP]
And the little red flowers blossomed,^[SEP]
The pine tree pointed his finger to the sky,^[SEP]
And the oak spread out his arms,^[SEP]
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,^[SEP]
And the rivers ran down to the sea;^[SEP]

And God smiled again,^[L]_[SEP]
And the rainbow appeared,^[L]_[SEP]
And curled itself around his shoulder.
Then God raised his arm and he waved his hand^[L]_[SEP]
Over the sea and over the land,^[L]_[SEP]
And he said: Bring forth! Bring forth!^[L]_[SEP]
And quicker than God could drop his hand,^[L]_[SEP]
Fishes and fowls^[L]_[SEP]
And beasts and birds^[L]_[SEP]
Swam the rivers and the seas,^[L]_[SEP]
Roamed the forests and the woods,^[L]_[SEP]
And split the air with their wings.^[L]_[SEP]
And God said: That's good!

Then God walked around,^[L]_[SEP]
And God looked around,^[L]_[SEP]
On all that he had made.^[L]_[SEP]
He looked at his sun,^[L]_[SEP]
And he looked at his moon,^[L]_[SEP]
And he looked at his little stars,^[L]_[SEP]
He looked on his world,^[L]_[SEP]
With all its living things,^[L]_[SEP]
And God said: I'm lonely still.

Then God sat down—^[L]_[SEP]
On the side of a hill where he could think;^[L]_[SEP]
By a deep, wide river he sat down;^[L]_[SEP]
With his head in his hands,^[L]_[SEP]
God thought and thought,^[L]_[SEP]
Till he thought: I'll make me a man!
Up from the bed of the river,^[L]_[SEP]
God scooped the clay,^[L]_[SEP]
And by the bank of the river,^[L]_[SEP]
He kneeled him down;^[L]_[SEP]
And there the great God Almighty^[L]_[SEP]
Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,^[L]_[SEP]
Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,^[L]_[SEP]
Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand;^[L]_[SEP]

This great God,^[L]
Like a mammy bending over her baby,^[SEP]
Kneeled down in the dust,^[L]
Toiling over a lump of clay,^[SEP]
Till he shaped it in his own image;
Then into it he blew the breath of life,^[L]
And man became a living soul.^[SEP] Amen. Amen.

Scripture Readings for Holy Saturday at the Easter Vigil in the Holy Night of Easter

READING 1

A reading from the book of Genesis

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth,
the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss,
while a mighty wind swept over the waters.

Then God said,
“Let there be light,” and there was light.
God saw how good the light was.
God then separated the light from the darkness.
God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.”
Thus evening came, and morning followed – the first day.
(Pause for sung response - ‘then sings my soul my Savior God to thee ...’)

Then God said,
“Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters,
to separate one body of water from the other.”
And so it happened:
God made the dome,
and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it.
God called the dome “the sky.”
Evening came, and morning followed – the second day.
(Pause for sung response - ‘then sings my soul my Savior God to thee ...’)

Then God said,

“Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin,
so that the dry land may appear.”

And so it happened:

the water under the sky was gathered into its basin,
and the dry land appeared.

God called the dry land “the earth, “
and the basin of the water he called “the sea.”

God saw how good it was.

Then God said,

“Let the earth bring forth vegetation:
every kind of plant that bears seed
and every kind of fruit tree on earth
that bears fruit with its seed in it.”

And so it happened:

the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed
and every kind of fruit tree on earth
that bears fruit with its seed in it.

God saw how good it was.

Evening came, and morning followed – the third day.

(Pause for sung response - ‘then sings my soul my Savior God to thee ...’)

Then God said:

“Let there be lights in the dome of the sky,
to separate day from night.

Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years,
and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky,
to shed light upon the earth.”

And so it happened:

God made the two great lights,
the greater one to govern the day,
and the lesser one to govern the night;
and he made the stars.

God set them in the dome of the sky,
to shed light upon the earth,
to govern the day and the night,

and to separate the light from the darkness.

