

Dear Friends,

There is no darker place on earth than a cave. Once you get past the entrance where it is impossible for the light to enter in, the darkness of a cave is the deepest, blackest you will ever experience. If you stand perfectly still for just a few seconds you begin to lose your bearings. In practically no time at all you have no idea which direction is the way out of the cave. Soon a sense of panic settles in and you begin to wonder if you will ever make it out. You begin to feel like you are going to die in that cave and you wonder if anyone will ever find you.

Jesus was buried in a cave with a huge stone rolled across the front of it. Then the stone was sealed to the entrance of the cave so that absolutely no light was able to get in. The tomb in which Jesus was laid was supposed to be, for all time, completely dark.

On the night of the Easter Vigil the church is going to be very dark. The darkness in which the Easter Vigil Mass begins is supposed to represent the darkness of the tomb in which Jesus' broken body was laid to rest. Soon after the Mass begins, a new fire will begin to glow outside the front doors of the church. A few seconds later the light of one small flame on top of the new paschal candle will be brought into the church. Then, that light will spread to everyone who is in the church as the tapered candles which the assembly holds will illuminate our sanctuary. The light of the risen Christ will glow in a symbolic way through the church as the flame is spread from that one flicker of light in the darkness of the night.

The real light of the risen Christ will be revealed, however, as Michael Sargeant and Cameron Davekos, who are to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion) and Patricia Thorsen (who will also be Confirmed in our faith) will experience death to their old way of life and a resurrection to new life as fully initiated members of our faith.

The Easter Vigil is the most important and beautiful Mass of the entire liturgical year. It is one we do not want to miss. This year our celebration of the Easter Vigil will be bi-lingual. For the first time since we started having Mass in Spanish in our parish, the Hispanic Community will have an opportunity to celebrate with us on this incredible night.

If you have never been to the Easter Vigil before, I encourage you to give it a try. This is the night in which we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the light of the world. We *see* the light of the risen Christ in a new flame. We *experience* the light of Christ as we witness the Sacraments of Initiation in which those who are received into the Church are given new hearts, new lives of grace, and new identities as members of the Body of Christ with us.

I look forward to seeing you at the Easter Vigil this year.

In joyful hope,

Fr. Tim Seigel.