

Easter Vigil Homily
Basilica of the Immaculate Conception
Bishop Felipe J. Estévez
April 15, 2017

St John of the Cross would call this night – *la noche luminosa*.

Darkness and light all wrapped into one. The darkness of death is overcome by the abundance of life, the Risen Christ, the New Man, the Alpha of history because in Him all things were created and the Omega point because as he said, “When I will be lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32).

Creation is renewed. Father Fragomeni says: “Something cosmic happens at Easter. Under the full moon and a starry sky, the whole earth erupts into praise. Heaven and earth narrate the wonderful works of God and all is music. The Risen One sets the rhythm, and all celestial and terrestrial voices are tuned for the song.”

St. Augustine loved the song of Easter, Alleluia, a new song, new. Because death is still there but in Christ Jesus now it is superseded. The Cross is there but has turned into Easter. The atheists are there, the skeptics are unconvinced, but we believers say with Paul, “God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.” And that is why we sing for 50 days, the song “Alleluia-Praise the Lord!” Life has overcome death, the holy name of Jesus is the victory over death, since in him we are a new creation!

The holy liturgy of the Church sings alleluia with magnificence but our hearts within need to join in with the joy of Easter. For joy to flourish we need to stop unnecessary complaining. Dead stop.

For joy to flourish, we need to stop destructive criticism of others and self. Dead stop. Smile. Let the sun rise within. Alleluia, Exultet! Let the light shine throughout! Alleluia!

I really like what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Its words are tied on two words: the Resurrection is a historical event, the Resurrection is a transcendent event. There are more than 500 witnesses of the apparitions of Jesus; Peter encounters him, and so does Thomas, and so does Paul, and so does Mary Magdalene. The tomb is found empty!

It is also a transcendent event. It is beyond all of us. We believe in the resurrection. It is God’s doing. No one saw it happening on Channel 4, Channel 10 could not film it! The purpose of the Church is to proclaim the paschal mystery. That is what Peter and Paul preached in the Acts of the Apostles, listen to the truth, respond, adhere, believe! And RCIA, the work of catechists, missionaries, homilists, come to the mystery of salvation, come let the light of Easter fill you with joy and peace!

We praise you with greater joy than ever!

On this Easter night...He is the Lamb who took away the sins of the world.

By dying he destroyed our death, by rising he restored our life! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!