God saw how good it was.

Evening came, and morning followed – the fourth day.

(Pause for sung response - 'then sings my soul my Savior God to thee ...')

Then God said,

“Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures,
and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky.”

And so it happened:

God created the great sea monsters

and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems,
and all kinds of winged birds.

God saw how good it was, and God blessed them, saying,

“Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas;
and let the birds multiply on the earth.”

Evening came, and morning followed – the fifth day.

(Pause for sung response - 'then sings my soul my Savior God to thee ...')

Then God said,

“Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures:
cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds.”

And so it happened:

God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle,
and all kinds of creeping things of the earth.

God saw how good it was.

Then God said:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,
the birds of the air, and the cattle,

and over all the wild animals

and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”

God created man in his image;

in the image of God he created him;

male and female he created them.

God blessed them, saying:

“Be fertile and multiply;

fill the earth and subdue it.

Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air,
and all the living things that move on the earth."

God also said:

"See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth
and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;
and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air,
and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground,
I give all the green plants for food."

And so it happened.

God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.
Evening came, and morning followed – the sixth day.

(Pause for sung response - 'then sings my soul my Savior God to thee ...')

Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.
Since on the seventh day God was finished
with the work he had been doing,
he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.

The Word of the Lord

READING 2

A reading from the book of Genesis

God put Abraham to the test.

He called to him, "Abraham!"

"Here I am," he replied.

Then God said:

"Take your son Isaac, your only one, whom you love,
and go to the land of Moriah.

There you shall offer him up as a holocaust
on a height that I will point out to you."

Early the next morning Abraham saddled his donkey,
took with him his son Isaac and two of his servants as well,
and with the wood that he had cut for the holocaust,

set out for the place of which God had told him.

On the third day Abraham got sight of the place from afar.

Then he said to his servants:

"Both of you stay here with the donkey,
while the boy and I go on over yonder.

We will worship and then come back to you."

Thereupon Abraham took the wood for the holocaust

and laid it on his son Isaac's shoulders,

while he himself carried the fire and the knife.

As the two walked on together, Isaac spoke to his father Abraham:

"Father!" Isaac said.

"Yes, son," he replied.

Isaac continued, "Here are the fire and the wood,

but where is the sheep for the holocaust?"

"Son," Abraham answered,

"God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust."

Then the two continued going forward.

When they came to the place of which God had told him,

Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it.

Next he tied up his son Isaac,

and put him on top of the wood on the altar.

Then he reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

But the LORD's messenger called to him from heaven,

"Abraham, Abraham!"

"Here I am!" he answered.

"Do not lay your hand on the boy," said the messenger.

"Do not do the least thing to him.

I know now how devoted you are to God,

since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son."

As Abraham looked about,

he spied a ram caught by its horns in the thicket.

So he went and took the ram

and offered it up as a holocaust in place of his son.

Abraham named the site Yahweh-yireh;

hence people now say, "On the mountain the LORD will see."

Again the LORD's messenger called to Abraham from heaven and said:

"I swear by myself, declares the LORD,
that because you acted as you did
in not withholding from me your beloved son,
I will bless you abundantly
and make your descendants as countless
as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore;
your descendants shall take possession
of the gates of their enemies,
and in your descendants all the nations of the earth shall find
blessing—
all this because you obeyed my command."

The Word of the Lord

Reading 3

A reading from the book of Exodus

The LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me?
Tell the Israelites to go forward.
And you, lift up your staff and, with hand outstretched over the sea,
split the sea in two,
that the Israelites may pass through it on dry land.
But I will make the Egyptians so obstinate
that they will go in after them.
Then I will receive glory through Pharaoh and all his army,
his chariots and charioteers.
The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD,
when I receive glory through Pharaoh
and his chariots and charioteers."

The angel of God, who had been leading Israel's camp,

now moved and went around behind them.
The column of cloud also, leaving the front,
took up its place behind them,
so that it came between the camp of the Egyptians
and that of Israel.

