

## **Easter Vigil Homily, 2007**

I was told to keep this short and to the point. I can promise neither. I will however give a brief commentary on the themes of the readings. Here we go:

Genesis: from CHAOS to COMMUNITY

Abraham: from NO-PEOPLE to A CHOSEN PEOPLE

Exodus: from a SLAVE PEOPLE to a LIBERATED  
PEOPLE

Isaiah 54: from a REJECTED PEOPLE to an EMBRACED  
PEOPLE

Isaiah 55: from a HUNGRY PEOPLE to a WELL-FED  
PEOPLE

Baruch: from an IGNORANT PEOPLE to a WISE  
PEOPLE

Ezekiel: from a DEAD PEOPLE to an ALIVE PEOPLE

At the heart of the Vigil is the theme of PASSOVER. PASSOVER is inseparable from our religious and collective MEMORY.

Memory is important because we have our religious and spiritual identity based on the PASSOVER themes found in each of these readings.

Why tell all the stories? Why go through all the rituals? We narrate and celebrate each time we listen to these stories, we hear

them differently. Each time we baptize, we – as community – are reborn.

Each VIGIL and really, each day we are filled with new people. With new friends, new members of the family, we become attuned to different things. New people bring new perspectives; they bring up new things or bring up old things that we never really dealt with. New people get us to appreciate *nuance* and give us the freedom to let go of the details.

Our community is TRANSFORMED by these people and their stories. These newly baptized people bring with them their burdens, their hopes, and their dreams. When they are BAPTIZED and SEALED in the HOLY SPIRIT, their dreams, burdens, hopes become our HOPES, our DREAMS and our BURDENS. As we share at this table, we solidify the GREAT PASSOVER of Christ that becomes our PASSOVER, our PASCHAL FEAST.

In my theological and spiritual journey over this past year, I have come to more deeply appreciate the stories of people who come from other lands. I remember a family in Oaxaca telling me how hard it was to send their eldest son to the US. The family was otherwise starving and they hated to see him go, but they knew that

their only chance of survival was to have him send back a small remittance each month. They cried as they let him go. When I read the story of Abraham and Sarah, I think of how Sarah must have felt when she had to let her husband and son leave.

So let us all prepare for a great transformation of this community. Let us prepare for their rebirth in baptism and let us pray for ours as we all come forward to the table of Christ.

#### Reflection Questions:

- 1) Do you agree/disagree with the notion that relationships change the way we see the world?
- 2) Which one/s of the Vigil readings speak to your phase of spiritual development? For example, do you relate to “from Chaos to community” more than “from ignorance to wisdom?” Why? Why not?
- 3) In what areas of your life do you feel “reborn?”