

In Vigilia Paschalis et Dominica Paschae

In Resurrectione Domini

Lectio Divina by Fr. Randy Soto

I. Lectio

A. The Liturgy of the Word evidences God's plan which we call History of Salvation. One by one the readings with their respective psalm describe a new eon in this long history of ours:

1. **Creation:** God made the world and humanity and established that we should subject the world but to serve him as our God: *"And God saw all that He made, and behold, it was very good."* Christ the New Adam recreated all things anew, because the stain of original sin had affected the order of cosmos. Jesus redeemed all things through the Cross, the Tree of life. Ps 104 is a plea song that calls the Holy Spirit to renew all things: *"Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth."*

2. **Abraham's Test and Fidelity:** The call to sacrifice Isaac takes Abraham by surprise. Finally the Lord was beginning to come through with his promise of blessing and desdendance: *"I will greatly multiple your seed as the stars of the heavens."* All of the sudden this new indication to sacrifice his only son seems to put Abraham to the ultimate test. But in the end, what God did not allow happening for Isaac he did allow for His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. What was just a promise in Abraham becomes reality in Jesus. Ps 16 expresses utter confidence in God's love and providence which teaches us the way of life: *"You are my inheritance, O Lord."*

3. **The Liberation of Israel and the "New Exodus."** Israel was freed from bondage in Egypt by crossing the waters of the Red Sea: *"and the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land."* In the same manner Christians are liberated from the source of all slavery by the waters of baptism. Moses' Canticle (Ex 15:1-6.17-18) is a song of victory and thanksgiving for having been freed and for being in a new free land: *"Let us sing to the Lord; he has covered himself in glory."*

4. **Israel's Reconstruction:** God assisted Israel to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem as well as The Holy Temple. In this way he manifests his deep love for his people: *"My loving kindness will not be removed from you."* In the same way, God does assist us to get to the Real Jerusalem, that of the Kingdom of Heaven. There we shall suffer no more and there will be no end. Ps 30 is a praise hymn that sings to the joy of being in the Presence of YHWH in the Celestial Palace (*Hekal ha kaddosh*): *"I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me."*

5. **Promise of a New Covenant:** God promises through Prophet Isaiah the signing (lit. cutting) of a New Covenant in which the power of God's Word empowers all mankind to remain faithful to the covenant; something which always failed in the First Covenant: *"I will make an everlasting covenant with you."* The sacramental sign of the New Covenant is the Baptismal Water. Through this life giving waters the Holy Spirit imprints character in our souls and transforms us into new creatures, members of God's

family as adopted children. Isaiah's Canticle (12:2-6) expresses that only God is the source of salvation and life giving waters: *"You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation."*

6. New Ways for the New Covenant: Prophet Baruch teaches us that the New Covenant requires a new attitude on the part of those who seek the Lord: *"He has traced out the whole way of understanding, and has given her to Jacob, his servant, to Israel, his beloved son."* Baptism requires from all of us who believe more commitment, a generous heart to serving our brothers and sisters in the likeness of Christ the Way, the Truth and the Life. Ps 19 invites all to trust in God's Word, and in its powers to illuminate our earthly pilgrimage and the road o Heaven: *"Lord, you have the words of everlasting life."*

7. New hearts for the New Covenant: Prophet Ezekiel reminds us that the New Covenant requires a change of heart in mankind. This change of Heart is only possible if the Holy Spirit comes and renews all beings: *"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."* Christ told us that he was leaving in order to send us the Holy Spirit. Ps 42 is the people's prayer that searches God relentlessly. Like one searching for the Living Waters to quench thirst of justice and Mercy: *"like a deer that longs for running streams, my soul longs for you, my God."*

8. Having finished the proclamation of the OT Readings, we read from the letter of Paul to the Romans that wonderful statement: *"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."* Ps 118 is a joyful song that sings God's salvation, in the community intones three times the great (Hallel) or Alleluia: *"Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Let the house of Israel say: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia."* This Psalm will be present during the whole octave of Easter revealing thus the great sacramental unity of the Octave of Easter.