But the cloud now became dark, and thus the night passed
without the rival camps coming any closer together
all night long.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,
and the LORD swept the sea
with a strong east wind throughout the night
and so turned it into dry land.

When the water was thus divided,
the Israelites marched into the midst of the sea on dry land,
with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.

The Egyptians followed in pursuit;
all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and charioteers went after them
right into the midst of the sea.

In the night watch just before dawn
the LORD cast through the column of the fiery cloud
upon the Egyptian force a glance that threw it into a panic;
and he so clogged their chariot wheels
that they could hardly drive.

With that the Egyptians sounded the retreat before Israel,
because the LORD was fighting for them against the Egyptians.

Then the LORD told Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea,
that the water may flow back upon the Egyptians,
upon their chariots and their charioteers."

So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea,
and at dawn the sea flowed back to its normal depth.

The Egyptians were fleeing head on toward the sea,
when the LORD hurled them into its midst.

As the water flowed back,
it covered the chariots and the charioteers of Pharaoh's whole army
which had followed the Israelites into the sea.

Not a single one of them escaped.
But the Israelites had marched on dry land
through the midst of the sea,
with the water like a wall to their right and to their left.
Thus the LORD saved Israel on that day
from the power of the Egyptians.
When Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the seashore
and beheld the great power that the LORD
had shown against the Egyptians,
they feared the LORD and believed in him and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:
I will sing to the LORD, for he is gloriously triumphant;
horse and chariot he has cast into the sea.

The word of the Lord

Reading 4

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

Thus says the LORD:
All you who are thirsty,
come to the water!
You who have no money,
come, receive grain and eat;
come, without paying and without cost,
drink wine and milk!
Why spend your money for what is not bread,
your wages for what fails to satisfy?
Heed me, and you shall eat well,
you shall delight in rich fare.
Come to me heedfully,
listen, that you may have life.
I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,
the benefits assured to David.
As I made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander of nations,

so shall you summon a nation you knew not,
and nations that knew you not shall run to you,
because of the LORD, your God,
the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call him while he is near.

Let the scoundrel forsake his way,
and the wicked man his thoughts;
let him turn to the LORD for mercy;
to our God, who is generous in forgiving.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.

As high as the heavens are above the earth,
so high are my ways above your ways
and my thoughts above your thoughts.

For just as from the heavens
the rain and snow come down
and do not return there
till they have watered the earth,
making it fertile and fruitful,
giving seed to the one who sows
and bread to the one who eats,
so shall my word be
that goes forth from my mouth;
my word shall not return to me void,
but shall do my will,
achieving the end for which I sent it.

The word of the Lord

Reading 5

A reading from the book of the Prophet Ezekiel

The word of the LORD came to me, saying:
Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their land,
they defiled it by their conduct and deeds.

Therefore I poured out my fury upon them
because of the blood that they poured out on the ground,
and because they defiled it with idols.
I scattered them among the nations,
dispersing them over foreign lands;
according to their conduct and deeds I judged them.

But when they came among the nations wherever they came,
they served to profane my holy name,
because it was said of them: "These are the people of the LORD,
yet they had to leave their land."

So I have relented because of my holy name
which the house of Israel profaned
among the nations where they came.

Therefore say to the house of Israel: Thus says the Lord GOD:
Not for your sakes do I act, house of Israel,
but for the sake of my holy name,
which you profaned among the nations to which you came.

I will prove the holiness of my great name, profaned among the
nations,
in whose midst you have profaned it.
Thus the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD,
when in their sight I prove my holiness through you.

For I will take you away from among the nations,
gather you from all the foreign lands,
and bring you back to your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water upon you

to cleanse you from all your impurities,
and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you,
taking from your bodies your stony hearts
and giving you natural hearts.

I will put my spirit within you and make you live by my statutes,
careful to observe my decrees.
You shall live in the land I gave your fathers;
you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

The word of the Lord

Epistle

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into his death?

