

The Easter Triduum (Continued) The Vigil of Vigils 2011 Homily from Father Victor Vella. New Catholics

Vigil of Vigils... Holy Saturday 23rd April 9pm:

All gathered outside the presbytery for the lighting of a new fire and the Easter candle was lit from this. Then we entered the Church in darkness and the Easter candle was used to light individual candles, so for the beginning of the Vigil was by candlelight.

After the readings and Gospel, Father Victor gave his homily.



Father Victor referred to his Easter Vigil homily three years ago when he preached on the Gospel of Mark, chapter 16: 1-7, and last year when he chose to comment on the seventh reading of the Easter Vigil taken from the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 36: 16-28.

This year Fr. Victor chose to reflect on:

The Book of Exodus 14: 15-15:1 – the Third Reading of the Easter Vigil

- *The sons of Israel went on dry ground right into the sea.*

The Crossing of the Sea of Reeds****

Fr. Victor called this Book of Exodus action packed. This representation spells out the dynamism of the action story of the crossing and Father proceeded to explain what we can make of it.

There are two different perspectives, diametrically opposed.

Firstly, the destruction of the Jewish people's oppressors which could be the completion of their deliverance and freedom from persecution; it has been argued by some scholars that this story of the deliverance at the sea lies at the heart of the deliverance of the people from bondage namely, the epic narrative of the Exodus.

The second perspective says this is the beginning of their journey and wanderings in the wilderness, which has been characterized by grumbling, moaning and protests to their God, who responds graciously to their needs.

This action story is presented from two different points of view. Although they focused on different characters, they do not clash theologically. The story as narrated from the point of view of God would show his glory by the destruction of the Egyptians. The point of view as narrated by the Israelites: *"Why do you cry out to me?"* This was God's response to Moses.

How did they react? They were overwhelmed with fear, which was justified as there was an army on one side and the Sea the other! The Israelites were in a state of fear and panic.

Moses reassures them to, *"Be firm and not get anxious, for God will fight your battles."*

They then made an affirmation of faith and feared God. The "fear of God" is the beginning of the manifestation of faith and because they feared they trusted.

What does this story mean for you and me?

The book of Exodus shows the same pattern of events in the story of Israel in the wilderness: the people rebel; God intervenes; the people put their faith in God.

Is our journey similar to the journey the people of Israel have gone through? "Human fear" which finishes with the "fear of God"?

My message to you as you start this journey: Amy, Yvonne, Naomi, Marie, Toni and Damian are to be part of the people.

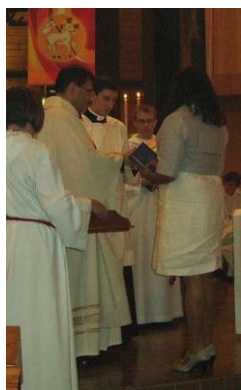
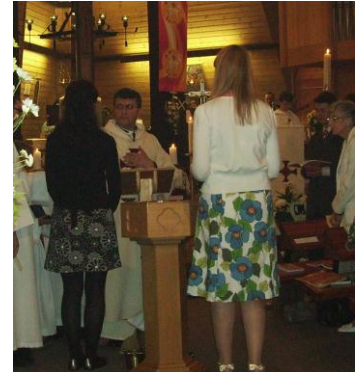
The journey of the people of Israel had been peppered with fear and lack of trust in the Lord, but be reassured as Moses reassured the people.... Believe, have trust in the Church - the "togetherness" of the people of God, for without the Church we cannot be reassured in those moments of despair or dark times when faith will waiver.

The journey will not be "on dry ground"; like all our journeys you will also lose trust, but the input and the presence of the community, despite our faults and failures, will help us to reach our destination and see God face to face, which is our objective as Christians and the purpose of our journey.

****In Hebrew "**yam suf**" is a phrase which occurs about twenty three times in the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament) and has traditionally been understood to refer to the salt water inlet located between Africa and the Arabian peninsula, known in English as the Red Sea. More recently, alternate understandings of the term have been proposed for those passages where it refers to the Israelite Crossing of the Sea as told in Exodus 13-15. These proposals would mean that "**yam suf**" is better translated in these passages as *Sea of Reeds* or *Sea of Seaweed*. I Kings 9:26 identifies "**yam suf**" with the Red Sea (at Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba).

Baptism: Marie (left) prepares for Baptism, whilst her sponsor looks on. Father is about to anoint Marie with the Holy Oils. Father is about to be very generous with the Baptismal water.

The six candidates who received Confirmation are given gifts. Marie, Amy, Yvonne, Naomi, Tony and Damian.



May the good Lord
be with you to bless
and guide you always

The Offertory Hymn was sung in Czech to try and make Marie and Tony, Czech nationals, feel at home. We hope the accents weren't too awful!

Raduj se a vesel (All of God's Creation) (A Czech Easter hymn written by Bohuslav Korejs.)

Amy with her Father and step-mother.



The six new Catholics



True Joy Comes From God



Candidates and sponsors

