

# What to Expect on Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday

Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. Mass on Holy Saturday night and Easter Sunday are joyful celebrations of this. This is the most important time of the Church's year.

Some people go to vigil Mass on Holy Saturday night and others go to dawn or day Mass on Easter Sunday. There are some differences depending on which one you attend.

## Holy Saturday Vigil Mass

This Mass is held after darkness has fallen. There are four parts to it:

- The Service of Light
- Liturgy of the Word
- Liturgy of Baptism
- Liturgy of the Eucharist

### The Service of Light:

We remember that Jesus is the Light of the World and that he dispels the darkness. The electric lights in the church are switched off. A fire is lit and blessed outside, representing eternal life in Christ.

The priest will light a Paschal Candle from the new fire. The Paschal Candle is very special and represents Christ, the Light of the World.

### The priest will say:

Christ yesterday and today

the Beginning and the End

the Alpha

and the Omega

All time belongs to him

and all the ages

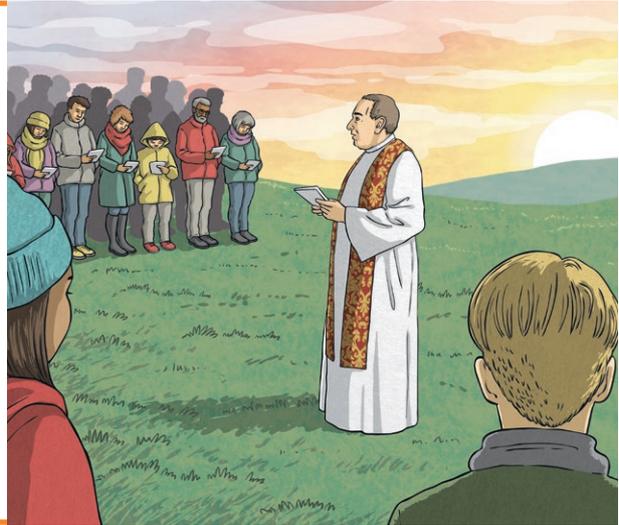
To him be glory and power

through every age and for ever. Amen

He will then insert five grains of incense into the candle in the shape of a cross while saying:



1. By his holy
2. and glorious wounds,
3. may Christ the Lord
4. guard us
5. and protect us. Amen.



The candle is then taken through the church. It is lifted up at three different times as the priest sings, 'The Light of Christ' (or *Lumen Christi*) and the people reply, 'Thanks be to God' (or *Deo gratias*). The flame of the Paschal Candle will be shared so that people can light their own candle. Bright little flames will now flicker throughout the whole church as the *Exsultet* (Easter Proclamation) is said or sung. The people rejoice and are glad. This is a time of hope. Some of the words of the proclamation are:

"...a fire into many flames divided,  
yet never dimmed by sharing of its light."

### **Liturgy of the Word:**

There are more readings than normal. There will be at least three from the Old Testament. These readings are about some of the things God has done for his people. One of the readings tells of how the Israelites were able to cross the Red Sea to escape from slavery in Egypt. The *Gloria* will be sung again after not being heard since Holy Thursday, and The Gospel will be read.

### **Liturgy of Baptism:**

The water in the font is blessed and the bottom of the Paschal Candle will be placed in it. Sometimes a child will be baptised at this point in the Mass. Everyone will be sprinkled with Holy Water and renew the promises made at their own baptism.

### **The Liturgy of the Eucharist:**

You will hear special prayers during the Eucharist Prayer and people will receive Holy Communion.

### **Dawn Mass**

Many dioceses and parishes will host Dawn Masses on Easter Sunday morning. These will usually be held outside. Mass at dawn on Easter Sunday will have some different prayers and readings than at the Easter Vigil.

### **Mass on Easter Sunday**

Mass on Easter Sunday will have some prayers and readings that are different to those at the Easter Vigil too.

All of these Masses celebrate Christ's Resurrection. This is a time of great joy.

