

## **EASTER VIGIL (A-5)-2011 How do we carry our light?**

When you think of darkness, what images come to mind? I think of night, a room with curtains drawn and no light turned on, a cave, a time of depression, a time when everything in life is going badly, the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, the loss of a pet, a time that seems hopeless. So when we hear that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb while it was still dark, all of these images come to my mind. She represents us all in the midst of darkness. You see darkness is not just the absence of light, it is the absence of God's light and our own light.

Tonight we celebrate the Light of the World, the light that dispels the darkness of evil, of injustice, of harshness, and depression. Tonight we will celebrate the reception of that light in the Baptism of our soon-to-be initiates. Their candles will be lit from the Easter candle we just lit for the first time as we began. Listen to the words for they are meant for them and for us. We are to walk always as children of the light.

Do you know what that means? It means that a depressed Christian is a contradiction in terms. One shouldn't exist. Our Elect have felt called to say "Yes," to being a part of us Catholic Christians. Theirs has been a process of growth that most cradle Catholics take for granted. We learned what we know about God and the Church from our parents and other family. They learned what they know from you and me, from our example, from the Word of God they heard inviting them. Their "Yes" is a re-lighting of the Easter candle.

How do we carry our own Baptismal candle? It is blown out in order to continue the celebration, but symbolically and actually it is to be always lit, always providing light in the darkness. Is our life providing light to the world when we leave here, or not? Is it providing the light of goodness and kindness? Is it providing the light of forgiveness and the challenge of a faith that does justice, a faith that is right relationship?

Mary came to the tomb with all types of feelings. Then she gets an even greater shock. She was going to finish dressing the body due to the lack of time on Friday. She finds the stone rolled back, the burial clothes but no body. Her 1<sup>st</sup> thought was, “What have they done with him?” Not only is she bummed at the ugly death she witnessed, but now she can’t do what she set out to do, say “Good bye.” We all know the rest of the story. Her “Good-bye” moment becomes a “hello again” moment. Her darkness is dispelled by the Light of the world.

Her experience tells us that pain and loss is not the end. 1<sup>st</sup> we will experience more pain and loss, doubt, confusion, frustration, and unbelief. Then the spark of light and faith will dispel hopelessness with the light of hope. “The tomb is empty, where is the body?” will be replaced with “I have seen the Lord.” Do we witness to having seen the Lord? Well, our Elect will do so in a minute. We need to thank God that this is happening. One of us here needs that witness to dispel their darkness.

Psychologist Lee Salk learned this from his mother. She’d been driven from her home, her town and her country by a warring tribe. She came to the USA and still encountered hardship but never gave up hope. She married, had 3 sons, and taught them all “to think about what they had and not about what they didn’t have. She taught them that in hardship we develop the capacity to appreciate the beauty that exists in the simple elements of life.” She said: “When it gets dark enough, you can see the stars.” (Adapted from: “While it is still dark,” [Dynamic Preaching](#), Vol. XI, No. 4, April, 1996, pg. 6-7)

With Jesus, we have a star that dispels the darkness of a life that feels hopeless, with the light of hope. With Jesus, we have a star that we can gaze on every day and moment of our lives and draw strength to be stars ourselves. Let us break bread in memory of our Super-Star and always recognize him in the breaking of that Bread.