9. We joyfully intone the Gloria and proclaim the tidings: He is risen!

10. The Gospel of Matthew helps us to underline the joy of our celebration: *"Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples."* This joy is no ordinary one, but the joy of the Spirit which enable us to sing to the whole World even lauder that Christ has triumphed over sin and death. Our joy, like the one of the biblical woman is reassured by the words of the angel who said: *"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."*

11. During the Easter morning Mass we read our First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. In it we read's Peter discourse about the Resurrection: *"They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance."*

12 The Second Reading is from Colossians 3:1-4. This reading teaches us to search and to enjoy the spiritual goods that emanate from the Life of the Risen Christ: *"Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory."*

13. John's Gospel presents the two princes of the Church running towards the Tomb. The proof of Jesus' Resurrections is not the burial clothes, the Sudarium, or

even the empty tomb, not even the apparitions of the Risen Lord to the disciples. The answer cannot be found among natural elements but rather among supernatural gifts God has given us: it is through faith and faith in Jesus Christ *“For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.”*

14. During the evening Mass we read from Luke’s Gospel the Eucharistic encounter of Jesus Christ with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus explains the Scriptures to them, and then their eyes were open to recognize him in the Breaking of the Bread.

III. *Meditatio*

A. Tonight we discover that our daily lives are more than just the mere succession of events; we discover that our lives form part of the History of Salvation. We realize that God’s plan of Salvation includes each and every one of us. In a world filled with so many situations of slavery and sin this Holy Night gives us the occasion to witness the power of God at hand redeeming and liberating the human race from the bondage of sin and death: *“on this most holy night, when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life, the Church invites her children throughout the world to come together in vigil and prayer.”*

B. Around the new blessed fire and standing in the middle of the night, like those about to set out on a long journey, we are invited to listen attentively to God’s Word. The light from that fire was used to light our Easter Candle and from it each of our individual candles: *“We share in the light of your glory through your Son, the light of the world. Make this new fire + holy, and inflame us with new hope [...] May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.”* All of the sudden, the darkness of the night fades away and the Light of the Risen Christ begins to shine forth the way to Salvation. The *Exultet* sings to the wonders of this Holy Night and proclaims to the four corners of the world that Christ is Risen. He is the reason for everything that is, he is also the reason for our faith and hope and Love.

C. During the next 8 days we are Solemnly Celebrating this Easter Joy, but the Church extends the festivities for 50 long days so that the Message may reach all corners of the Earth. At Pentecost, and with another Vigil we shall receive the promise of the Holy Spirit.

III. *Oratio*

A. All prayers of this Vigil are reach in Theology and Contemplation. By the principle of *Lex orandi, Lex Credendi* we can contemplate on the meaning of these prayers to give foundation to our Catholic Interpretation of the Bible.

1. Prayer after Reading 1:

Almighty and eternal God,
you created all things in wonderful beauty and order.
Help us now to perceive
how still more wonderful is the new creation
by which in the fullness of time

you redeemed your people
through the sacrifice of our Passover, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

2. Prayer after Reading 2:

God and Father of all who believe in you,
you promised Abraham that he would become the father of all nations,
and through the death and resurrection of Christ
you fulfill that promise:
everywhere throughout the world you increase your chosen people.
May we respond to your call
by joyfully accepting your invitation to the new life of grace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

3. Prayer after Reading 3:

Father,
even today we see the wonders
of the miracles you worked long ago.
You once saved a single nation from slavery,
and now you offer that salvation to all through baptism.
May the peoples of the world become true sons of Abraham
and prove worthy of the heritage of Israel.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

4. Prayer after Reading 4:

Almighty and eternal God,
glorify your name by increasing you chosen people
as you promised long ago.
In reward for their trust,
may we seek in the Church the fulfillment of your promise.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

5. Prayer after Reading 5:

Almighty, ever-living God,
only hope of the world,
by the preaching of the prophets
you proclaimed the mysteries we are celebrating tonight.
Help us to be your faithful people,
for it is by your inspiration alone
that we can grow in goodness.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. Prayer after Reading 6:

Father,
you increase your Church
by continuing to call all people to salvation.
Listen to our prayers
and always watch over those you cleanse in baptism.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

7. Prayer after Reading 7:

God of unchanging power and light,

look with mercy and favor on your entire Church.
Bring lasting salvation to mankind,
so that the world may see
the fallen lifted up,
the old made new,
and all things brought to perfection,
through him who is their origin,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

