

From the ashes of Lent to the stillness of Good Friday, we have walked a long road. It has been a journey marked by repentance, fasting, self-denial, and reflection. We have examined our lives, confessed our sins, and remembered the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. Many of us have given something up; others have taken on new disciplines. All of it has been meant to draw us closer to God.

But tonight—this Great Vigil—is not the end of that journey. It is its turning point.

St. Paul writes in Romans: *“Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”* This is the heart of what we celebrate tonight—not simply that Christ died, but that Christ is risen.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not a small detail of our faith; it is its foundation. As Paul says elsewhere, if Christ has not been raised, then our faith is in vain. But Christ *has* been raised—and that changes everything.

Because of the resurrection, death no longer has the final word. Because of the resurrection, sin no longer holds ultimate power. Because of the resurrection, hope is not wishful thinking—it is a living reality.

And Paul makes it very clear: this is not only about Jesus. It is about us.

Through baptism, we are united with Christ—not only in his death, but also in his resurrection. We are not merely observers of this miracle; we are participants in it. When Christ rose, he opened the way for us to rise as well—not just at the end of time, but here and now, in the way we live.

*“So we too might walk in newness of life.”*

That phrase—*newness of life*—is the invitation of Easter.

It means that the resurrection is not just something we celebrate once a year; it is something we live every day. It means that the old self—the self bound by sin, fear, bitterness, and selfishness—has been crucified with Christ. And in its place, a new self has been born.

A self that is free.

A self that is alive to God.

A self that reflects Christ in the world.

This is why the resurrection cannot remain an idea or a story we tell. It must become a reality we embody.

The destination is this: a transformed life.

A life that looks like Christ's life.

A life marked by love, by mercy, by forgiveness.

A life that seeks justice, that cares for the marginalized, that lifts up the broken.

The resurrection gives us the power to choose differently.

It gives us the power to forgive when we would rather hold on to anger.

It gives us the power to love when it is difficult.

It gives us the power to live not for ourselves, but for God and for others.

So tonight, as we celebrate the risen Christ, we are also called to embrace our identity as risen people.

Not just during Easter, but every day that follows.

The question before us is not only, *"Do we believe that Christ is risen?"* The question is, *"Will we live as people who have been raised with him?"*

Will we walk in newness of life?

Will we allow the resurrection to shape our choices, our relationships, our priorities?

Will we daily put off the old self and put on Christ?

Because this is the truth of the Great Vigil: the tomb is empty—but our lives must not remain unchanged.

Christ is risen. Death has been defeated. A new creation has begun.

And we are invited—right now, tonight—to step into that new life.