

## **Easter Vigil 2008 † Christ the King**

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We take pictures of our vacations, special days, weddings and birthdays. Whether they are still photographs or video, pictures remind us of good times and colorful characters. Photographs trigger great memories.

Tonight we look at our family photo album. The album of faith is full of photographs. But long before the camera was invented, our ancestors painted pictures with written words. The bible records these word pictures. Let's reflect on some of the word pictures we have just heard.

In the first picture, we see creation. The earth is a formless void and there is nothing, until God speaks. Each day builds on each day; each day builds on the refrain "An God saw that it was good." The picture shifts and we see the creation of woman and man – and again it is good. We are created in God imagine, we are created good.

The page turns and we see Moses with his arms outstretched, leading the chosen people from slavery to freedom.

Another page turn, in this picture Ezekiel is talking to God. Ezekiel is reassured that God will bring his people back, back from exile, back home again. (Ezekiel 34:11-13, 24-25) Ezekiel reminds God that these people must change, and change radically. So God makes a promise, "I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts."

What a promise, what a picture! Our God loves us so much that God reaches right down into our hearts and fills our hearts with love.

We turn the page again. This picture is a bit dark; the darkness just before dawn. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb. The picture flashes with light. The earth shakes, an angel descends from heaven, his clothes white as fallen snow. Guards stand frozen, shaken with fear. The angel tells the women, “Do not be afraid. I know you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised” from the dead.

The two Marys peak into the empty tomb. The picture shifts. We catch the Marys walking; their task to tell the disciples that Jesus is risen! Hear them telling you this Good News!

All these pictures are in our photo album of faith; written in words. But there are many more pictures. See now your own photographs; they too are contained in this album.

Tonight, we add more photographs. Three people have come asking to be baptized in Jesus Christ. Watch as we add other pages to our faith album.

Soon, we will hear their stories. We will then go to the font of life. We will see Logan, Robbynrae and Stephen join Christ in his death; as they emerge from the font, they will rise to new life in Christ.

Moments later we will hear Megan and Jacob's, our candidates, stories as they add their photos to our album. They will be all be anointed with the Sacred Chrism, the sweet perfumed oil of ministry and service.

These images, these photographs transform us all, and all of us will sing: *Blessed be God, O Blessed be God, who calls you by name, who calls you by name, Holy and chosen ones. Holy and chosen ones!*

Look around, this is a picture to be treasured. This is the Easter Vigil. Tonight, we look at our family photo album, the album of faith, and we add pages, images painted with words.

Five people join the church this evening. They believe and we believe: Christ is risen. Truly he has risen. Alleluia, Alleuia.

*Adapted from **Father Clyde A. Bonar, Ph.D.***