8. Prayer after the Gloria:

Lord God,
you have brightened this night
with the radiance of the risen Christ.
Quicken the spirit of sonship in your Church;
renew us in mind and body
to give you whole-hearted service.
Grant this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

B. The Baptismal Liturgy and the complementary Rites of the RCIA are focused on introducing the catechumens into the Way of Christ. At the same time they help the Baptized to renew their promises and to strengthen their faith by actively participating in the Easter Celebrations

C. The third part of our celebration is the Eucharistic Celebration. Bread and wine are presented so that they may be transformed into the glorious Body of the Risen Christ. Christ is the Lamb in which has died to redeem us and by receiving him we are eating our own salvation: *"He is the true Lamb that took away the sins of the world. By dying he destroyed our death; by rising he restored our life (Preface)."*

III. Contemplatio

A. Two Hymns to contemplate:

THE EXULTET

The Exsultet, sometimes seen as "Exultet" and also referred to as the Praeconium Paschale, is an ancient chant sung during the Easter Vigil. It is traditionally sung by the deacon after the Paschal candle has been lit and the clergy have processed to the altar. The lighted Paschal candle contains a twofold symbolism. First, it represents the pillar of fire that went before the Israelites during their flight from Egypt. Second, it represents Christ, who is the light of the world. The procession likewise has a twofold meaning. It symbolizes the journey of the Israelites out of Egypt, and also the arrival of Christ who is the

Savior of the world. The Exsultet sings of this symbolism and recalls for us the history of our salvation; from the fall of Adam, to the events of that first Passover held by Moses and the Israelites, and then finally the events of that last Passover at which Jesus suffered, died, rose from the dead and by which mankind was redeemed. The tone of the hymn is very much one of joy at having received so great a gift as our redemption and eternal life. (Latin from the 1962 & 1975 Missal. Tr. by Abbot Cabrol, OSB, 1934.)

<p>Exsultet iam angelica turba caelorum exsultent divina mysteria et pro tanti Regis victoria, tuba insonet salutaris.</p>	<p>Let now the heavenly hosts of angels rejoice let the living mysteries be joyfully celebrated: and let a sacred trumpet proclaim the victory of so great a King.</p>
<p>Gaudeat et tellus tantis irradiata fulgoribus et, aeterni regis splendore illustrata, totius orbis se sentiat amisisse caliginem.</p>	<p>Let the earth also be filled with joy, illuminated with such resplendent rays; and let men know that the darkness which overspread the whole world is chased away by the splendor of our eternal King.</p>
<p>Laetetur et mater Ecclesia tanti luminis adornata fulgoribus: et magnis populorum vocibus haec aula resultet.</p>	<p>Let our mother the Church be also glad, finding herself adorned with the rays of so great a light and let this temple resound with the joyful acclamations of the people.</p>
<p>Quapropter adstantes vos, fratres carissimi, ad tam miram huius sancti luminis claritatem, una mecum, quaeso, Dei omnipotentis misericordiam invocate.</p>	<p>Wherefore, beloved brethren, you who are now present at the admirable brightness of this holy light, I beseech you to invoke with me the mercy of almighty God.</p>
<p>Ut, qui me non meis meritis intra Levitarum numerum dignatus est aggregare luminis sui claritatem infundens cerei huius laudem implere perficiat.</p>	<p>That he, who has admitted me into the number of his Levites not on my own merits, will, by an infusion of his light upon me, enable me to celebrate the praises of this light.</p>
<p>Per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum Filium suum, qui cum eo vivit et regnat in unitate</p>	<p>Through our Lord Jesus Christ his Son, who with Him and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth one God</p>

