

**The Easter Vigil  
(Year C)****Seven (!) Old Testament Readings**

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| 1. <u>Six Days of Creation</u><br>(Genesis 1:1-2:2)               | → | The Resurrection—New Creation<br>(see esp. <u>Gen 1:2-5</u> ) |
| 2. <u>Abraham and the Sacrifice of Isaac</u><br>(Genesis 22:1-18) | → | Death of Jesus on Calvary                                     |
| 3. <u>The Crossing of the Red Sea</u><br>(Exodus 14:15-15:1)      | → | Waters of Baptism<br>(see esp. <u>Exod 14:15-30</u> )         |
| 4. <u>The Wedding of God and His Bride</u><br>(Isaiah 54:5-14)    | → | Christ the Bridegroom   |
| 5. <u>The Feast of Water, Grain, and Wine</u><br>(Isaiah 55:1-11) | → | The Eucharistic Feast   |
| 6. <u>Wisdom has appeared on Earth</u><br>(Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4:4) | → | Sacred Scripture  |
| 7. <u>Sprinkle Clean Water: A New Heart</u><br>(Ezekiel 36:16-28) | → | Sacrament of Baptism<br>(see esp. <u>Ezek 36:25-26</u> )      |

**Living Tradition: The Crossing of the Red Sea and Baptism**

Cyril of Jerusalem: First you entered into the vestibule of the Baptistery, and there facing towards the West you listened to the command to stretch forth your hand, and as *in the presence of Satan you renounced him*. Now ye must know that *this figure is found in ancient history*. For when Pharaoh, that most bitter and cruel tyrant, was oppressing the free and high-born people of the Hebrews, God sent Moses to bring them out of the evil bondage of the Egyptians... The enemy, however, after their rescue, pursued after them, and saw the sea wondrously parted for them; nevertheless he went on, following close in their footsteps, and was all at once overwhelmed and engulfed in the Red Sea. *Now turn from the old to the new, from the figure to the reality*. There we have Moses sent from God to Egypt; here, Christ, sent forth from His Father into the world: there, that Moses might lead forth an afflicted people out of Egypt; here, that Christ might rescue those who are oppressed in the world under sin... *there, the tyrant was pursuing that ancient people even to the sea; and here the daring and shameless spirit, the author of evil, was following you even to the very streams of salvation. The tyrant of old was drowned in the sea; and this present one disappears in the water of salvation.* (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 19.2-3; trans. NPNF)

**Romans 6:3-11—Baptism as Burial and Resurrection**

1. Death and Resurrection with Christ: through the sacrament of baptism (6:4)

**Luke 24:1-12—The Resurrection of Jesus (Easter Sunday)**

1. The Body: “they did not find the body” (Greek *sōma*) (24:3)
  - a. Resurrection ≠ return to ordinary earthly life (e.g., Jairus’ daughter, Lazarus)

## The Mass Readings Explained

- b. Resurrection ≠ immortality of Jesus’ “soul”
- c. Resurrection ≠ Jesus’ “spirit” is “exalted to heaven” after he died
- d. Resurrection = reunion of Jesus’ soul and body *for all eternity*

### 2. The Women:

- a. Mary Magdalene: former demoniac (Luke 8:2)
- b. Joanna: wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward (Luke 8:3)
- c. Mary mother of James: Jesus’ aunt (cf. Luke 8:19-21; Mark 15:40, 47)

3. Disciples: think the women’s words “an idle tale”; Peter “wondered” what happened!

### **Josephus: the Testimony of Women in Antiquity**

Put not trust in a single witness, but let there be three or at least two... From women let no evidence be accepted, because of the levity and temerity of their sex... (Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.219)

### **Living Tradition: Augustine and the Women’s Role in the Resurrection**

From the beginning of Christ's mission, women show to him and to his mystery a special *sensitivity which is characteristic* of their *femininity*. It must also be said that this is especially confirmed in the Paschal Mystery, not only at the Cross but also at the dawn of the Resurrection. The women *are the first at the tomb*. They are the first to find it empty. They are the first to hear: "He is not here. *He has risen*, as he said" (*Mt* 28:6). They are the first to embrace his feet (cf. *Mt* 28:9). They are also the first to be called to announce this truth to the Apostles (cf. *Mt* 28:1-10; *Lk* 24:8-11). The Gospel of John (cf. also *Mk* 16: 9) emphasizes *the special role of Mary Magdalene*. She is the first to meet the Risen Christ... Hence she came to be called "the apostle of the Apostles" (Latin *apostolorum apostola*). Mary Magdalene was the first eyewitness of the Risen Christ, and for this reason she was also *the first to bear witness to him before the Apostles*. (John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem* no. 16, citing St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 20.3, 2519)

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

1. What is the connection between Genesis 1 and the discovery of the tomb on the “first day of the week” (Luke 24:1)?

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2. Do you ordinarily think of the sacrament of Baptism as being “buried” and “raised” with Christ? What are the implications for this way of looking at the sacrament?

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3. Why is the fact that it was the women who first testified to the truth of the Resurrection significant? How would their testimony have been regarded in antiquity?

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### For Further Study

1. Pablo Gadenz, *The Gospel of Luke* (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 389-92.