

# Easter Vigil



The night will be as clear as day; it will  
become our light, our joy!

Janette Dobson  
*(Josephite Companion)*

Our journey through Lent to Easter has been drawing us slowly, surely and inexorably to this Easter day. We've travelled with Jesus and his disciples through various sections of his earthly mission.

We've seen some magnificent high points such as Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist in the Jordan River and His Father's appearance and approval. We recalled the Transfiguration on the mount where Jesus' glory was revealed, but we've also witnessed Jesus' frustration when his followers did not understand or respond as he'd hoped.

Despite seeing the miracle cures and actions of Jesus, many could still not accept his message. Their ears and eyes were not open nor receptive, and their feet were encased in the clay of tradition, or fear, or avoidance.

However, Jesus persisted in His mission. He was not daunted and continued on the path to Jerusalem and His imminent death. He introduced his disciples to Eucharist and invited them to share in His own body and blood during His last Passover meal immediately prior to the total sacrifice of his body on Calvary only hours later.



*The Easter Vigil is the pinnacle of the liturgical year – it celebrates the resurrection and invites us to renew our baptismal commitment to live as people of God*

### **DESPITE SEEING THE MIRACLE CURES AND ACTIONS OF JESUS, MANY COULD STILL NOT ACCEPT HIS MESSAGE**

As Jesus' body was hurriedly placed in the tomb on that Good Friday, how bleak the darkness must have appeared to his friends. They left Golgotha in deep sorrow and regret. How could it have ended this way? Jesus was their promised Messiah; he was the son of God surely? It was not meant to end like this!

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But hope was rekindled that Easter morn. When the women found the tomb empty, they recalled Jesus' words and

they recognised that death had been conquered. Jesus had risen from the dead as He had promised. We re-engage with this mystery in a very special way through the Easter Vigil. As we gather in the darkness and await the lighting of the Easter fire, we too experience the darkness of the tomb. We joyfully light our candles from the new fire of the 2026 Paschal Candle, and we enter into the Resurrection mystery.

As the cantor intones the very special Easter prayer, the Exultet, we recall God's goodness and mercy to His people which began at the dawn of creation, travelled with them through their journeyings and truly remains with us today. Jesus' resurrection has enabled us to also rise above death in our lives. The very ancient Celtic prayer *The Deer's Cry*, aptly captures this:



*We witness resurrection through the heroic actions of many people: the weary parent caring for a sick or disabled child, the desperate person trying to find affordable housing*

*“I arise today: through the Strength of heaven: Light of sun, Radiance of moon, Splendour of fire, Speed of lightning, Swiftiness of wind, Depth of sea, Stability of earth, Firmness of rock.”*

Our loving God gives us the capacity to rise above many human failings and conditions. We too can arise again to be agents of change in our world. In his book, *Already Within – Divining the Hidden Spring*, Daniel O’Leary writes that:

*“Resurrection is about the passion for the possible in our everyday lives. Resurrection is as earthy, local and intimate as our sweat and blood, our dreams and nightmares, our drives and passions. It is as real as whatever or whoever drives and drains us, draws and drags us. Resurrection, in fact, is the deepest meaning of everything*

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*that brings a smile to our faces, a tear to our eyes, a vitality to our voices and a tenderness to our touch. Resurrection is as real as that.”*

We witness this through the heroic actions of many people: the weary parent caring for a sick or disabled child; the elderly couple witnessing to love despite the ravages of age or dementia; the desperate family trying to find affordable housing. It is not difficult to find evidence of resurrection around us.



In his latest book *How Christians Can Succeed Today*, Greg Sheridan proposes the examples of Leila and Danny Abdallah, and Jess Echeverry. From vastly different backgrounds and life circumstances, they were all able to rise above their desperate situations to not only come to a place of peace and light, but to share that light with others.

The Abdallahs, after facing the deaths of three of their children and a loved niece in a tragic accident, rose from the solitude and darkness of their grief to transform into agents of forgiveness towards the young driver who recklessly ran down their children as they walked along the footpath.

Their actions have had a transformative effect on this young man who naturally faces a long, lonely and difficult period of imprisonment. He understands the irreparable harm he has caused, but he also feels the unexpected hope their forgiveness has given him.

Danny and Leila are also beacons of light to their family and the wider community

with the example of their forgiveness and establishment of their [i4Give Foundation](#), which promotes the central message of forgiveness. Although they are still grieving their loss, they have allowed the power of resurrection to change and direct their family life into positive peace and outreach.

Young Jess Echeverry in Los Angeles has been able to transform her life from that of abject poverty and homelessness to become a guiding light to other homeless young people, enabling them to redevelop hope and find meaning again in their lives. That's the power of resurrection in action!

Resurrection can break through the darkness of despair and release God's powerful light into human lives again. As we sing the *Exultet* this Easter, let us rejoice and go out determined to shine the light of Jesus' resurrection far and wide.

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*Let us rejoice as we sing the Exultet this Easter*