Spiritus Sancti, Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum.	for ever and ever.
R. Amen.	R. Amen.
V. Dominus vobiscum. R. Et cum spiritu tuo.	V. The Lord be with you. R. And with thy spirit.
V. Sursum corda. R. Habemus ad Dominum.	V. Lift up your hearts. R. We have lifted them up to the Lord.
V. Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro. R. Dignum et iustum est.	V. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. R. It is fitting and just.
Vere dignum et iustum est, invisibilem Deum Patrem omnipotentem Filiumque eius unigenitum, Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, toto cordis ac mentis affectu et vocis ministerio personare.	It is truly fitting and just to proclaim with all the affection of our heart and soul, and with the sound of our voice the invisible God the Father almighty, and his only Son our Lord Jesus Christ.
Qui pro nobis aeterno Patri Adae debitum solvit et veteris piaculi cautionem pio cruore deterisit.	Who paid for us to his eternal Father the debt of Adam: and by his sacred blood canceled the guilt contracted by original sin.
Haec sunt enim festa Paschalia, in quibus vere ille Agnus occiditur, cuius sanguine postes fidelium consecrantur.	For this is the Paschal solemnity, in which the true Lamb was slain, by whose blood the doors of the faithful are consecrated.
Haec nox est, in qua primum patres nostros, filios Israel, eductos de Aegypto, Mare Rubrum sicco vestigio transire fecisti. Haec igitur nox est, quae peccatorum tenebras columnae illuminatione purgavit.	This is the night in which thou formerly broughtest forth our forefathers, the children of Israel, out of Egypt, leading them dry-foot through the Red Sea. This then is the night which dissipated the darkness of sin by the light of the pillar.
Haec nox est, quae hodie per universum mundum in Christo credentes a vitiis saeculi, et caligine peccatorum segregatos reddit gratiae, sociat sanctitati.	This is the night which now delivers all over the world those that believe in Christ from the vices of the world and darkness of sin, restores them to grace, and clothes them with sanctity.

<p>Haec nox est, in qua, destructis vinculis mortis, Christus ab inferis victor ascendit.</p>	<p>This is the night in which Christ broke the chains of death, and ascended conqueror from hell.</p>
<p>Nihil enim nobis nasci profuit, nisi redimi profuisset.</p>	<p>For it availed us nothing to be born, unless it had availed us to be redeemed.</p>
<p>O mira circa nos tuae pietatis dignatio! O inaestimabilis dilectio caritatis: ut servum redimeres, Filium tradidisti!</p>	<p>O how admirable is thy goodness towards us! O how inestimable is thy love! Thou hast delivered up thy Son to redeem a slave.</p>
<p>O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum est!</p>	<p>O truly necessary sin of Adam, which the death of Christ has blotted out!</p>
<p>O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!</p>	<p>O happy fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer!</p>
<p>O vere beata nox, quae sola meruit scire tempus et horam, in qua Christus ab inferis resurrexit!</p>	<p>O truly blessed night, which alone deserves to know the time and hour when Christ rose again from hell.</p>
<p>Haec nox est, de qua scriptum est: Et nox sicut dies illuminabitur: et nox illuminatio mea in deliciis meis.</p>	<p>This is the night of which it is written: And the night shall be as light as the day, and the night is my illumination in my delights.</p>
<p>Huius igitur sanctificatio noctis fugat scelera, culpas lavat: et reddit innocentiam lapsis, et maestis laetitiam. Fugat odia, concordiam parat, et curvat imperia.</p>	<p>Therefore the sanctification of this night blots out crimes, washes away sins, and restores innocence to sinners, and joy to the sorrowful. It banishes enmities, produces concord, and humbles empires.</p>
<p>In huius igitur noctis gratia, suscipe, sancte Pater laudis huius sacrificium vespertinum, quod tibi in haec cerei oblatione sollemni, per ministrorum manus de operibus apum, sacrosancta reddit ecclesia.</p>	<p>Therefore on this sacred night, receive, O holy Father, the evening sacrifice of this sacrifice, which thy holy Church by the hands of her ministers presents to thee in the solemn offering of this wax candle made out of the labor of bees.</p>

