

MYSTAGOGY

Lighting and Blessing of New Fire

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

*Christ our Light,
you are true God
from true God,
and light from light.
Guide us
out from darkness and sin.
Bring us into
the Promised Land
of your love.*

Recall the Easter Vigil

At the very start of the Easter Vigil, the assembly gathered in darkness as the new fire was lit and then blessed.

Probe the Mystery

We humans are not nocturnal creatures. We do not do well in darkness. Without light it is difficult for us to see. How many of us suffer in winter when the hours of daylight are less and we are more prone to depression because of this lack?

Jesus describes how in his public ministry he has come into the world in order to ignite a blaze, to fan into flaming fire a contagion of faith (see Luke 12:49). He ardently desires that our hearts warm to

this faith, that we become emboldened and live in the light of his love.

Standing there in the dark at the beginning of the Easter Vigil, did you feel anticipation? Was there a thrill in your heart as the small flames of the new fire slowly built up and light began to shine forth in the darkness? Words were not yet spoken, only the flames shimmered. The light divided the dark, cast it back, and the words of the blessing propelled us into a new day, the day of our birth into Christ Jesus.

Saint Paul says that we see in Christ's face the glory of God himself (see 2 Corinthians 4:6).

Savor the Sweetness of Salvation

The Paschal candle remains lit for each Sunday of the Easter season. It stands in a prominent place as a symbol of the light of Christ, which illumines our minds and hearts.

Outside of the Easter season, lit candles adorn the altar and pulpit, reminding us that we are a people of light who always follow the guiding light of Christ and live accordingly.

As you reflect back on the long process of preparation that led you to the Easter Vigil and your full initiation into the Christian life, what was the most enlightening aspect of this formation for you?

And just as the ray is of the sun (for there would be no ray if the sun were not), the sun is never conceived as existing by itself without the ray of brightness that is shed from it. This is why the apostle, delivering to us the continuity and eternity of that existence that the Only-Begotten has of the Father, calls the Son "the brightness of his glory."

Saint Gregory of Nyssa, *Against Eunomius* 8:I (NPNF 2 5:202)

Inspire Others

Is there someone in your family, your neighborhood, or at work who needs cheering up or who could use a kind word? Spread a little light in that person's life by going out of your way to share the warmth of Christ's love.