

The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

March 30, 2013

Every story of Easter contains the same critical elements. As they tell the central story of our faith, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – all of them – report: One, that the tomb was empty; two, that the Resurrection took place in the early hours of Sunday morning; and three, that Mary Magdalene was the one who made the greatest discovery of all time.

Now, there's one more fact that's reported by all four evangelists in all four of the Gospel stories. And you might think it unimportant. They tell us that there were *angels* present. Luke tells us that the angels ask Mary Magdalene and the other women a question: "Why are you looking for the Living One among the dead?" In other words, "If you're looking for the Risen Jesus, you're looking in the wrong place!" The angels are with us tonight, and I think they might just be asking *us* this question – or, at least, a question that's very similar. *Why do you and I tend to look for God in all the wrong places?*

We've gathered together on the holiest night of the year. We've blessed *fire*! But the fire we've blessed isn't the Lord; it only *leads* us to God. We'll be blessing water, too! But the water isn't God; it only *leads* us to God. And in a few moments, we'll baptize Brittany and renew our own baptismal promises. We'll be holding fire in our hands, and we'll feel water raining down on our heads. But those promises we make only stand as a *reminder* of God.

I think we're sophisticated enough to know all that. I think we probably know where to look for God – but it's what we *want* from him when we *find* him: Maybe *that's* the problem. When someone we love is diagnosed with cancer, we know that God is close to us. But when we find God – what do we want? We want *explanations*. When we're having trouble with our children or our parents, or our in-laws, or our boss, we know that Jesus is close to us. But when we find him – what do we want? We want *solutions*. When someone dies, we know that the Risen Lord is near. But when we find him – what do we end up asking for? We ask for *answers*.

But the Risen Lord doesn't provide answers to our questions, or solutions to our problems, or explanations about our suffering. The Risen Lord doesn't *provide* answers: he *is* the answer. The Risen Lord doesn't *provide* explanations: he *is* the explanation. And the Risen Lord doesn't *provide* solutions... simply because he *is* the solution.

We've certainly come looking for the Lord tonight, and we've come to the right place. We're here to celebrate the fact that we already *have* the answer; everything's been explained; and the solution is already in our grasp. Let *that* be the greatest gift of Easter this year. That, as we renew our Baptismal promises, we remember that we've *truly found the Lord* – simply because we've stopped looking for him in all the wrong places.

Paul A. Magnano

Pastor