

## The Easter Vigil (Year A)

### Seven (!) Old Testament Readings

1. Six Days of Creation → The Resurrection—New Creation  
(Genesis 1:1-2:2)
2. Abraham and the Sacrifice of Isaac → Death of Jesus on Calvary  
(Genesis 22:1-18)
3. The Crossing of the Red Sea → Waters of Baptism  
(Exodus 14:15-15:1)
4. The Wedding of God and His Bride → Christ the Bridegroom  
(Isaiah 54:5-14)
5. The Feast of Water, Grain, and Wine → The Eucharistic Feast  
(Isaiah 55:1-11)
6. Wisdom has Appeared on Earth → Sacred Scripture  
(Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4)
7. Sprinkle Clean Water: A New Heart → Sacrament of Baptism  
(Ezekiel 36:16-28)

### Romans 6:3-11—Baptism as Co-Crucifixion and Resurrection

1. Crucifixion with Christ: “baptized *into his death*”!
2. Burial with Christ: immersion in waters of baptism
3. Resurrection with Christ: walk in “newness of life”
4. Union with Jesus: if united in his death, then also in his bodily resurrection
5. Why be Crucified with Jesus? “He who has died is freed from sin” (6:7)
6. After Baptism: consider yourselves “dead” to sin, but “alive” to God

### Matthew 28:1-10—The Resurrection of Jesus (Easter Sunday)

1. “After the Sabbath” = Saturday
2. The “first day of the week” = Sunday (cf. Genesis 1)
3. The Empty Tomb: the bodily nature of the resurrection of Jesus

### The *Catechism* on the “First Day of the Week”

Jesus rose from the dead “on the first day of the week.” *Because it is the “first day,” the day of Christ’s Resurrection recalls the first creation. Because it is the “eighth day” following the sabbath, it symbolizes the new creation ushered in by Christ’s Resurrection.* For Christians it has become the first of all days, the first of all feasts, the Lord’s Day (*he*

*kuriake hemera, dies dominica*)—Sunday: “We all gather on the day of the sun, for it is the first day [after the Jewish sabbath, but also the first day] when God, separating matter from darkness, made the world; and on this same day Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead.” (CCC 2174, citing St. Justin Martyr)

### Questions for Discussion and Reflection (Easter Vigil, Year A)

1. Have you ever wondered about why the Church chooses so many Old Testament readings? Can you see clearly now the rationale for each of the Readings? Take some time to look at the Responsorial Psalms for each reading and try to figure out why they too were selected.

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2. Do you ordinarily think of the sacrament of Baptism as being “crucified” and “raised” with Christ? As a baptism “into his death”? How does Paul’s vision of baptism in Romans 6 challenge our customary ways of understanding this sacrament?

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3. What difference does the bodily resurrection of Jesus make? Why wasn’t it simply enough for Jesus’ *soul* to live forever? Why did was he raised in his body? Read the *Catechism*, nos. 638-58 and take some time to meditate on the mystery of the Resurrection.

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### For Further Study

1. CCC 638-658: This section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* contains the Church’s official teaching the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is extremely rich and can serve as food for meditation.
2. Brant Pitre, *The Case for Jesus*, pp. 173-191. An explanation of what Jesus’ resurrection would have meant (and not meant) in the first century and why anyone believed such an extraordinary claim.
3. Carl Olson, *Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?* (Ignatius Press, 2016). A thorough but readable explanation of the evidence for believing in the resurrection with answers to common objections from skeptics.