We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death,
so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead
by the glory of the Father,
we too might live in newness of life.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his,
we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

We know that our old self was crucified with him,
so that our sinful body might be done away with,
that we might no longer be in slavery to sin.

For a dead person has been absolved from sin.

If, then, we have died with Christ,
we believe that we shall also live with him.

We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more;

death no longer has power over him.
As to his death, he died to sin once and for all;
as to his life, he lives for God.

Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being dead to sin
and living for God in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord

GOSPEL

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning,
Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.
And behold, there was a great earthquake;
for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven,
approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it.
His appearance was like lightning
and his clothing was white as snow.
The guards were shaken with fear of him
and became like dead men.
Then the angel said to the women in reply,
“Do not be afraid!
I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified.
He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said.
Come and see the place where he lay.
Then go quickly and tell his disciples,

'He has been raised from the dead,
and he is going before you to Galilee;
there you will see him.'
Behold, I have told you."
Then they went away quickly from the tomb,
fearful yet overjoyed,
and ran to announce this to his disciples.
And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them.
They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage.
Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid.
Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee,
and there they will see me."

The Gospel of the Lord

Discussion Prompts

After his Resurrection, we hear Jesus often say, "Be not afraid." He continually encourages his followers not to fear but to face the gloom and perils of our world. He urges us to be bearers of light to others.

- Explore the ways that fear and despair can often prevent us from extending our light to help those caught up in the injustice and violence of our world.
- What place or which person or group can you personally bring your light?
- How can we continue to allow Christ to be born in us and in our world?

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – April 11, 2020 **EASTER VIGIL**

Presider: Jesus is risen! As people filled with Easter hope, we are called to pray for the needs of our world.

Worship Leader

1. For Pope Francis, that he will lead our church joyously and inspire new generations to serve. We pray: **Hear us, O God.** (RESPOND: **Hear us, O God.**)
2. For all who are suffering from this pandemic, those who are sick and those who are separated, that they will recover and be restored to us. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
3. For all the first responders, health care providers, food service and grocery staff, and all who must work during these days of quarantine, that they will be safe from harm and know our gratitude. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
4. For all who like Mary Magdalen proclaim the Good News of the Resurrection with their very lives. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
5. For all those who yearn for good news in the face of war, poverty, sickness or betrayal. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
6. For the protection of our imperiled planet as we celebrate Earth Day later this month. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
7. For those who longed to be Baptized and Confirmed at Easter Vigils, but who must now await until the world heals of this pandemic, that they use this time of sheltering to discern ministries of service and compassion they could offer. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
8. For the grace to live the life of Gospel nonviolence so that we might be faithful followers of the nonviolent Jesus. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
9. For the more than 16 million people now unemployed people in our country, that they be offered the assistance they need to maintain their lives and rehired when the pandemic lifts. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those afflicted by the corona-virus, and for all those living with HIV

and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray:
Hear us, O God.

11. **[FOR EASTER VIGIL ONLY]** For all the dead, those who have fallen victim to this corona-virus and all those who died since last Easter — that God may bring them to a haven of rest and peace, especially Father Chester Smith, SVD. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Hear us, O God.**

Presider: God of the living: We thank you for all life and for the life you have bestowed upon us. Strengthen our faith in the Resurrection and our desire to show others the meaning of everlasting life. We pray especially for those for whom life is painful or fragile. Help us to rejoice in a time of sorrow and uncertainty. We ask these things in the name of your gloriously risen Son, Jesus. LET THE CHURCH SAY.....AMEN!

Sing or recite The Lord's Prayer.

Observe a period of silence and reflection, then pray the closing prayer.

Closing Prayer:

God of mercy,
pour forth upon us the spirit of your love,
to make one in mind and heart
those you have nourished by these Easter scriptures.
We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Lord.
Let the Church say.....AMEN. ALLELUIA.