<p>Sed iam columnae huius praeconia novimus, quam in honorem Dei rutilans ignis accendit. Qui, licet sit divisus in partes, mutuati tamen luminis detrimenta non novit. Alitur enim liquantibus ceris, quas in substantiam pretiosae huius lampadis apes mater eduxit.</p>	<p>And now we know the excellence of this pillar, which the bright fire lights for the honor of God. Which fire, though now divided, suffers no loss from the communication of its light. Because it is fed by the melted wax, which the mother bee wrought for the substance of this precious lamp.</p>
<p>Ending according to the 1962 Missal:</p>	<p>Ending according to the 1962 Missal:</p>
<p>O vere beata nox, quae exspoliavit Aegyptos, ditavit Hebraeos nox, in qua terrenis caelestia, humanis divina iunguntur!</p>	<p>O truly blessed night, which plundered the Egyptians, and enriched the Hebrews. A night, in which heaven is united to earth, and God to man.</p>
<p>Oramus ergo te, Domine, ut cereus iste in honorem tui nominis consecratus, ad noctis huius caliginem destruendam, indeficiens perseveret. Et in odorem suavitatis acceptus, supernis luminaribus misceatur. Flammas eius lucifer matutinus inveniat: Ille, inquam, lucifer, qui nescit occasum: Ille qui regressus ab inferis, humano generi serenus illuxit.</p>	<p>We beseech thee therefore, O Lord, that this candle, consecrated to the honor of thy name, may continue burning to dissipate the darkness this night. And being accepted as a sweet savor, may be united with the celestial lights. Let the morning star find it alight, that star which never sets. Which being returned from hell, shone with brightness on mankind.</p>
<p>Precamur ergo te, Domine, ut nos famulos tuos, omnemque clerum, et devotissimum populum, una cum beatissimo Papa nostro N. et Antistite nostro N. quiete temporum concessa, in his paschalibus gaudiis, assidua protectione regere, gubernare, et conservare digneris. Per eundem Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum Filium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spiritus Sancti, Deus, per omnia saecula saeculorum.</p>	<p>We beseech thee therefore, O Lord, to grant us peaceable times during these Paschal solemnities, and with thy constant protection to rule, govern, and preserve us thy servants, all the clergy, and the devout laity, together with our holy Pope N. and our Bishop N. Through the same Lord Jesus Christ thy Son : who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth one God for ever and ever.</p>

R. Amen.	R. Amen.
Ending according to the 1975 Missal:	Ending according to the 1975 Missal:
O vere beata nox, in qua terrenis caelestia, humanis divina iunguntur!	O truly blessed night, in which heaven is united to earth, and God to man!
Oramus ergo te, Domine, ut cereus iste in honorem tui nominis consecratus, ad noctis huius caliginem destruendam, indeficiens perseveret. Et in odorem suavitatis acceptus, supernis luminaribus misceatur. Flammas eius lucifer matutinus inveniatur: Ille, inquam, lucifer, qui nescit occasum: Christus Filius tuus, qui regressus ab inferis, humano generi serenus illuxit, et vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum.	We beseech thee therefore, O Lord, that this candle, consecrated to the honor of thy name, may continue burning to dissipate the darkness this night. And being accepted as a sweet savor, may be united with the celestial lights. Let the morning star find it alight, that star which never sets: Christ Thy Son, who came back from hell, and shone with brightness on mankind, and who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever.
R. Amen.	R. Amen.

Victimae Paschali Laudes

Victimae paschali laudes
immolent Christiani.

Ægnus redemit oves:

Christus innocens Patri
reconciliavit peccatores.

Mors et vita duello
conflixere mirando:
dux vitae mortuus,
regnat vivus.

Dic nobis Maria,

May you praise the Paschal Victim,
immolated for Christians.

The Lamb redeemed the sheep:

Christ, the innocent one,
has reconciled sinners to the Father.

A wonderful duel to behold,
as death and life struggle: The Prince of
life dead, now reigns alive.

Tell us, Mary Magdalene, what did you
see in the way?

quid vidisti in via?
Sepulcrum Christi viventis,
et gloriam vidi resurgentis:
Ængelicos testes,
sudarium, et vestes.
Surrexit Christus spes mea:
praecedet suos in Galilaeam.
Scimus Christum surrexisse
a mortuis vere:
tu nobis, victor Rex,
miserere.
Amen. Alleluia.

I saw the sepulcher of the living Christ,
and I saw the glory of the Resurrected
one: The Ængelic witnesses, the winding
cloth, and His garments.
The risen Christ is my hope:
He will go before His own into Galilee.
We know Christ to have risen
truly from the dead:
And thou, victorious King,
have mercy on us.
Amen. Alleluia.